



BATMAN KNIGHTFALL

VOLUME ONE





B A T M A N

KNIGHTFALL

volume one





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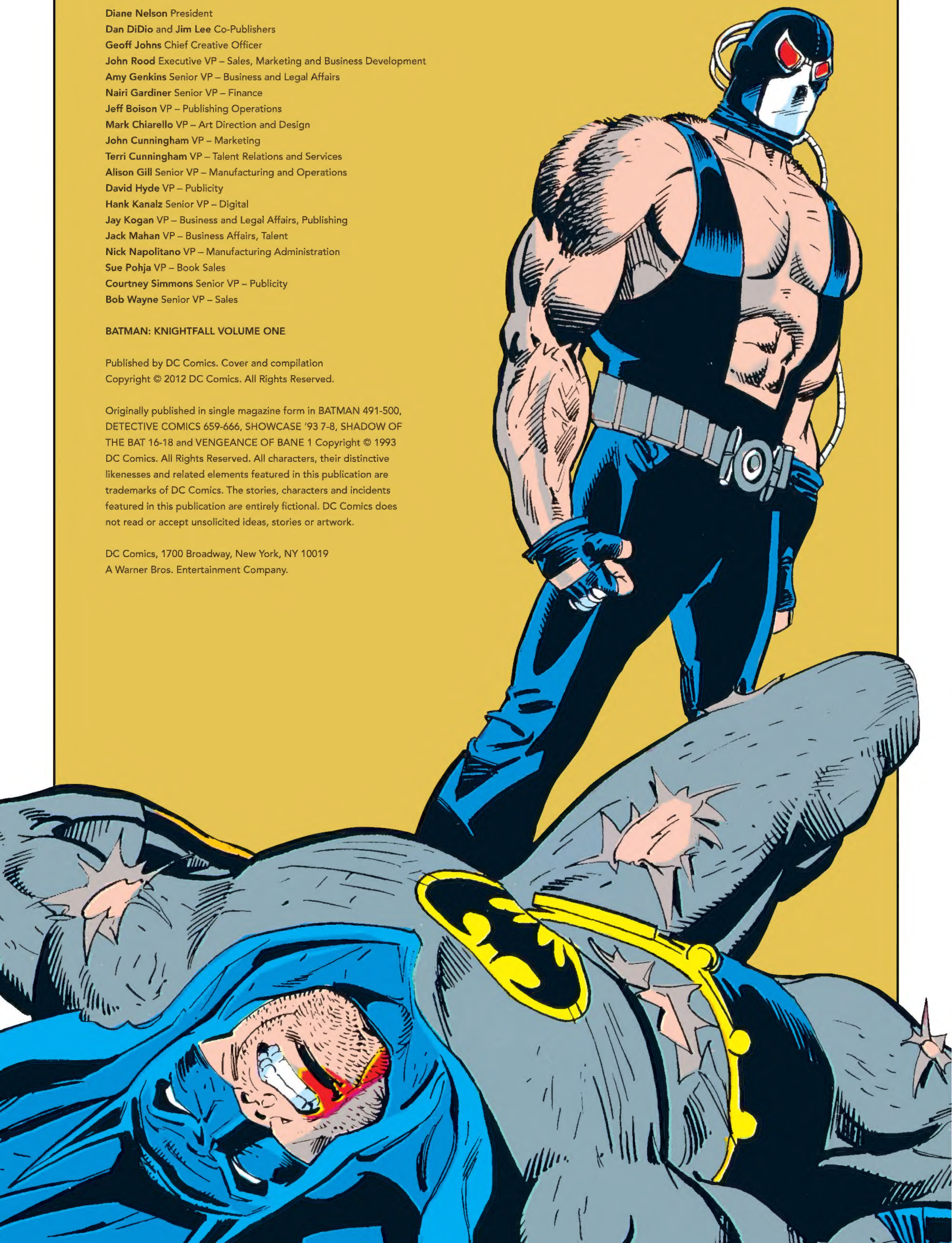
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SPECIAL
NO. 1 1993

B A T M A N

VENGEANCE OF BANE™

BY CHUCK DIXON,
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GFABRY 92

VENGEANCE OF BANE

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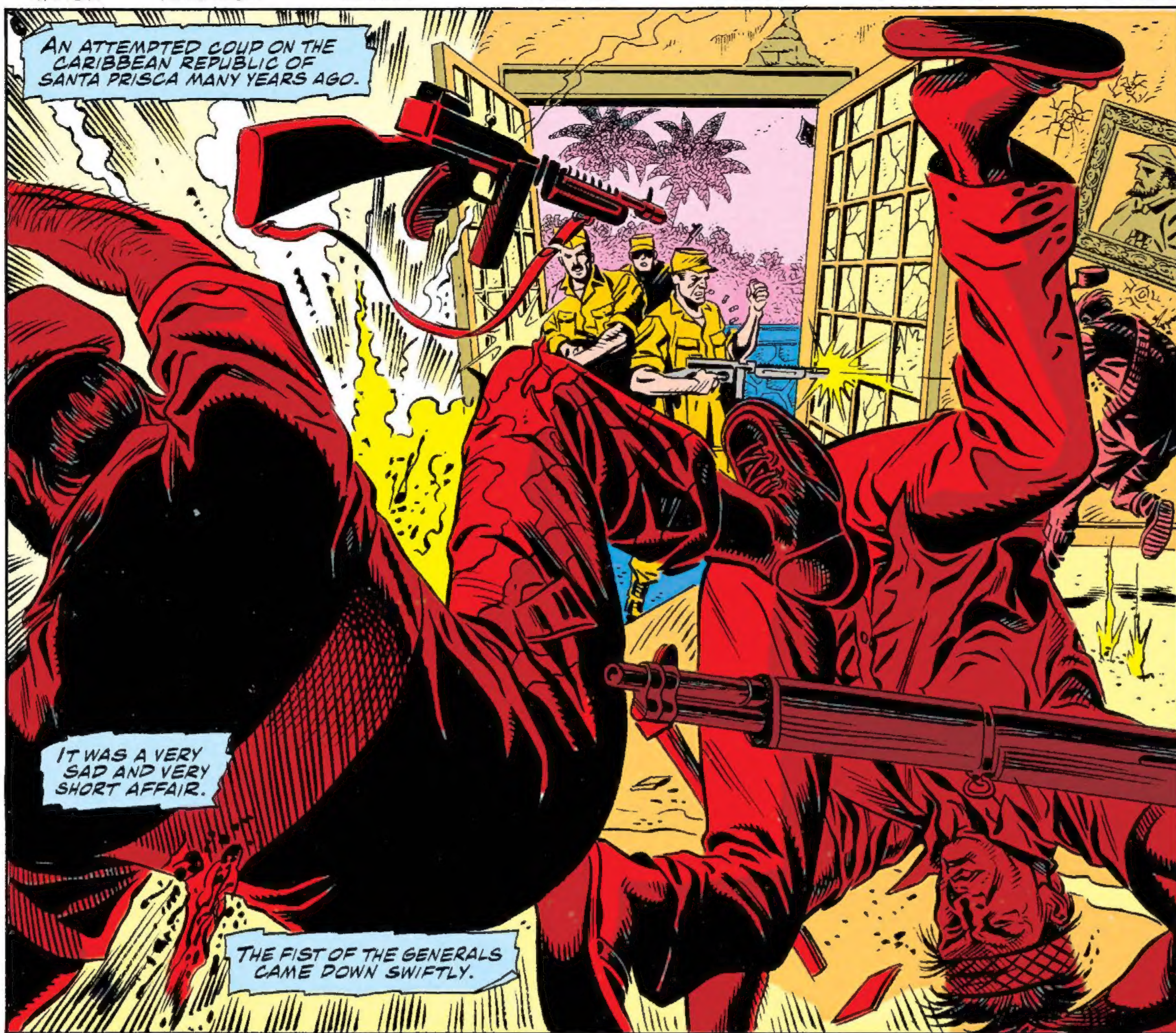
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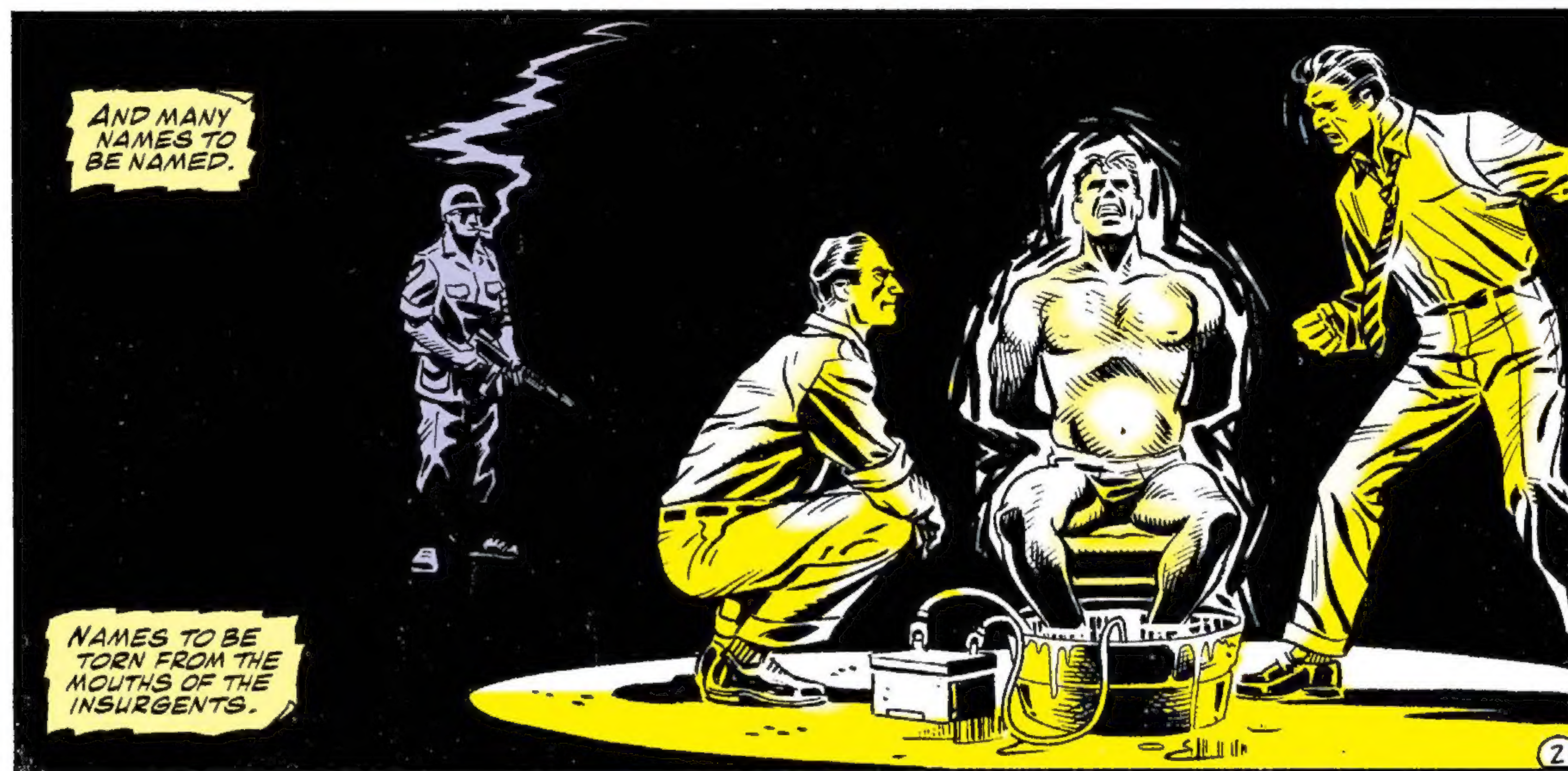
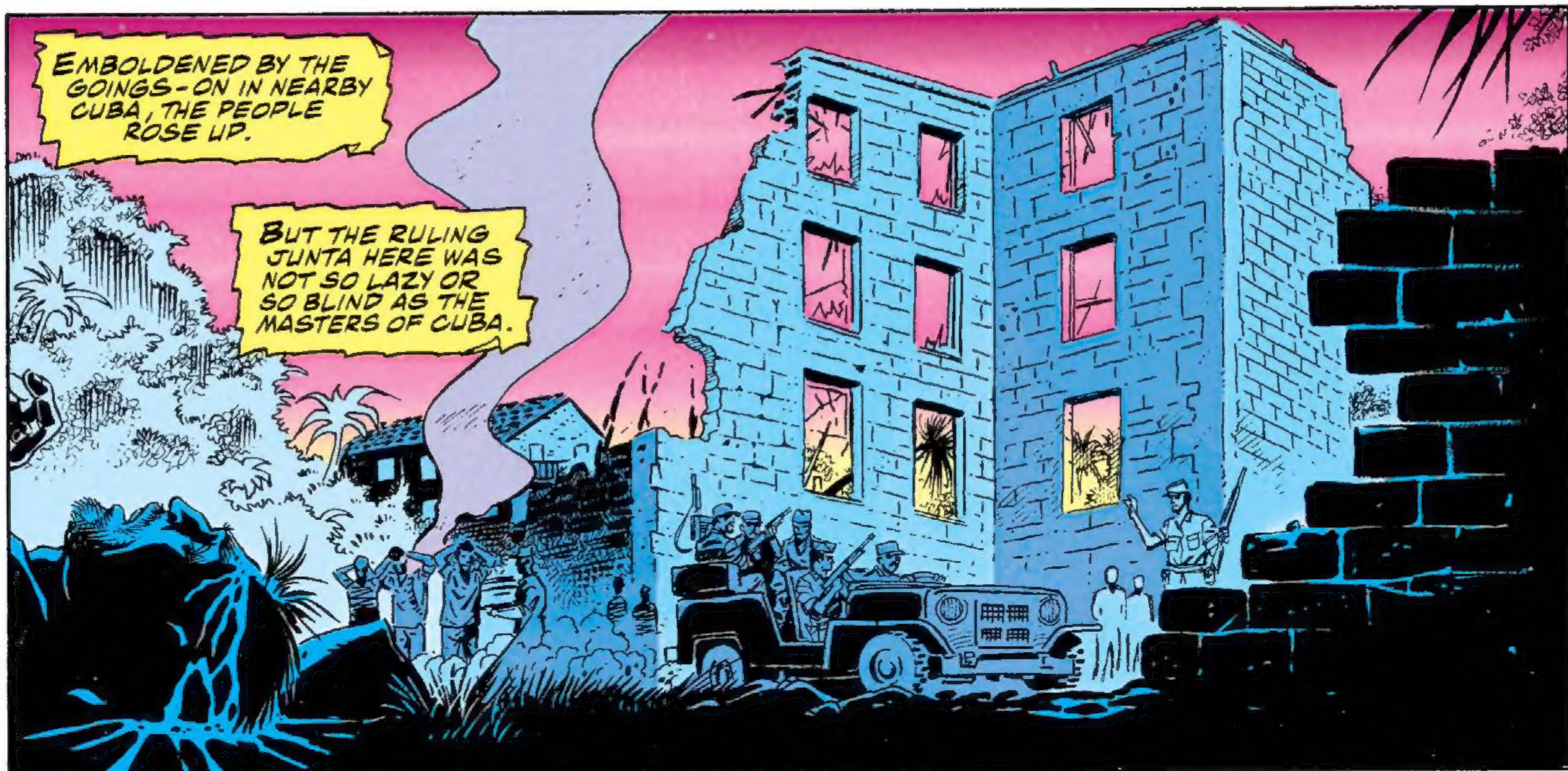
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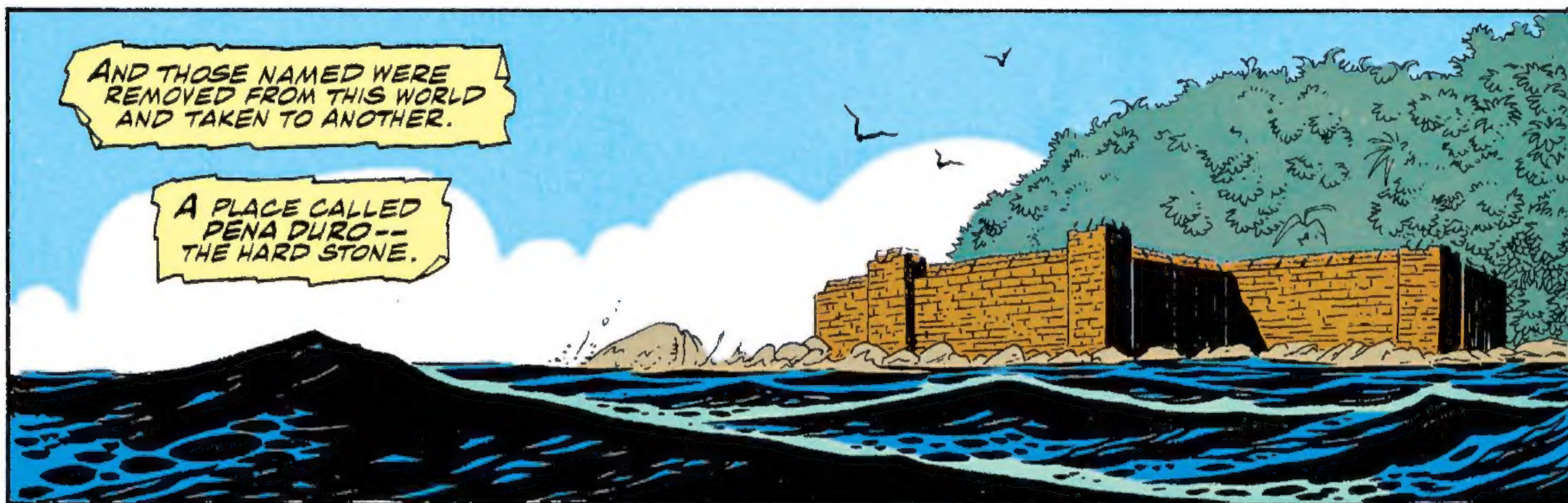
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AND THOSE NAMED WERE
REMOVED FROM THIS WORLD
AND TAKEN TO ANOTHER.

A PLACE CALLED
PENA DURO--
THE HARD STONE.



A WOMAN, HEAVY
WITH CHILD,
WAS BROUGHT
TO THIS PLACE.

HER UNBORN WAS
TO BE CHARGED
WITH THE CRIMES
OF HIS FATHER,
UNDER THE MEDIEVAL
CODES OF THIS
ISLAND NATION.



SANTA PRISCAN
LAW IS NOT
WITHOUT MERCY.

ONLY A MALE
CHILD COULD
SERVE THE
SENTENCE OF
THE FATHER.



AND HE WAS
BORN A
MALE CHILD.

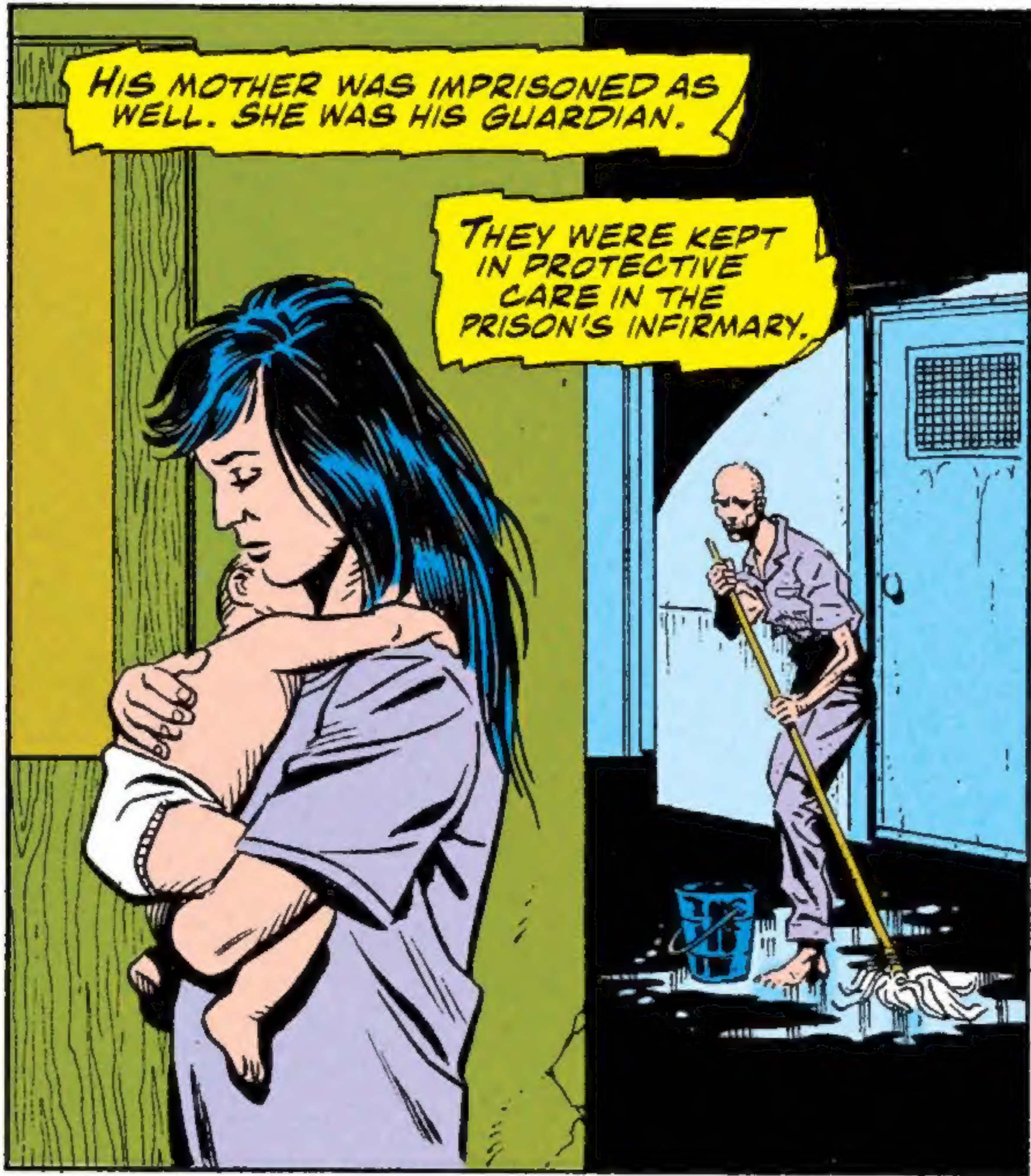
BORN TO LIFE,
AND A LIFE
SENTENCE.

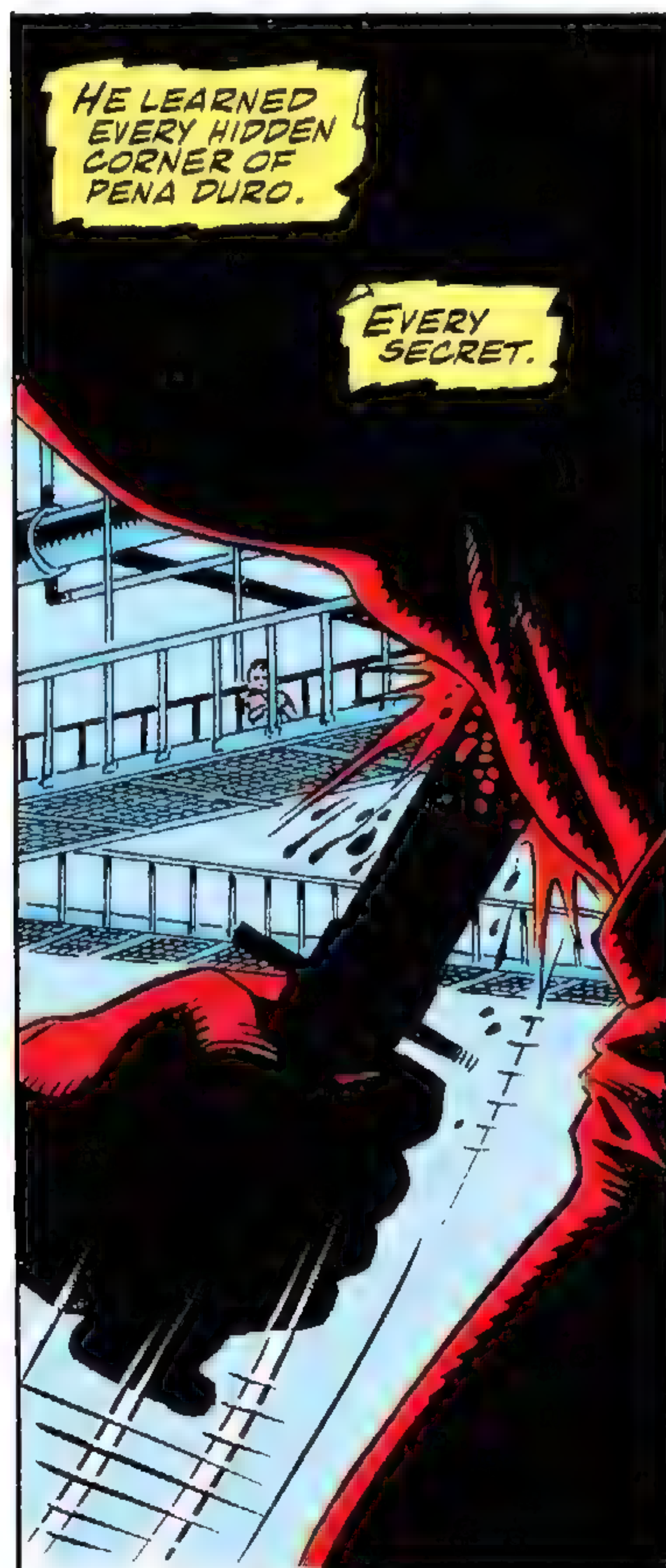
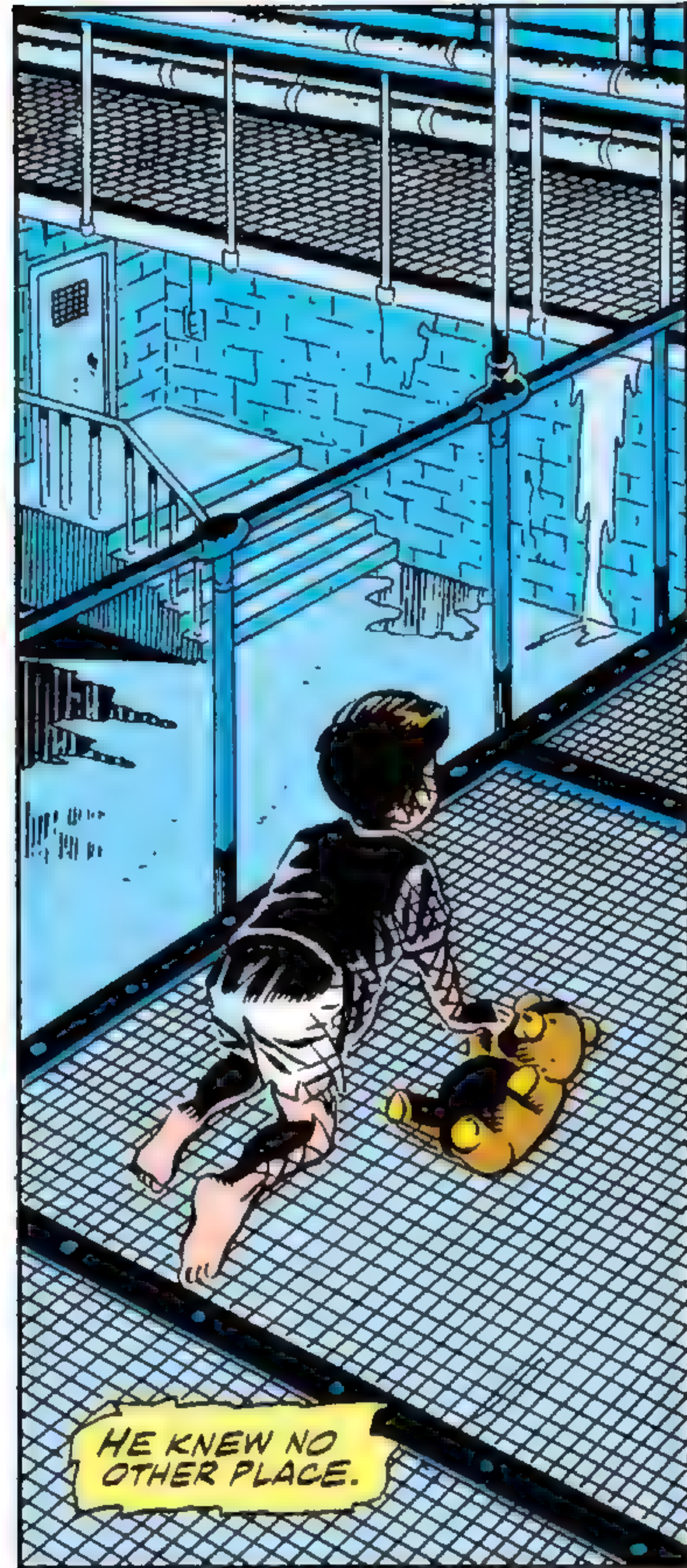
BEHIND THE
WALLS OF
PENA DURO.

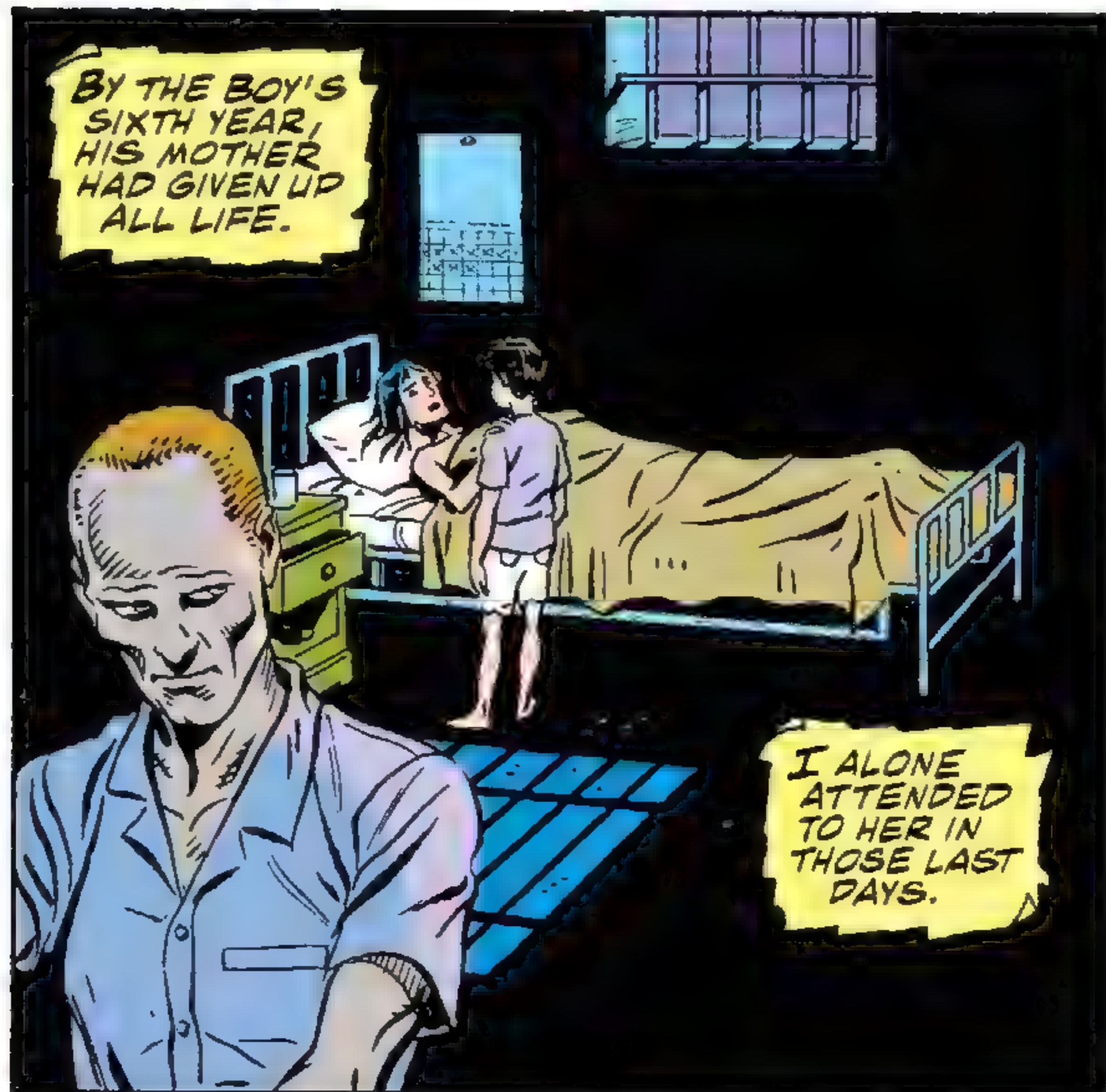


BUT THIS IS
NOT THE STORY
OF HOW BANE
WAS BORN.

IT IS THE STORY OF
HIS CREATION.







BY THE BOY'S SIXTH YEAR, HIS MOTHER HAD GIVEN UP ALL LIFE.

I ALONE ATTENDED TO HER IN THOSE LAST DAYS.



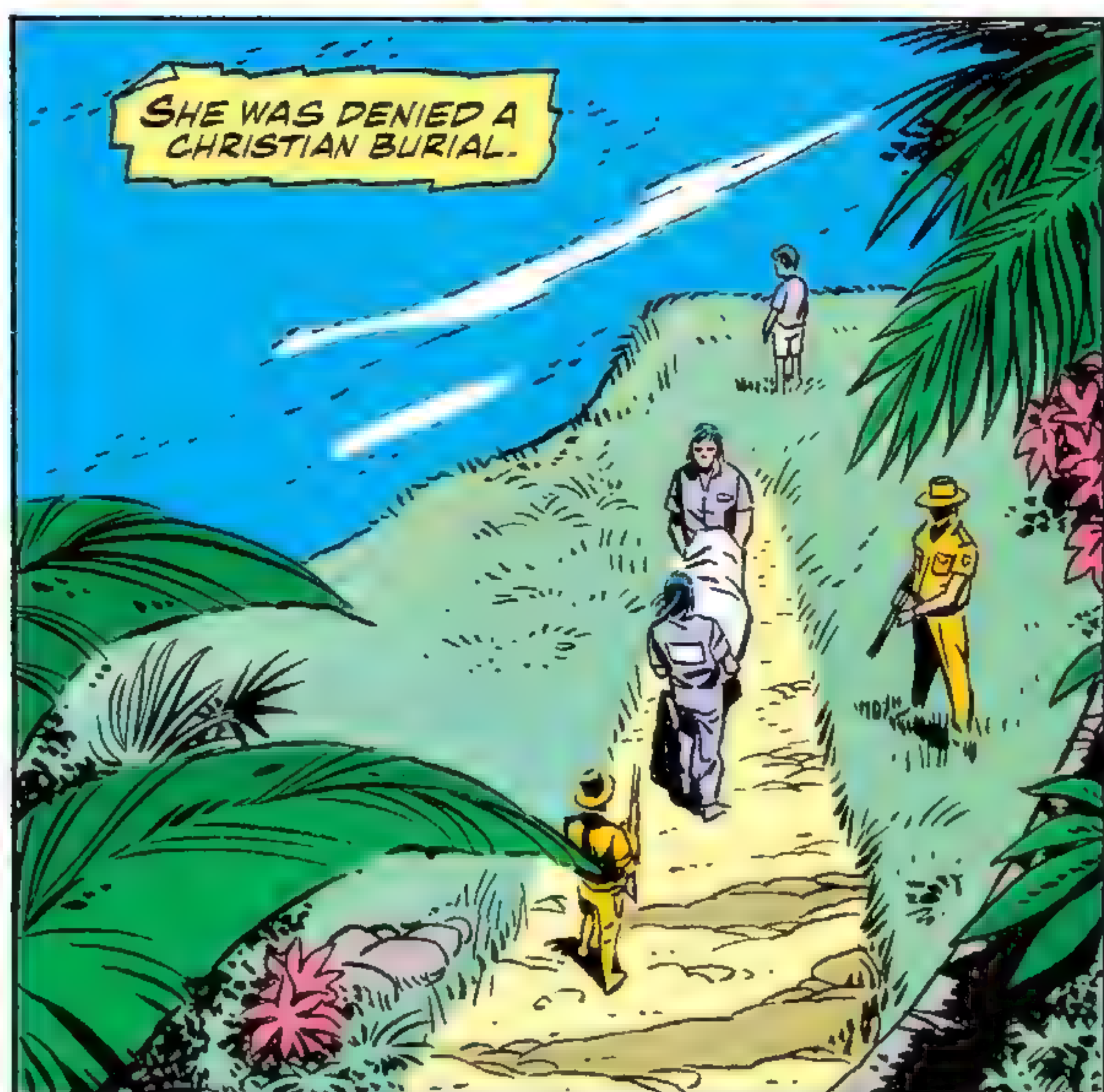
SHE WAS A FARM GIRL WHO COULD NOT SURVIVE HIDDEN FROM THE SUN.

AND SO FAR FROM GOD.



THE BOY WOULD NOT ALLOW HIMSELF A TEAR.

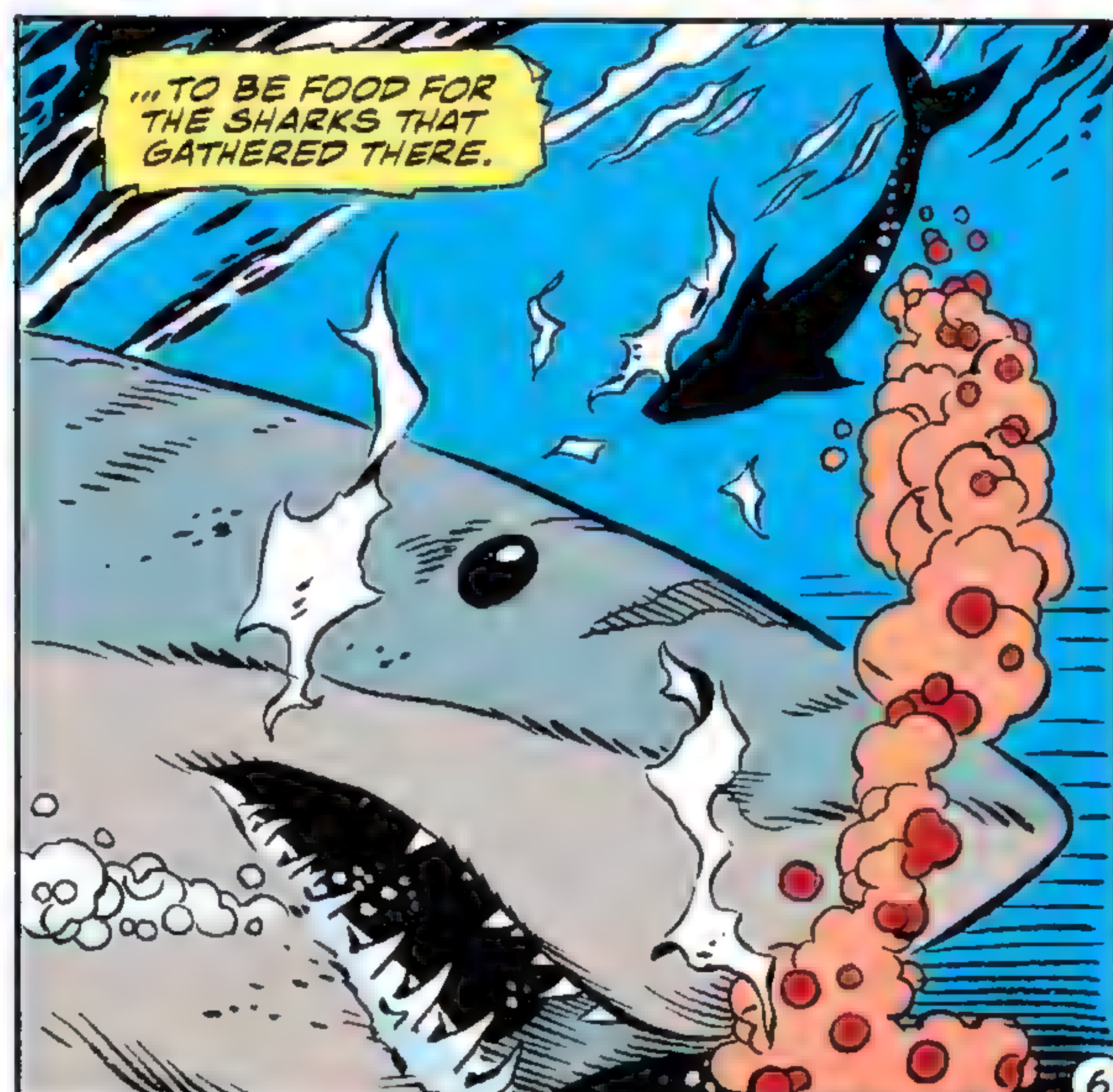
HE HAD BECOME AS HARD AS THIS PLACE. HIS MOTHER WAS WEAK. FOR THAT SHE DIED.



SHE WAS DENIED A CHRISTIAN BURIAL.



HER CORPSE WAS THROWN FROM PUNTO DE TIBURON...



...TO BE FOOD FOR THE SHARKS THAT GATHERED THERE.

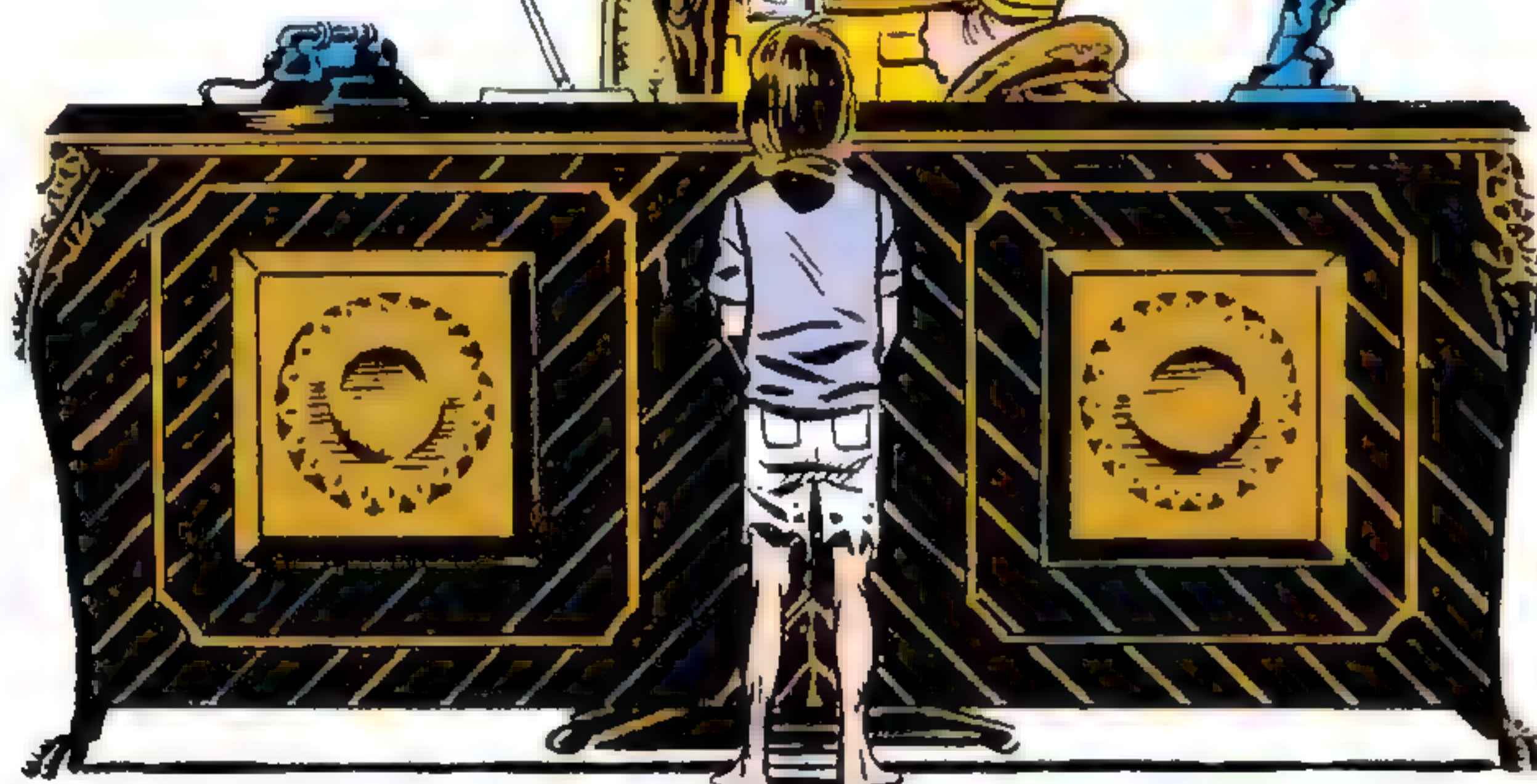
AND THE BOY
WAS TO BE
THROWN TO
THE ANIMALS
WITHIN THE
WALLS.



YOUR
MOTHER HAS
LEFT YOU QUITE
ALONE, LITTLE ONE.
SHE HAS LEFT YOU
WITHOUT A SINGLE
GUARDIAN BUT
THE STATE.

COMPRENDE?

BUT THE STATE
IS NO ONE'S
MOTHER. YOU
CANNOT EXPECT
THE SAME
TREATMENT.



YOU MUST
FEND FOR
YOURSELF,
LITTLE ONE.

I AM
RELEASING YOU
FROM PROTECTIVE
CUSTODY AND INTO
GENERAL POPULA-
TION. THAT IS
ALL.



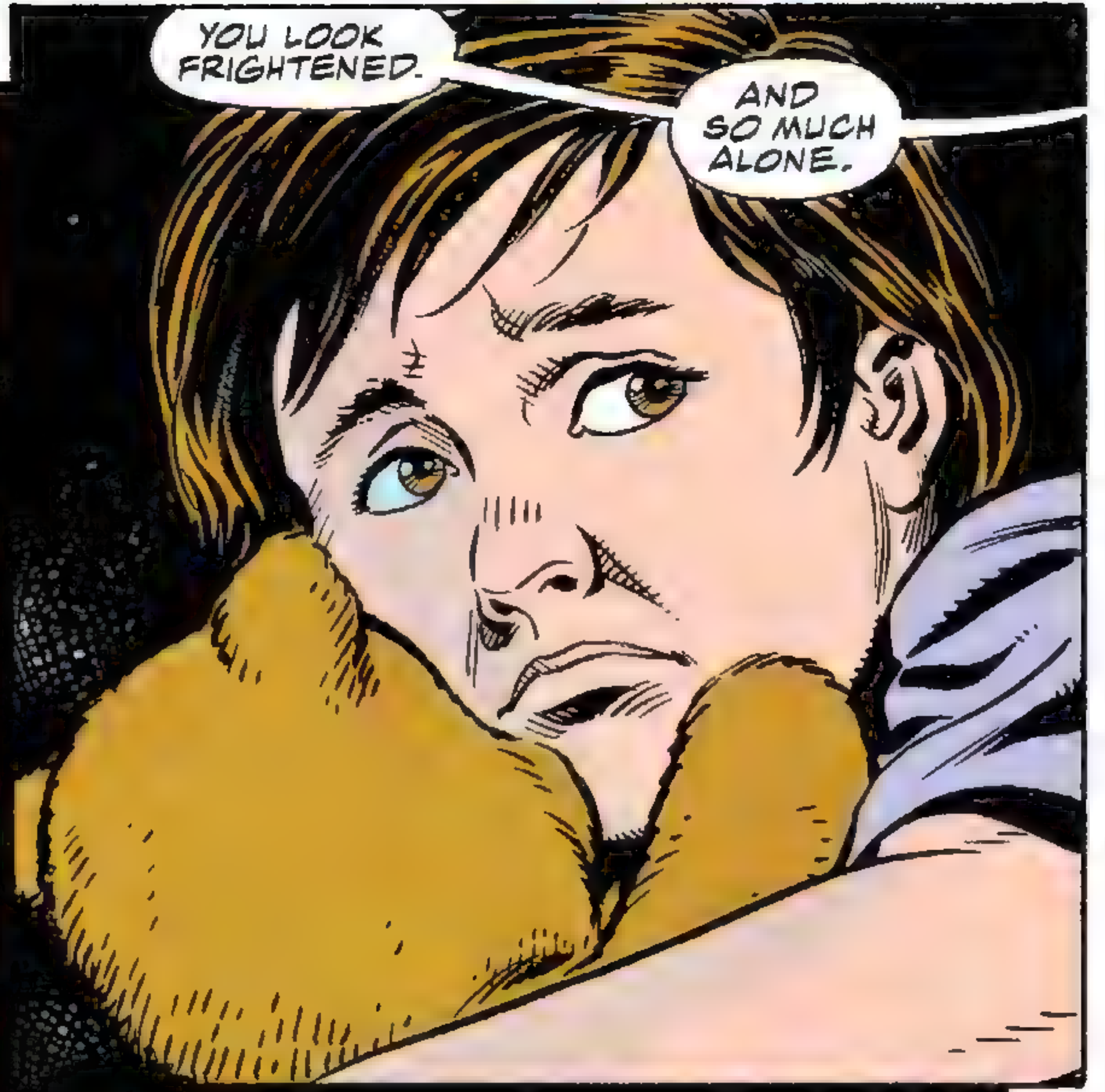
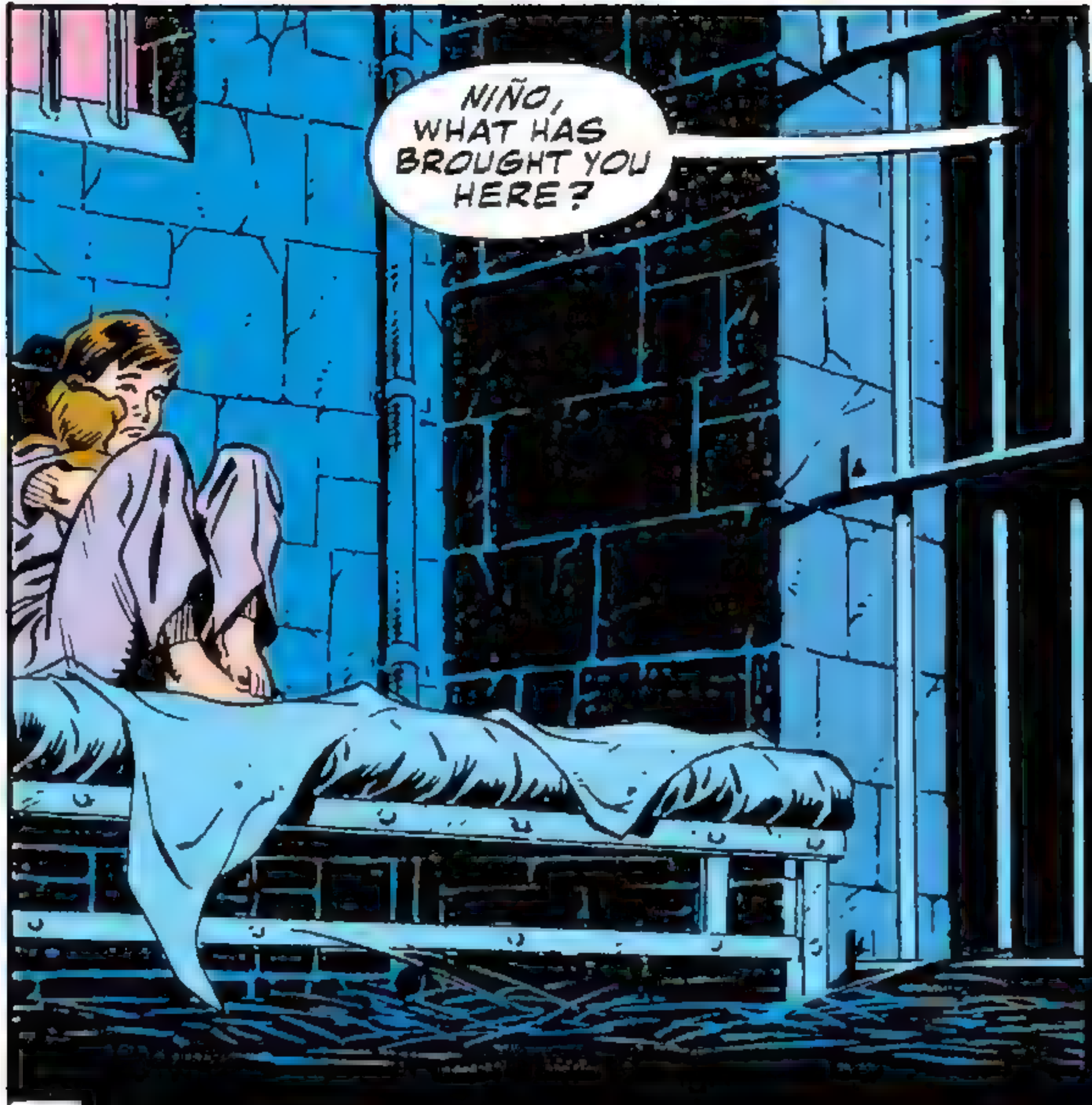
ONLY A
CHILD--

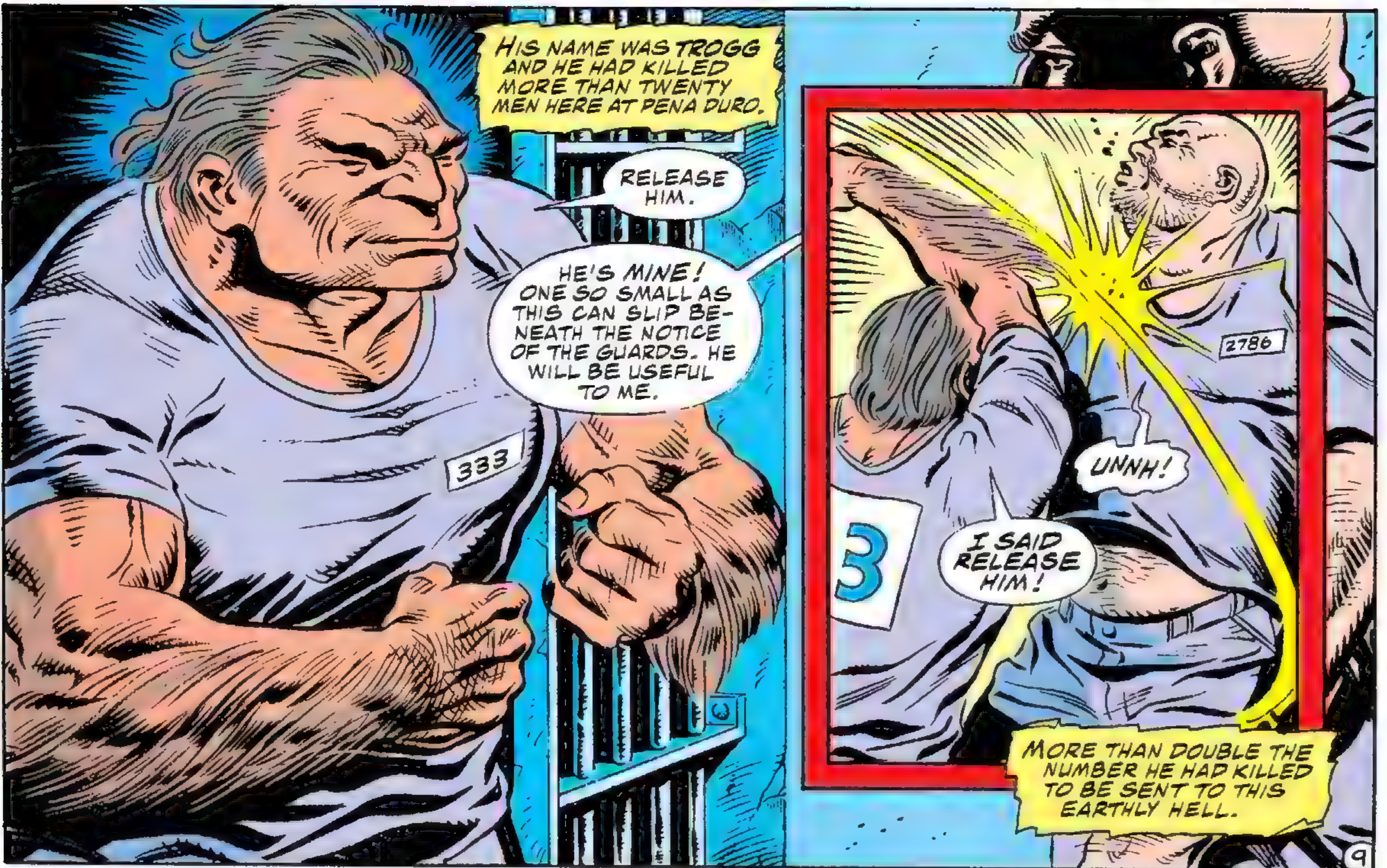
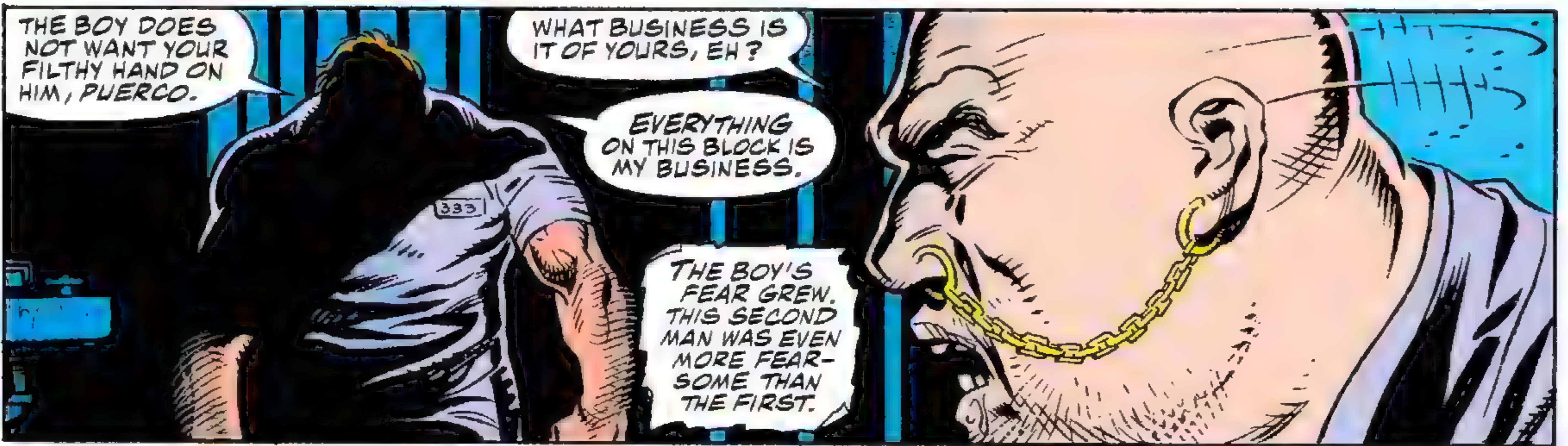
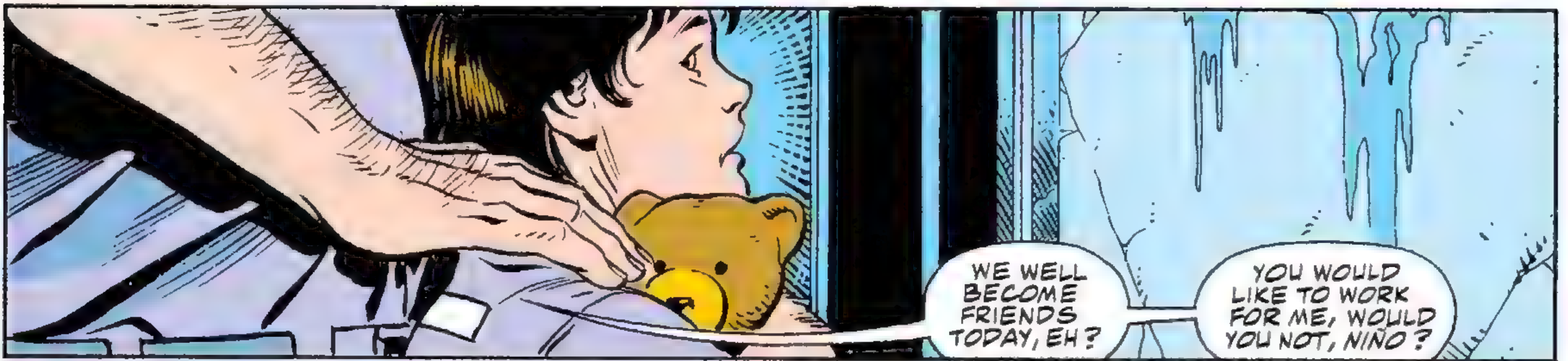
--AND SET DOWN
AMONG THE BEASTS
OF PENA DURO.

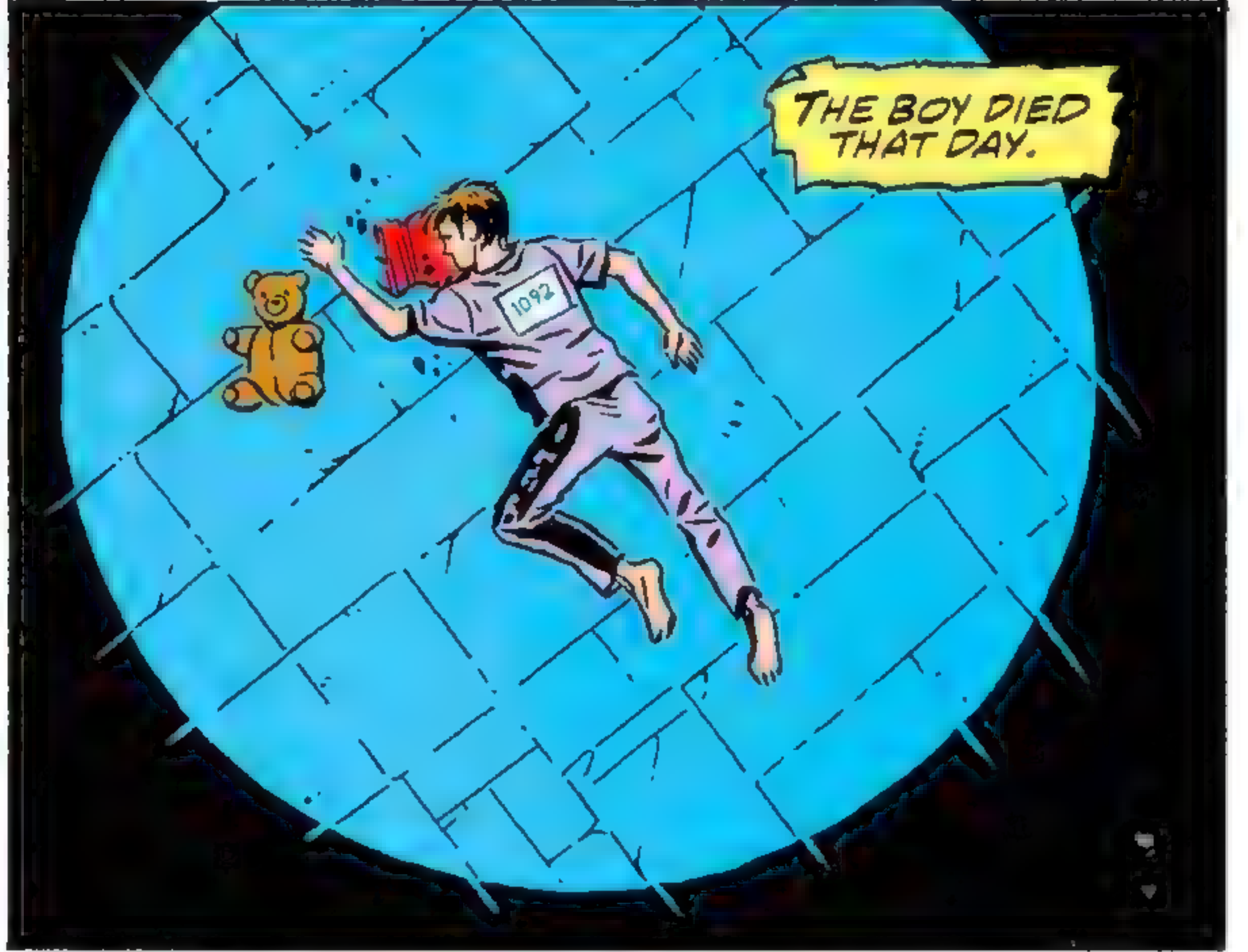
I WAS RESTRICTED
TO THE INFIRMARY
BLOCK AND COULD
NOT WATCH OVER HIM.



THE SHAME
I FELT.









ONLY MYSELF? BUT YOU ARE HERE.

WE ARE ONE. I AM AS YOU WILL BE MANY YEARS FROM NOW.

YOU ARE ME?

WHAT YOU WILL BECOME.

A PHYSICAL AND MENTAL PARAGON. THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF HUMAN SUPERIORITY. THE BLOOD OF KINGS RUNS IN YOU.

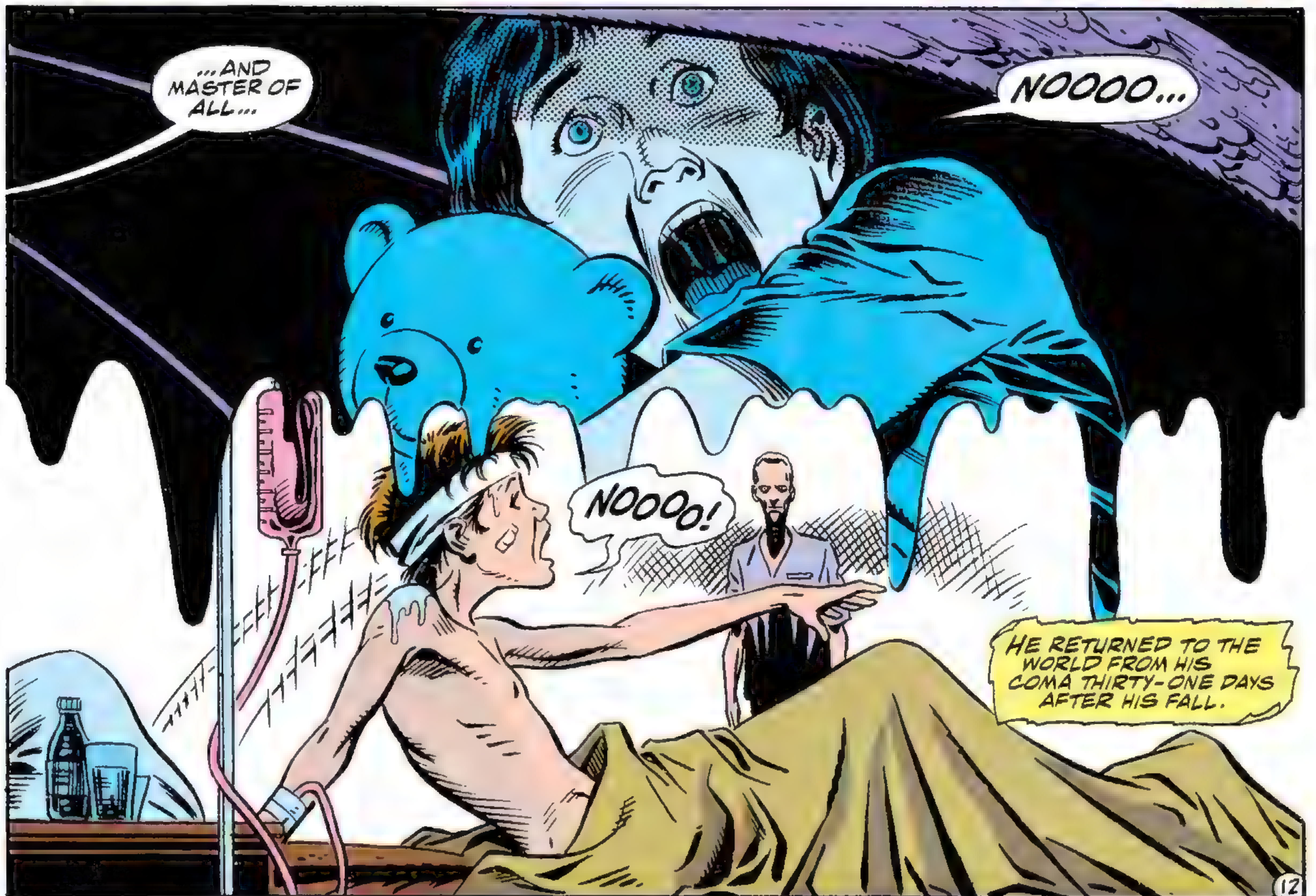
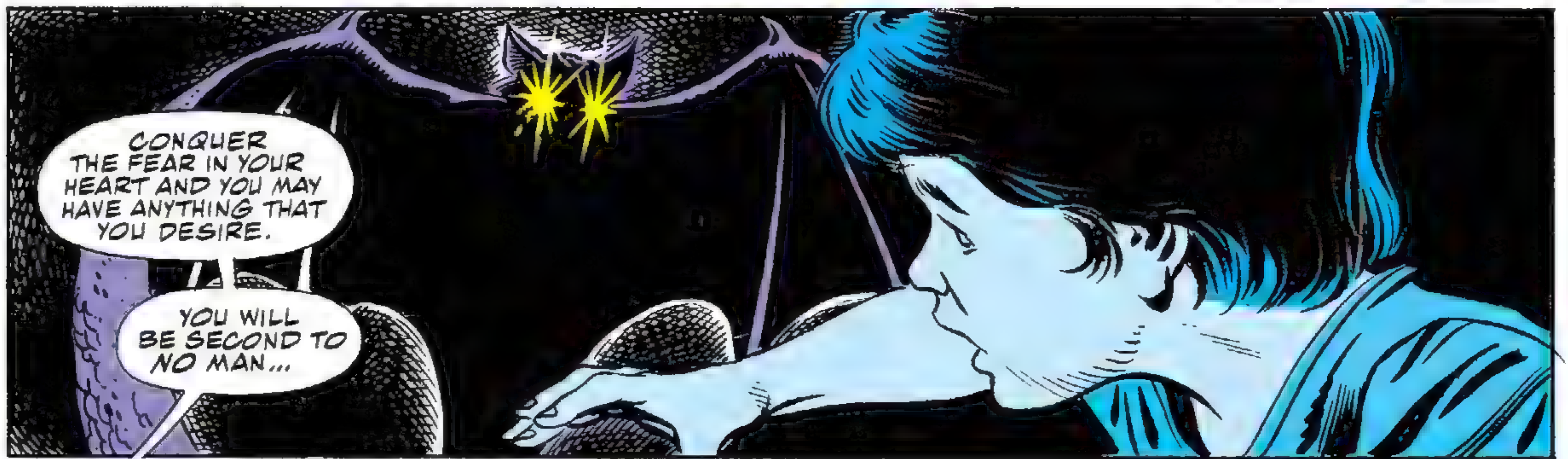
THE BLOOD OF YOUR FATHER. THE WORLD IS YOURS AND WILL BE YOURS ONE DAY. MEN WILL BE LIKE CATTLE BEFORE YOU. LIKE SHEEP.

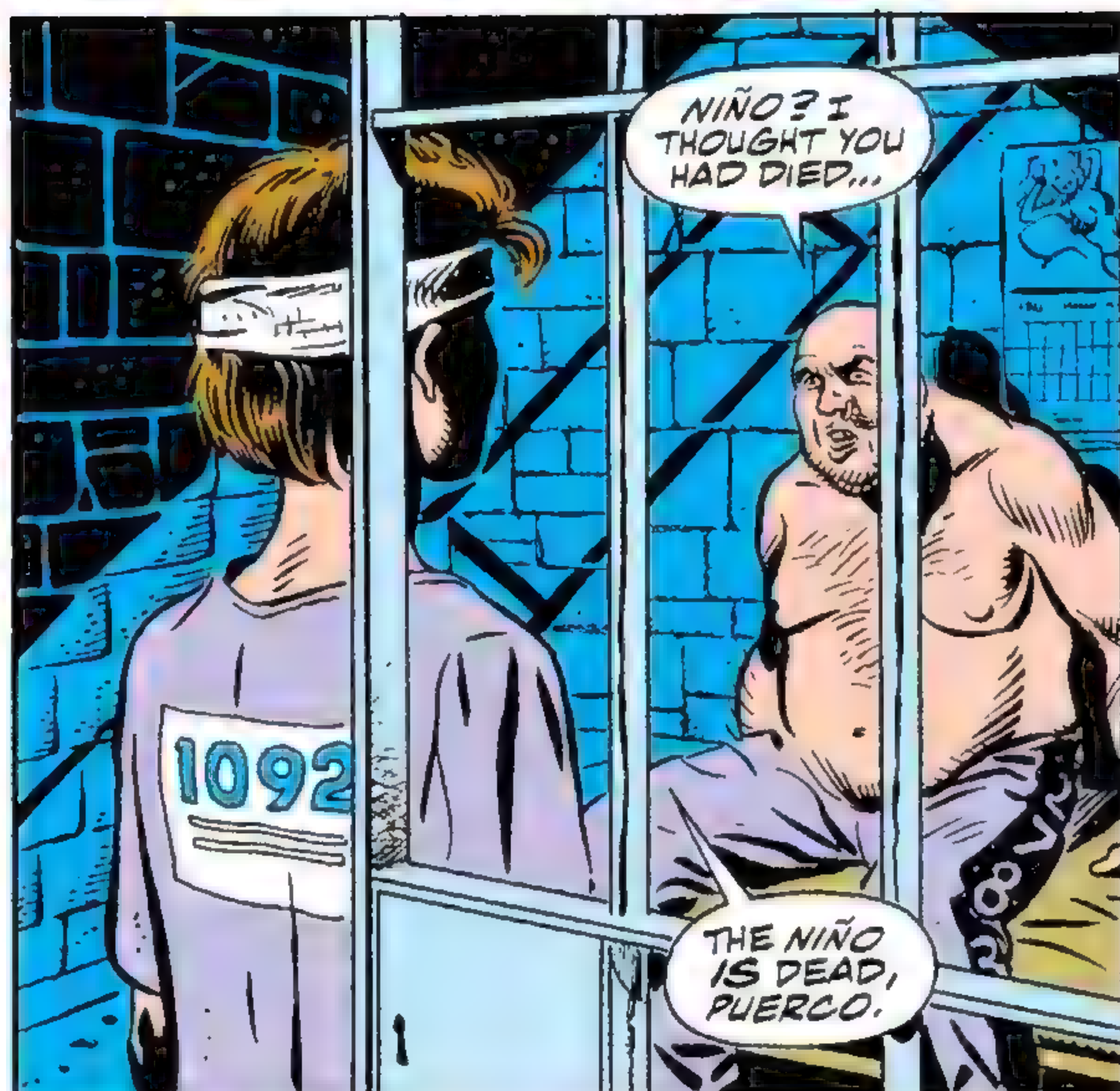
FOR ONLY A FEW MAY RULE THE MANY, AND YOU ARE ONE OF A RARE BREED.

ONLY ONE DANGER STANDS IN THE WAY OF YOUR MASTERING THE WORLD.

WHAT IS THAT?









IT WAS A SIMPLE THING TO FOLLOW THE TRAIL OF BLOOD...

IT WAS THE BOY. BY GOD, HE HAS TURNED FERAL!

I WILL NOT HAVE SUCH ABOMINATIONS IN MY PRISON. HE IS A BANE TO EVERYTHING HOLY!

AND SO HE WAS NAMED.



THE CHAINS ARE TOO BIG.

THE WEAPON, JEFE. IT IS COVERED IN BLOOD, AS THE BOY IS.

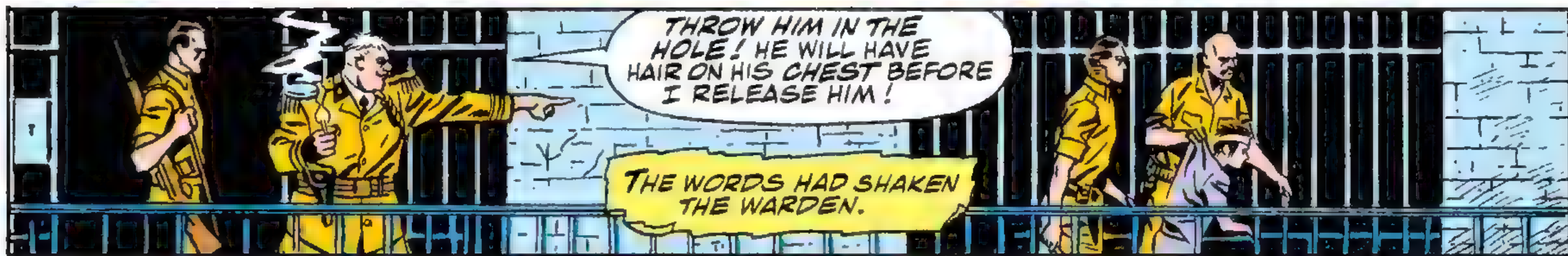


THROW HIM IN THE CAVIDAD OSCURO. THE CHAINS WILL FIT SNUG BEFORE HE SEES THE LIGHT OF THE SUN AGAIN.

I SPOKE TO MY MOTHER LAST NIGHT, MI CARCELERO...

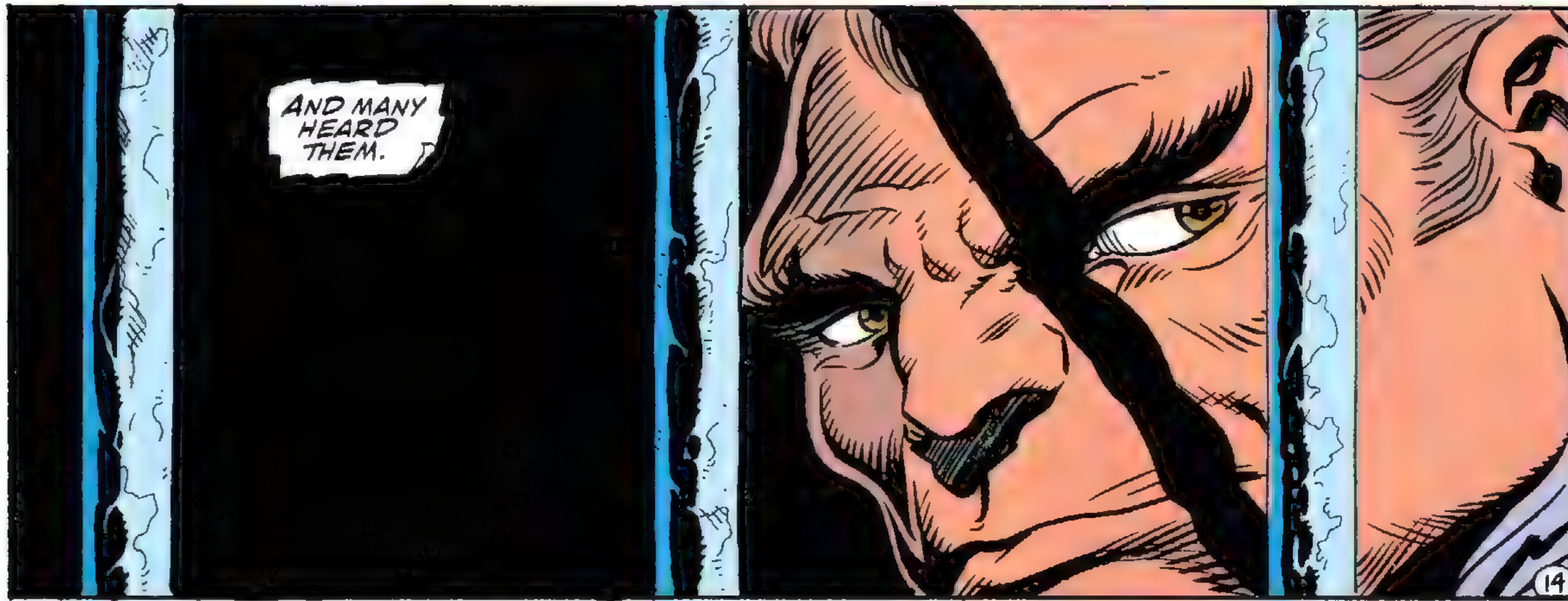


...SHE SAYS THEY STOKED A SPECIAL FIRE FOR YOU.

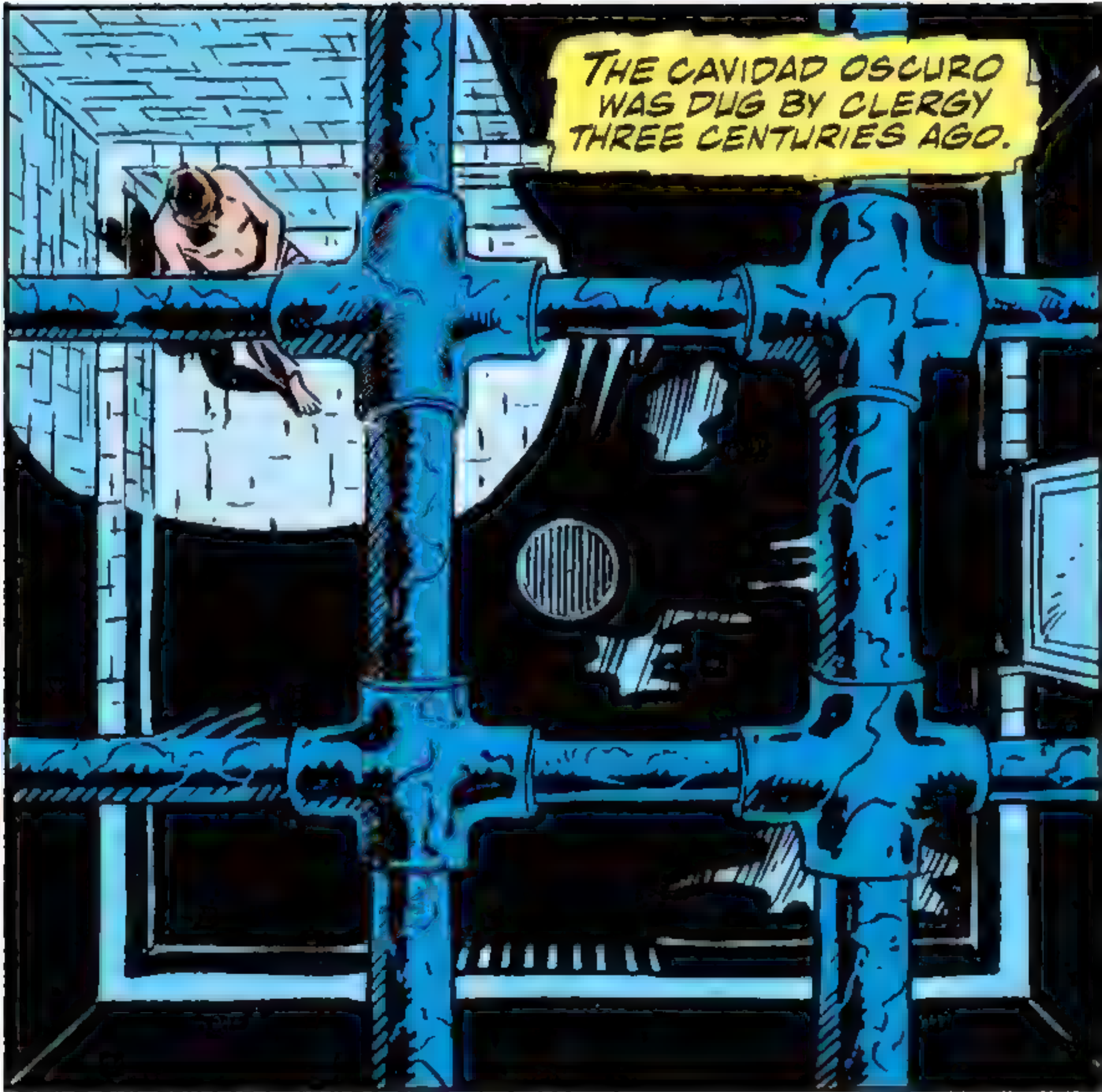


THROW HIM IN THE HOLE! HE WILL HAVE HAIR ON HIS CHEST BEFORE I RELEASE HIM!

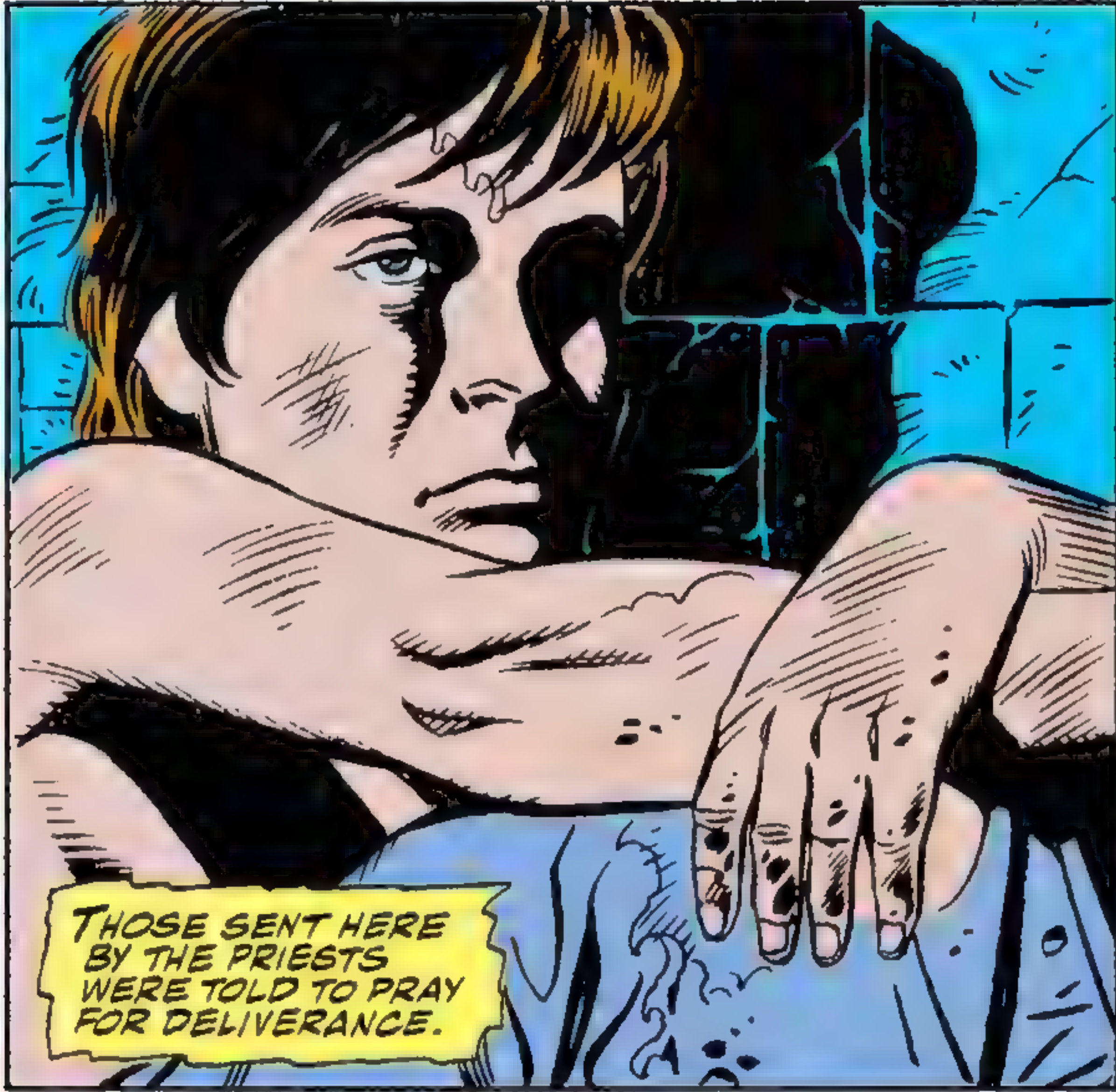
THE WORDS HAD SHAKEN THE WARDEN.



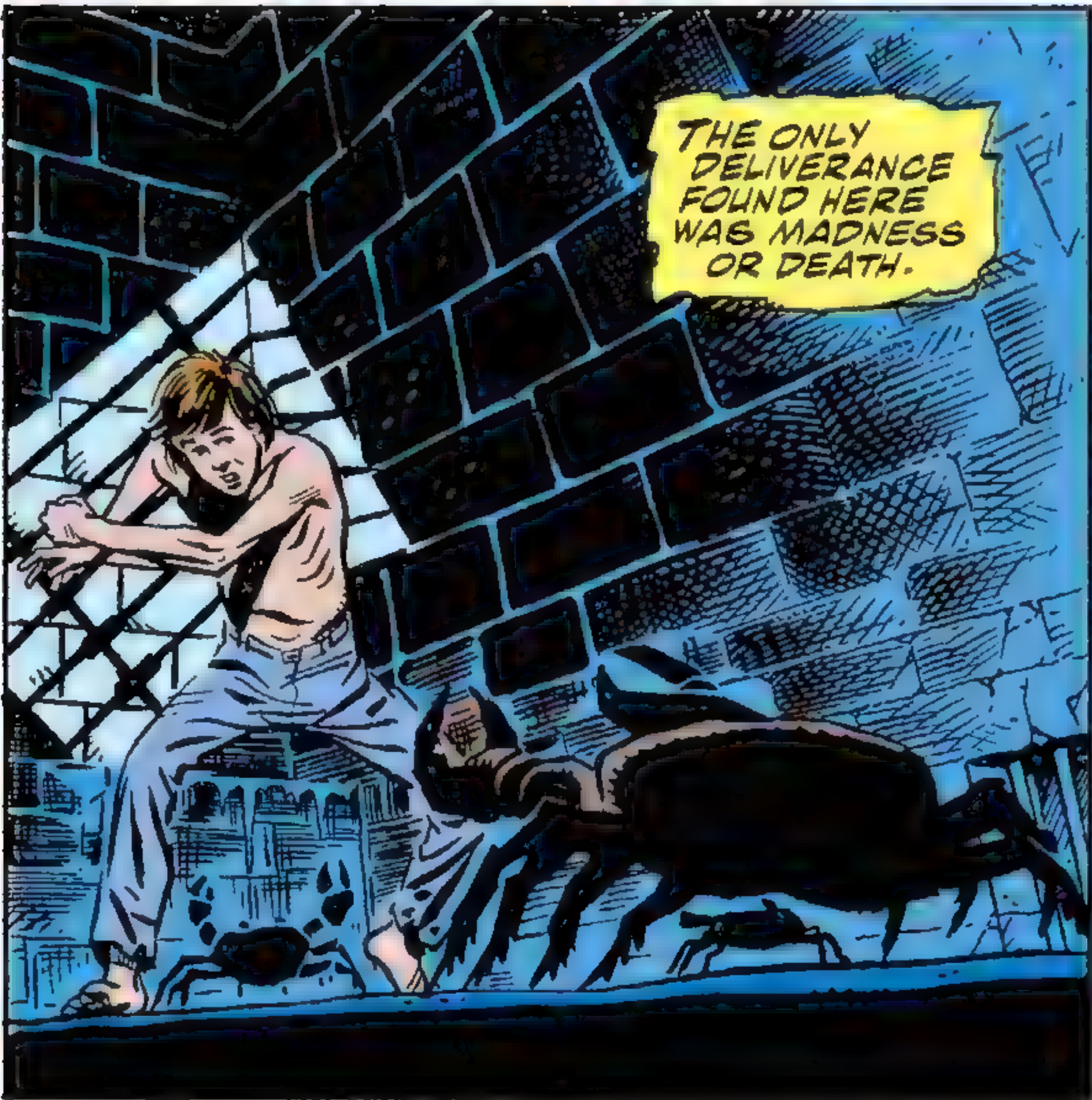
AND MANY HEARD THEM.



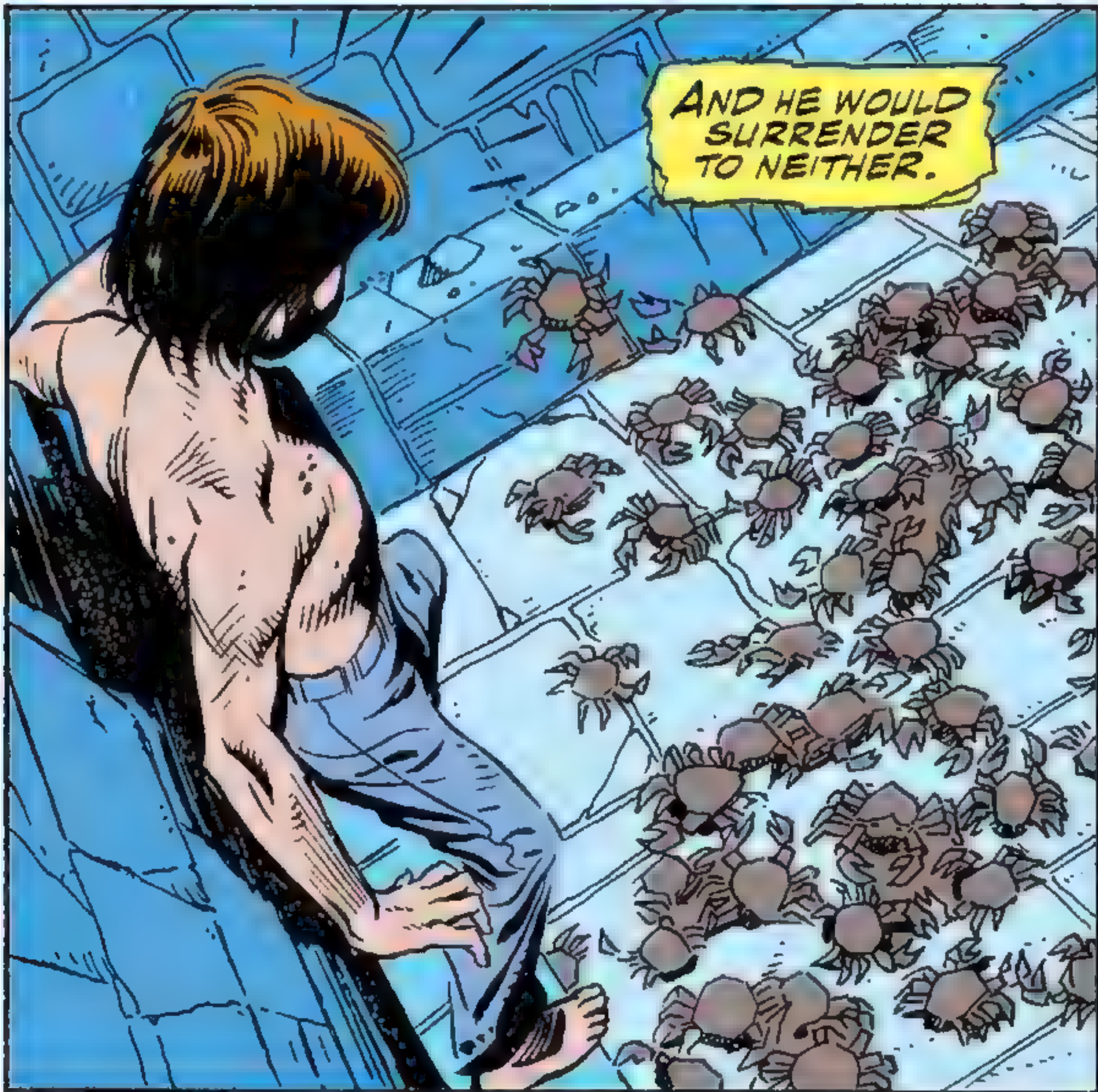
THE CAVIDAD OSCURO
WAS DUG BY CLERGY
THREE CENTURIES AGO.



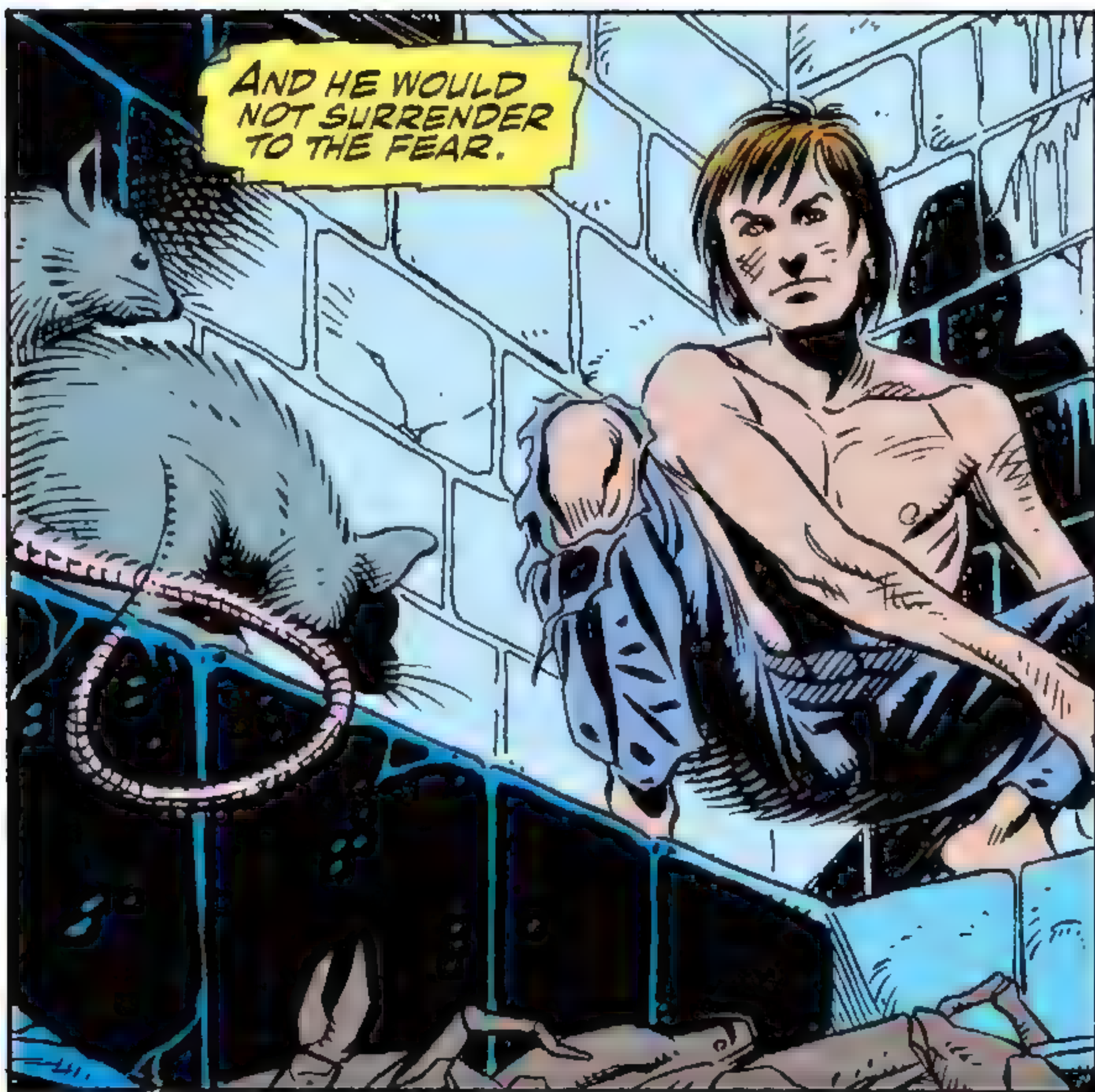
THOSE SENT HERE
BY THE PRIESTS
WERE TOLD TO PRAY
FOR DELIVERANCE.



THE ONLY
DELIVERANCE
FOUND HERE
WAS MADNESS
OR DEATH.



AND HE WOULD
SURRENDER
TO NEITHER.

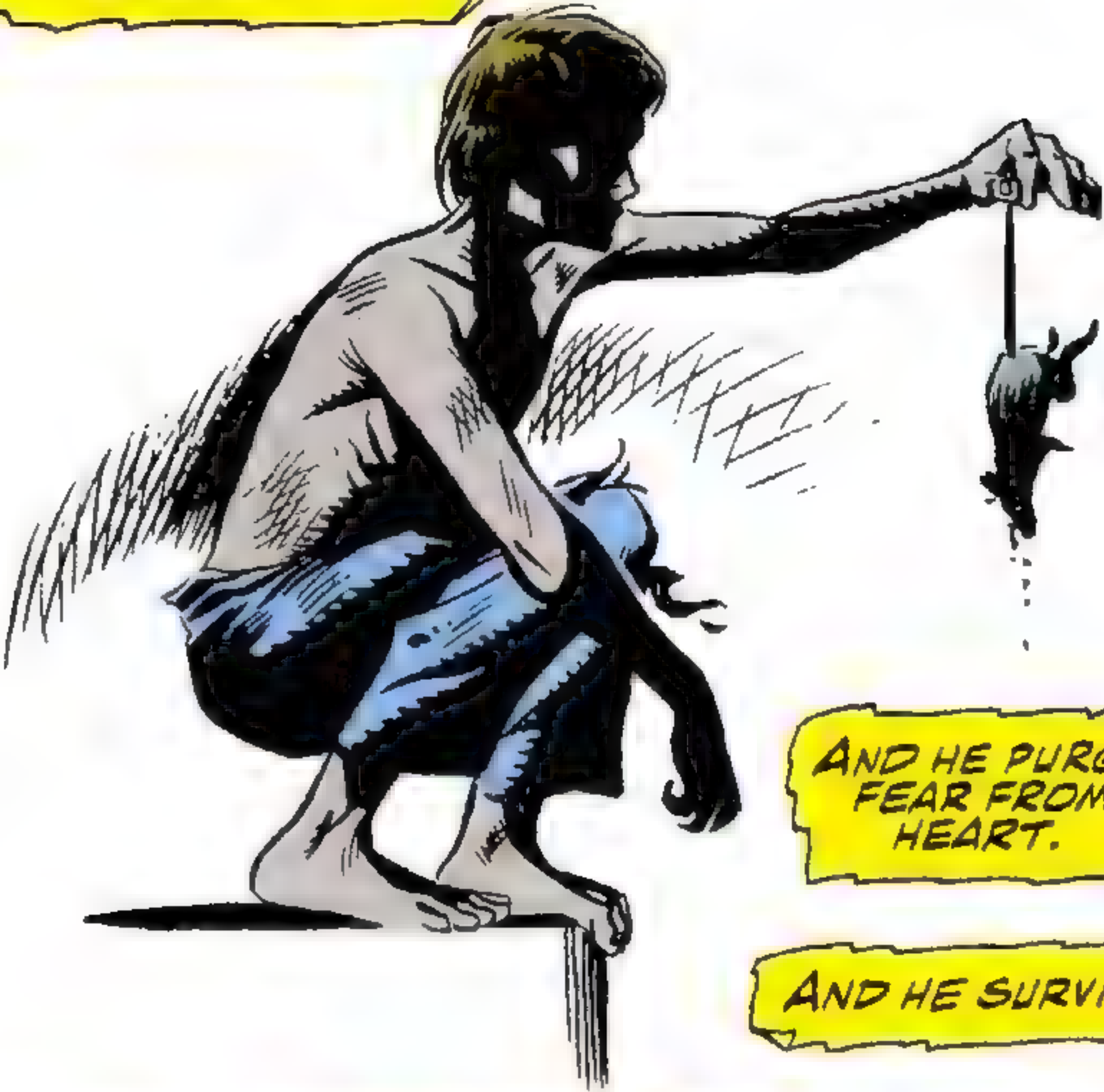


AND HE WOULD
NOT SURRENDER
TO THE FEAR.



HE WOULD
BECOME
FEAR.

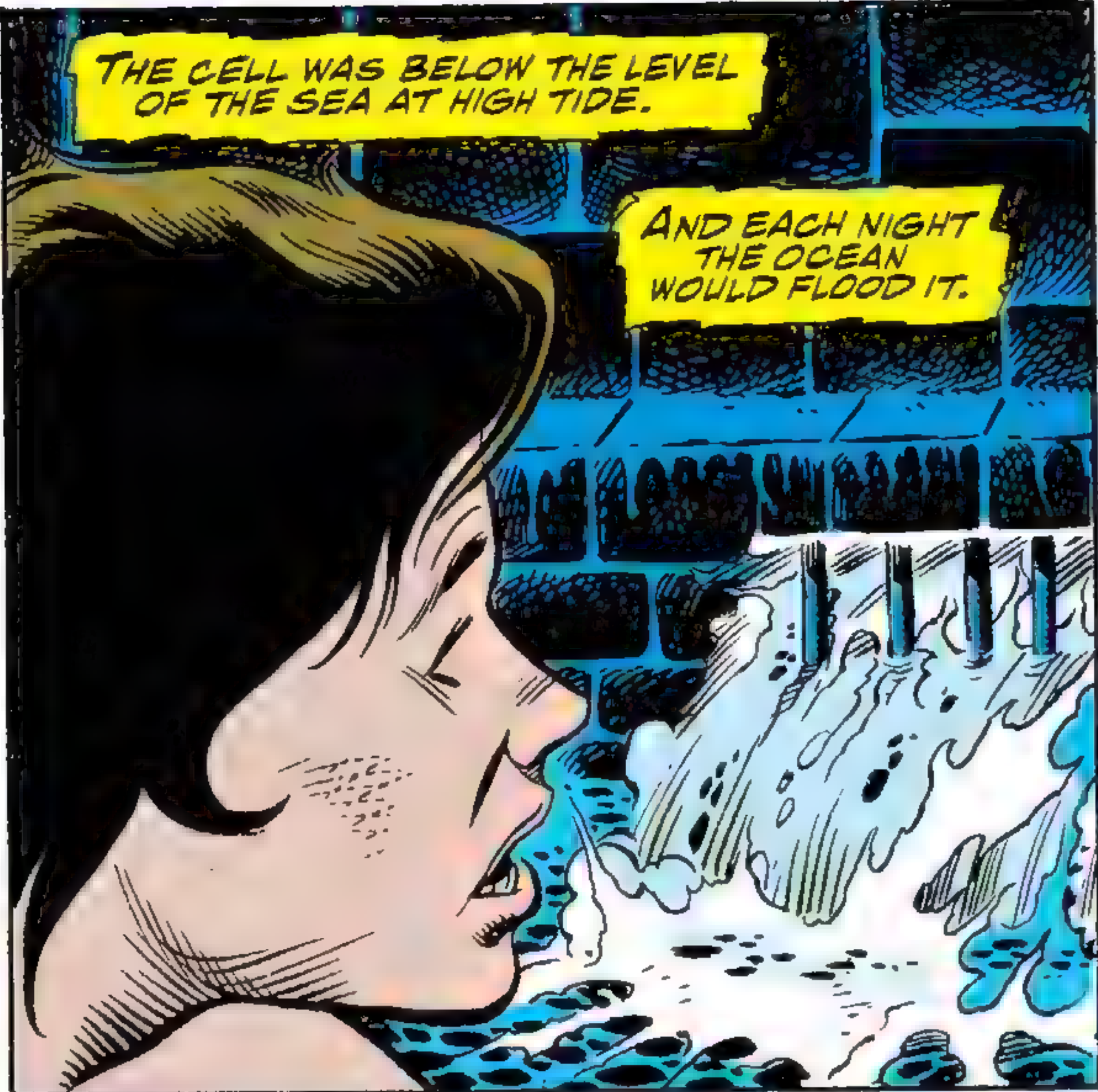
HE STARED INTO THE DARKNESS OF THAT PIT AND BECAME A PART OF IT.



AND HE PURGED FEAR FROM HIS HEART.

AND HE SURVIVED.

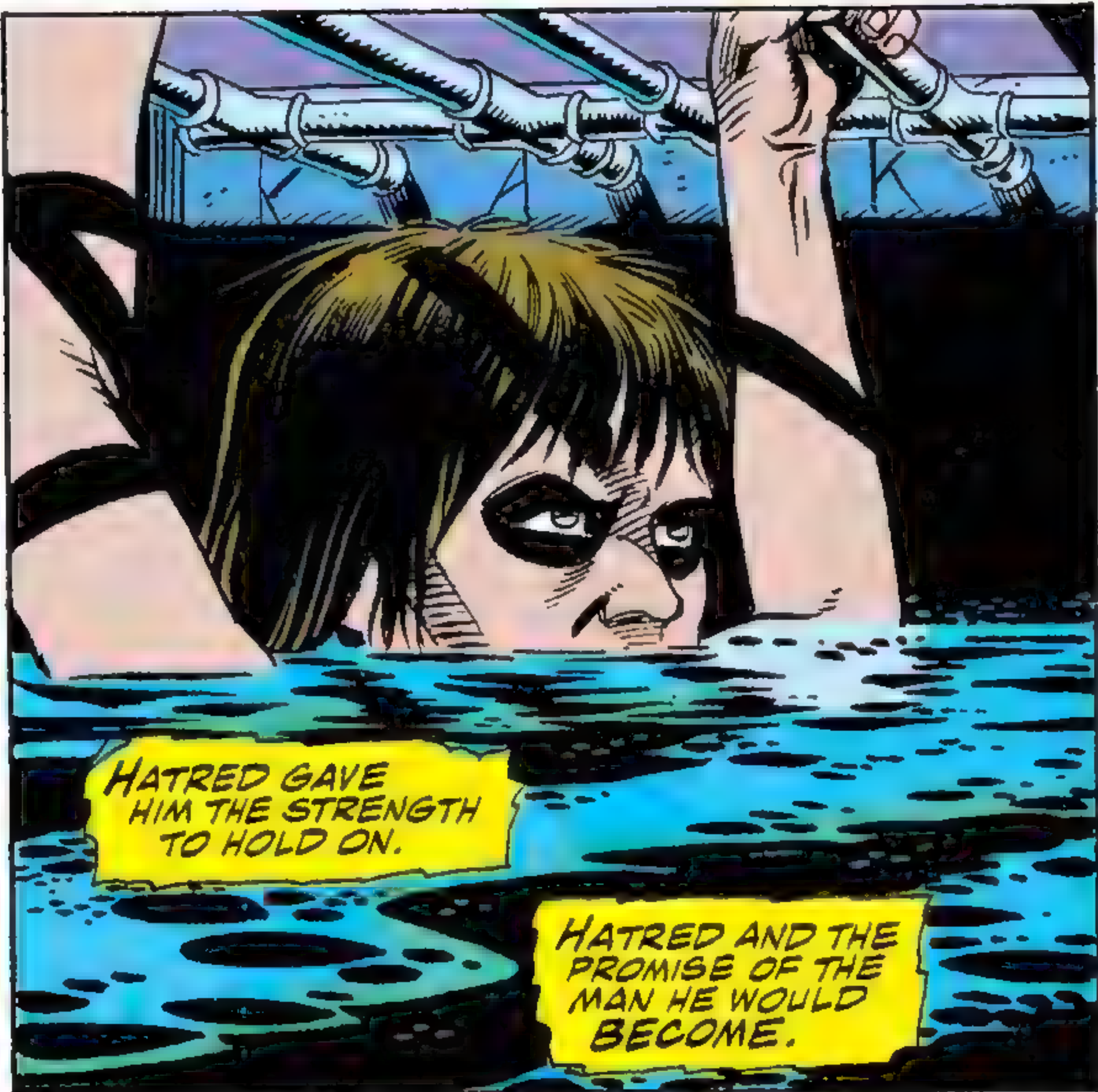
THE CELL WAS BELOW THE LEVEL OF THE SEA AT HIGH TIDE.



AND EACH NIGHT THE OCEAN WOULD FLOOD IT.

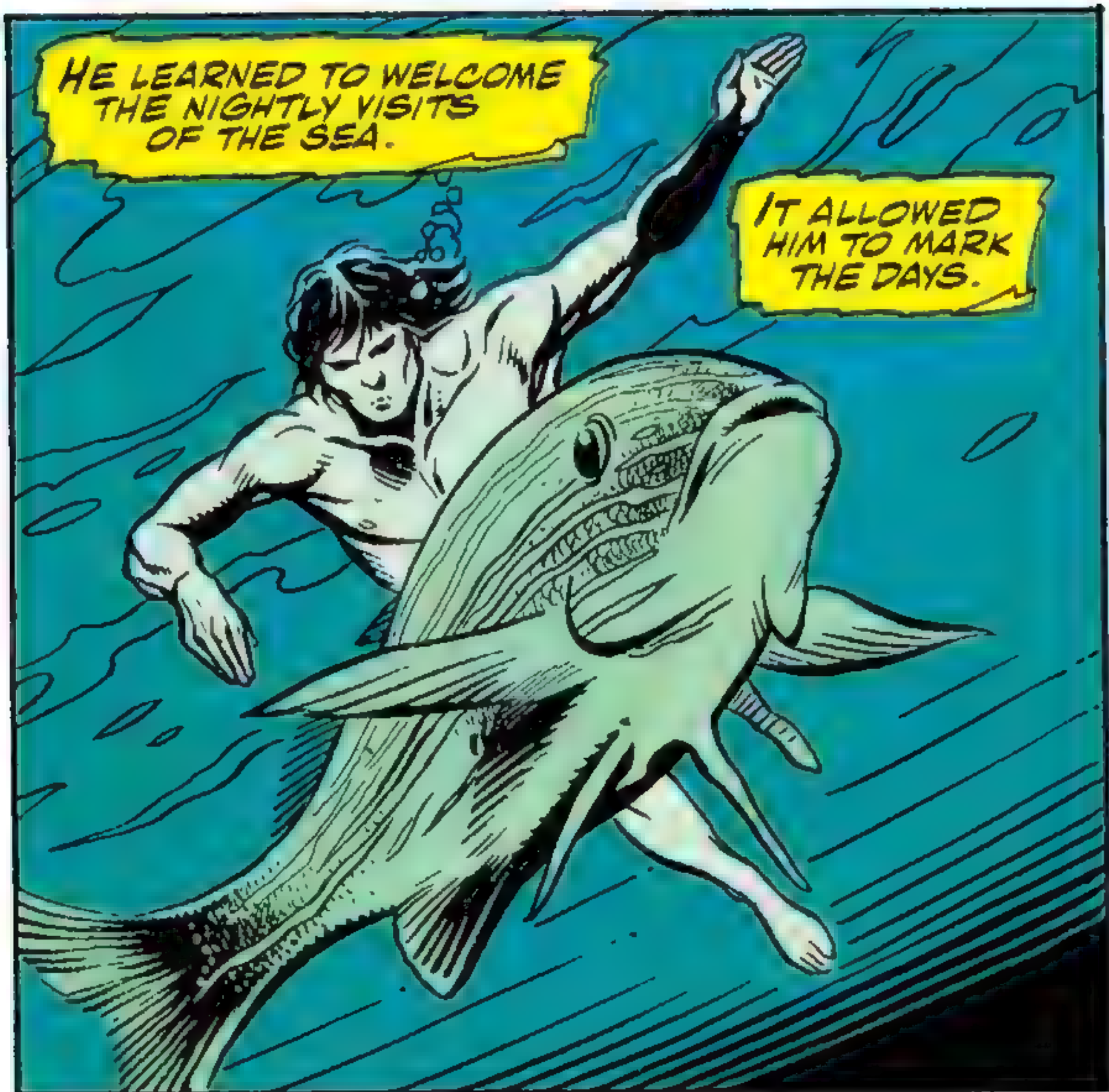


AND EACH NIGHT HE WOULD FIGHT FOR HIS LIFE.



HATRED GAVE HIM THE STRENGTH TO HOLD ON.

HATRED AND THE PROMISE OF THE MAN HE WOULD BECOME.



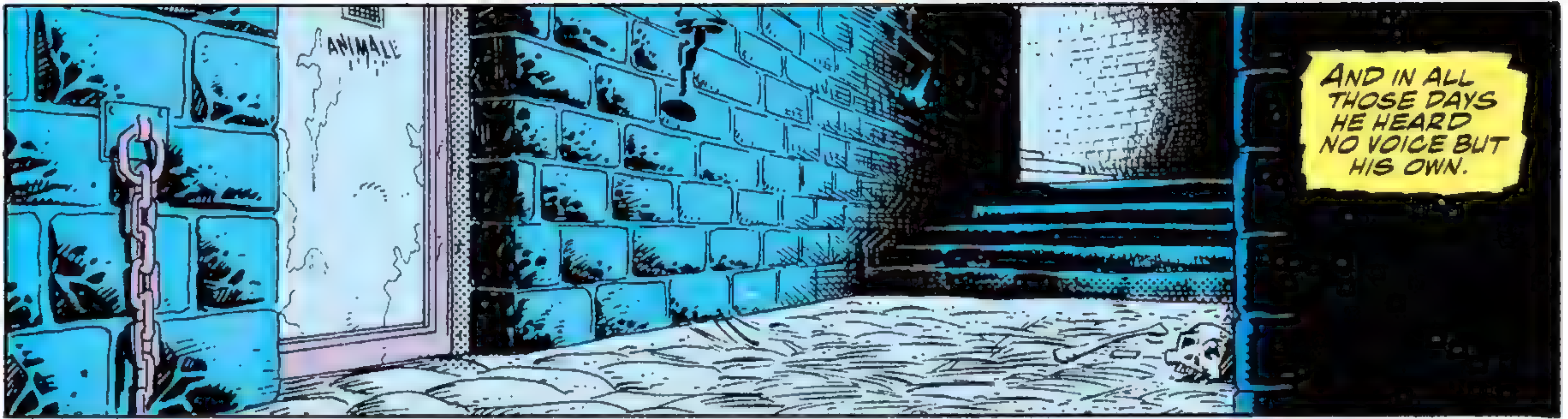
HE LEARNED TO WELCOME THE NIGHTLY VISITS OF THE SEA.

IT ALLOWED HIM TO MARK THE DAYS.



IT BROUGHT HIM FOOD.

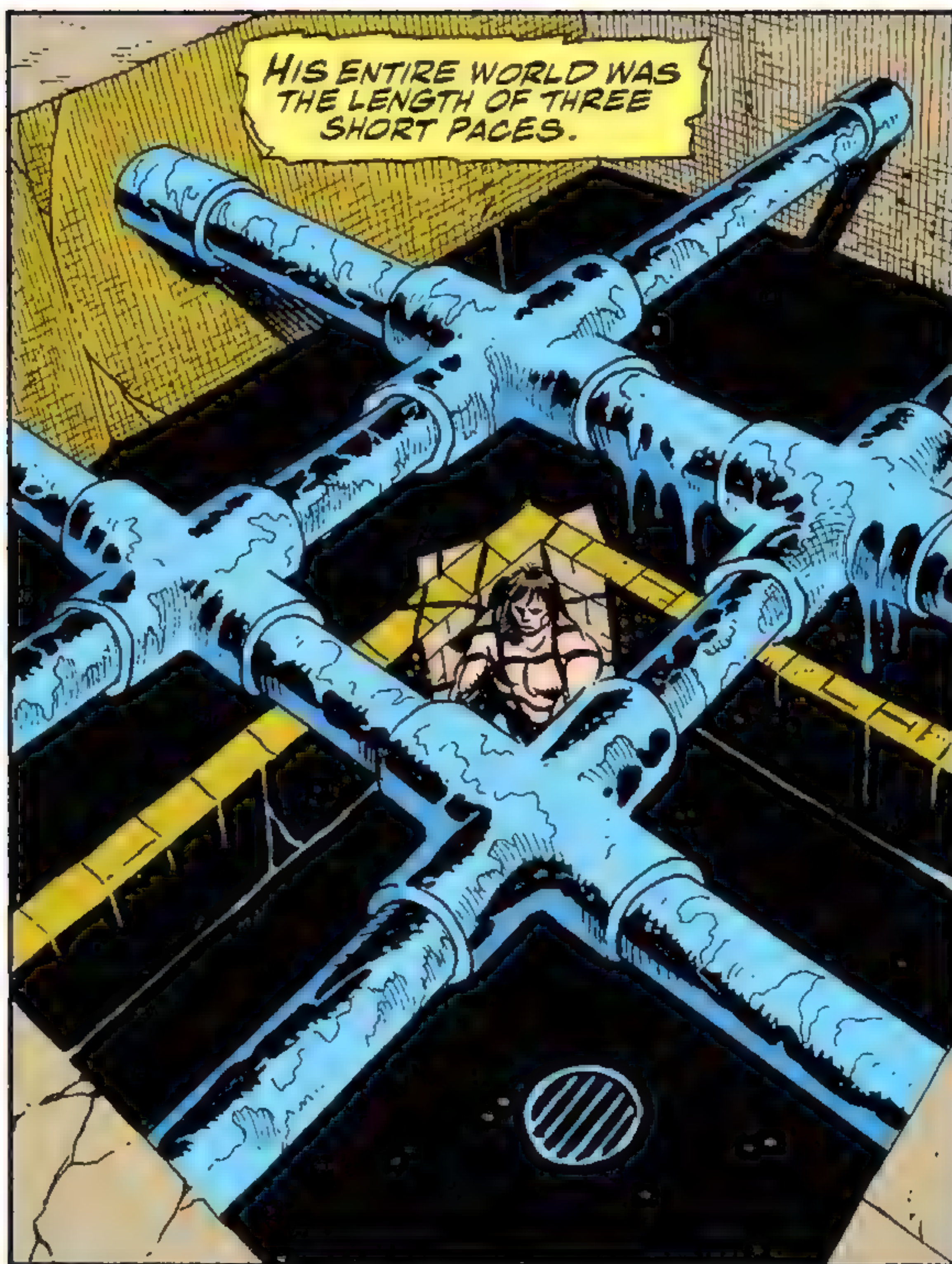
IT BROUGHT HIM LIFE.



AND IN ALL
THOSE DAYS
HE HEARD
NO VOICE BUT
HIS OWN.



WELDED INTO
A FIVE-BY-TEN-
FOOT CELL.

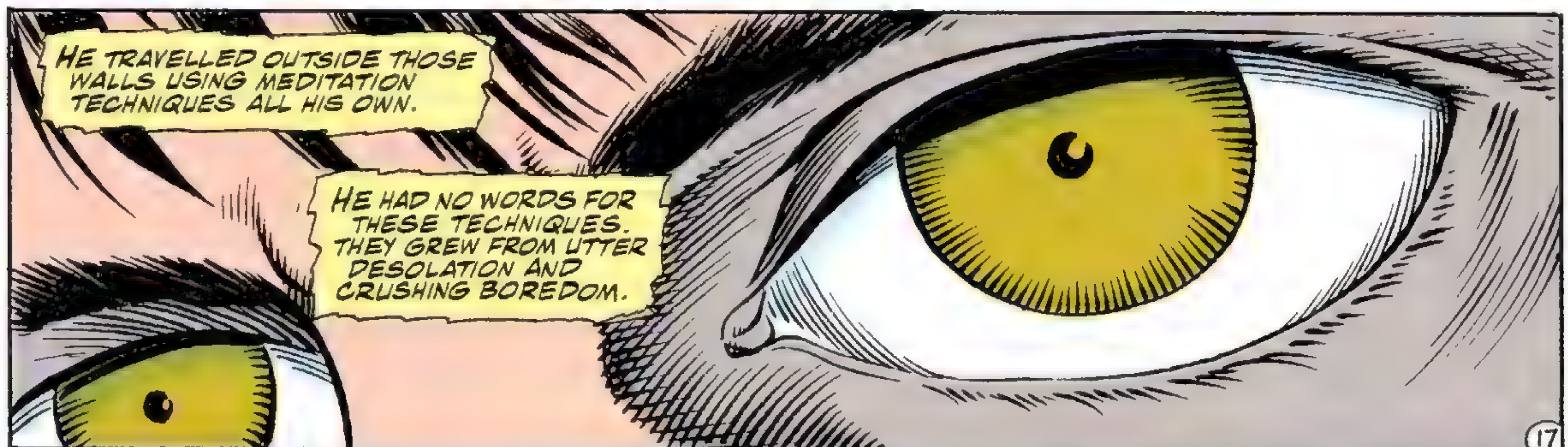


HIS ENTIRE WORLD WAS
THE LENGTH OF THREE
SHORT PACES.



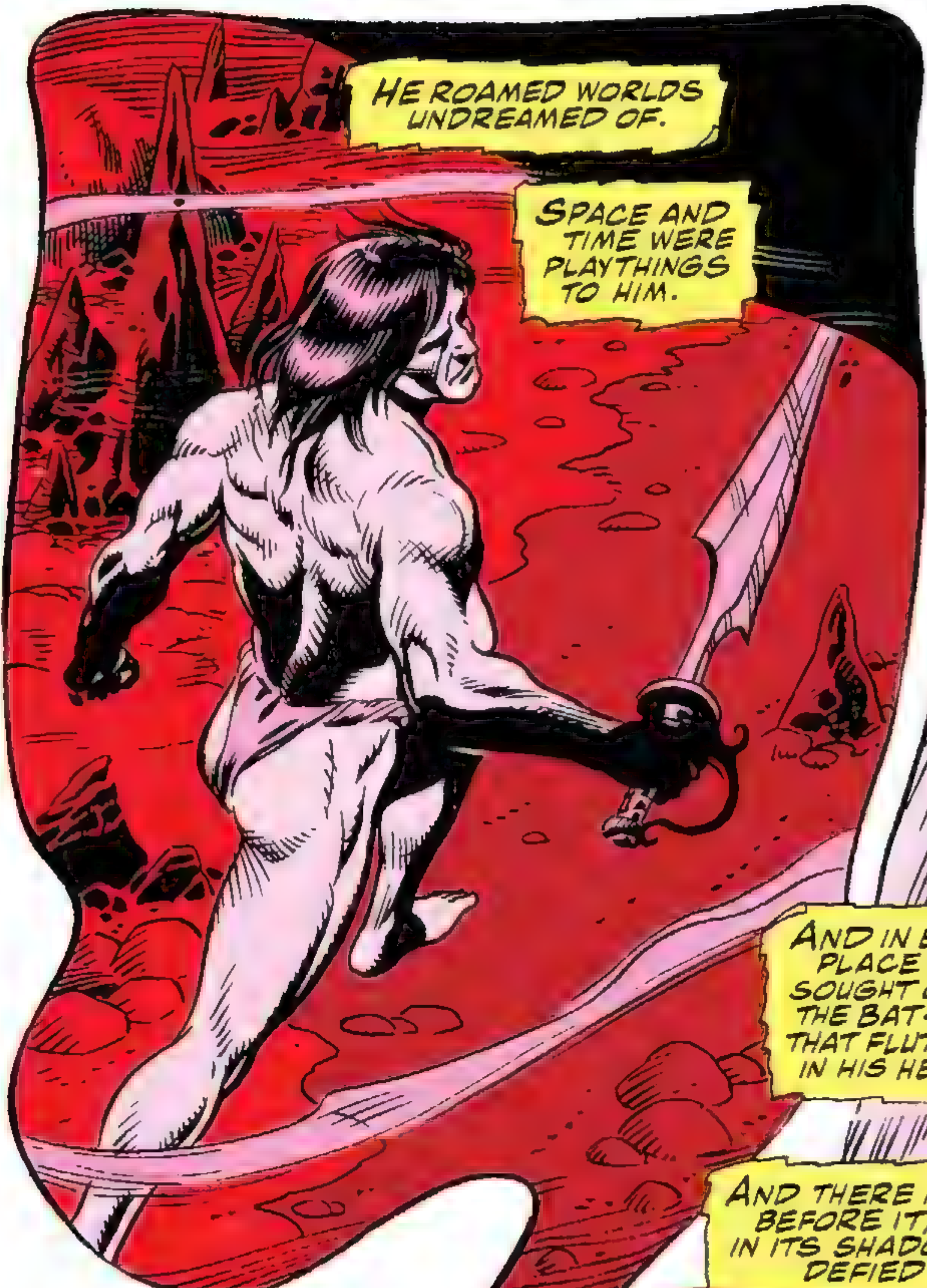
THEY COULD
NOT CONFIN
HIS MIND.

IN HIS MIND
HE TRAVELLED
BEYOND HIS
TOMB.



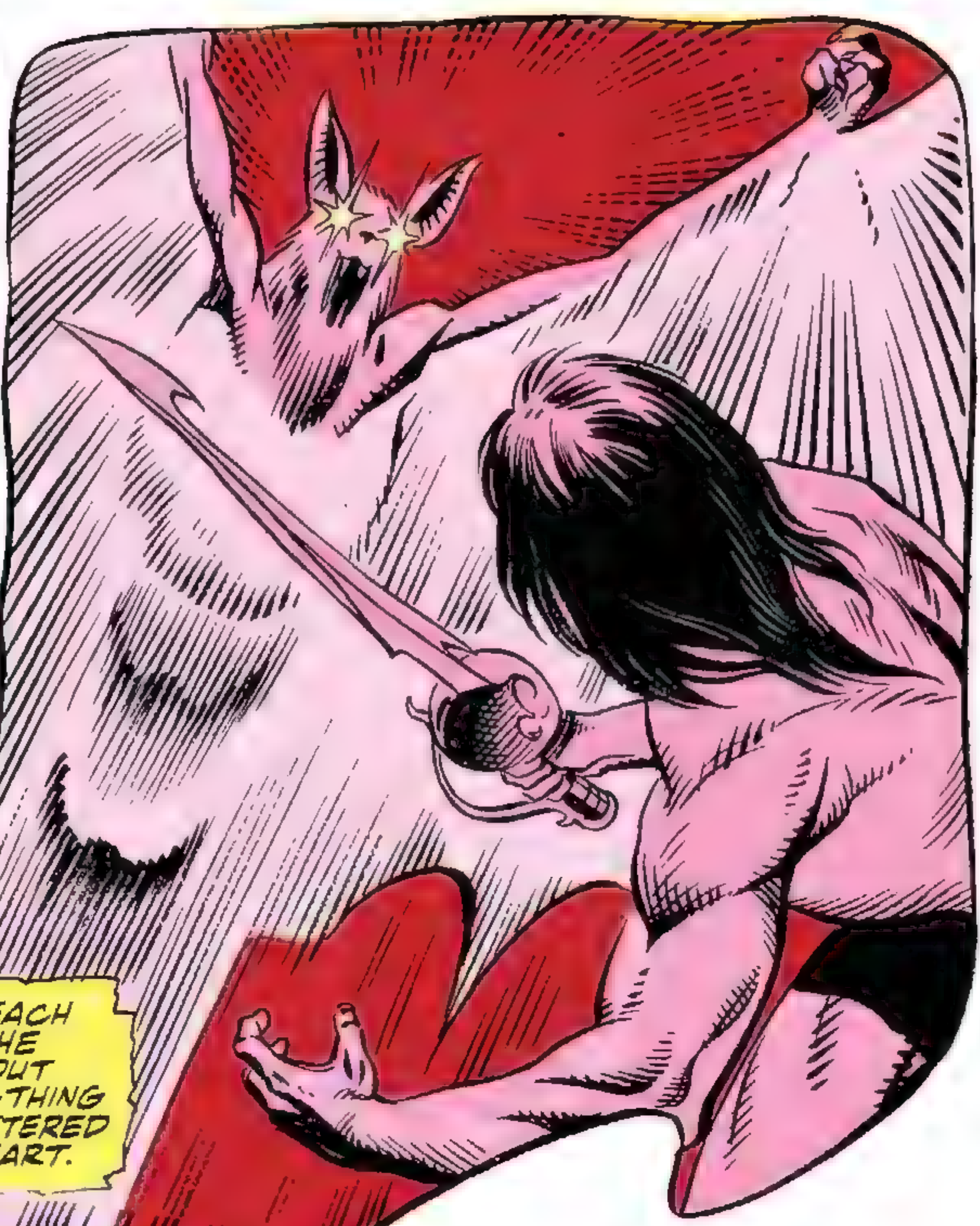
HE TRAVELLED OUTSIDE THOSE
WALLS USING MEDITATION
TECHNIQUES ALL HIS OWN.

HE HAD NO WORDS FOR
THESE TECHNIQUES.
THEY GREW FROM UTTER
DESOLATION AND
CRUSHING BOREDOM.

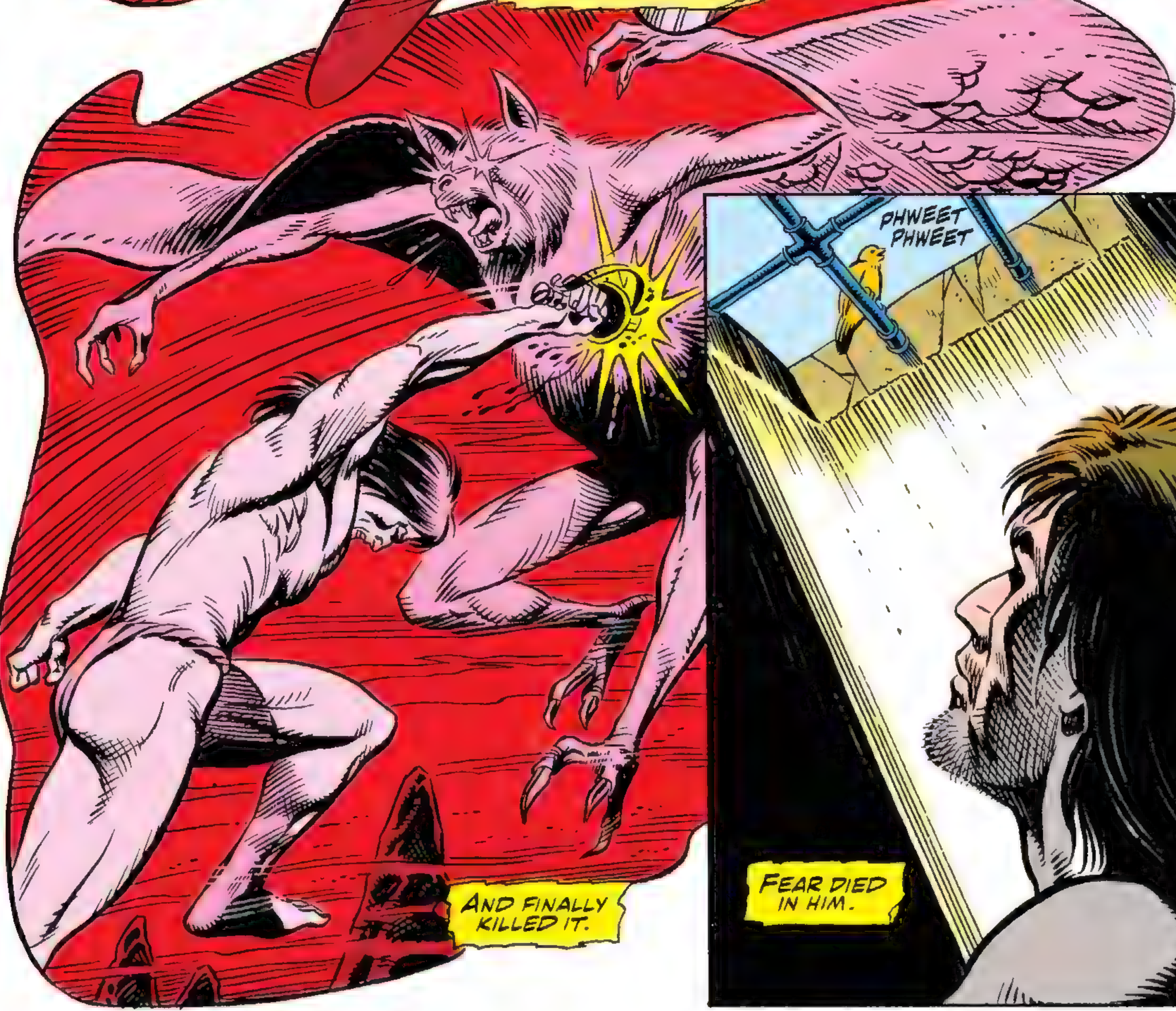


HE ROAMED WORLDS
UNDREAMED OF.

SPACE AND
TIME WERE
PLAYTHINGS
TO HIM.



AND IN EACH
PLACE HE
SOUGHT OUT
THE BAT-THING
THAT FLUTTERED
IN HIS HEART.



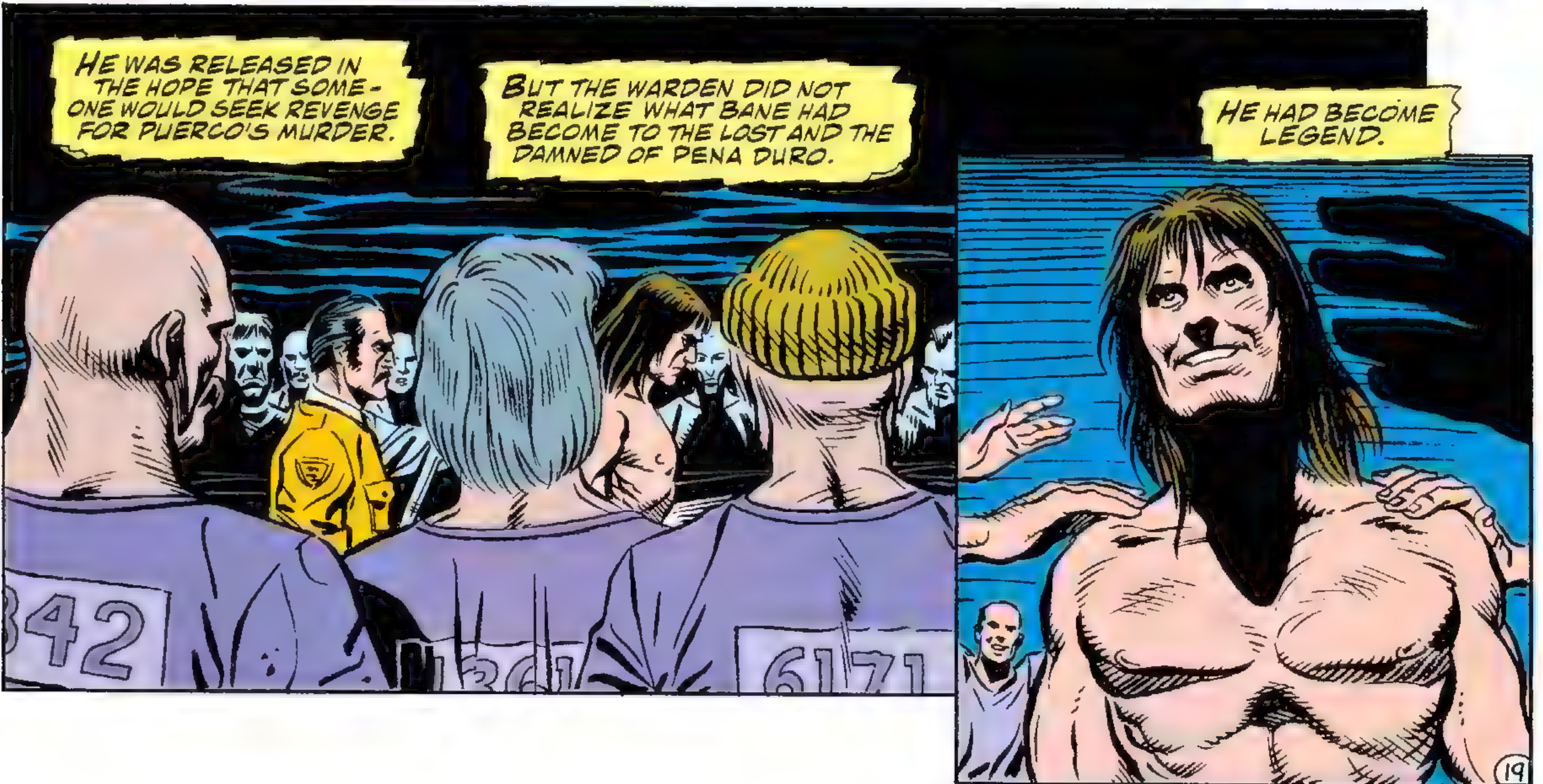
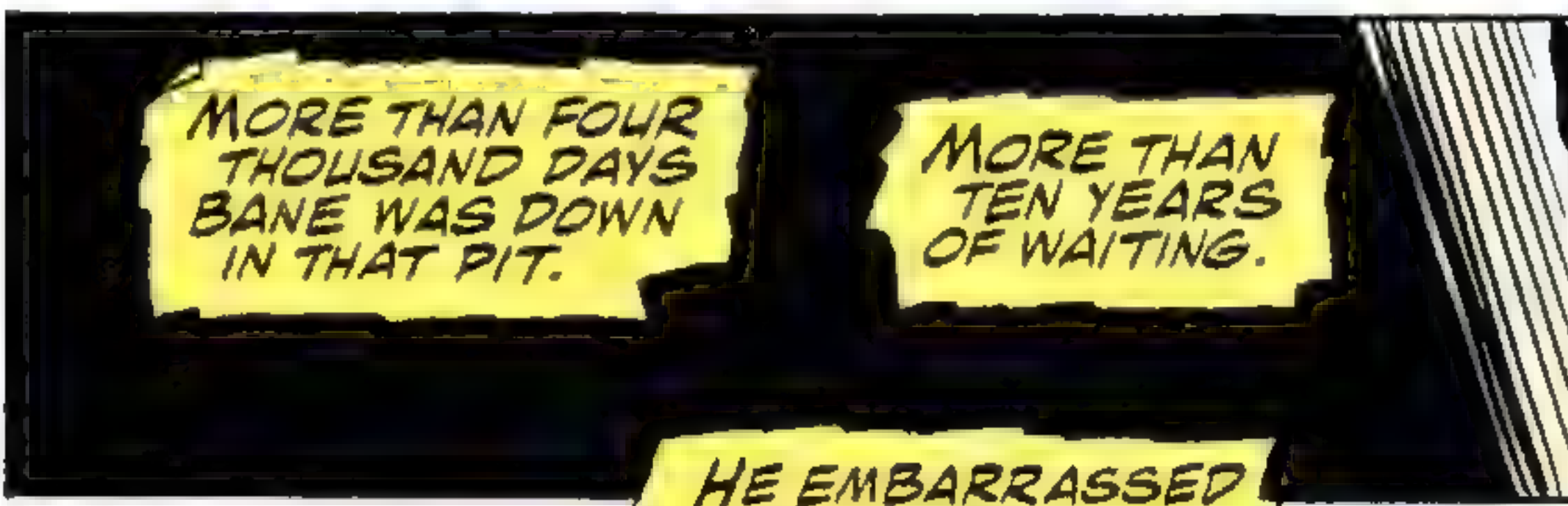
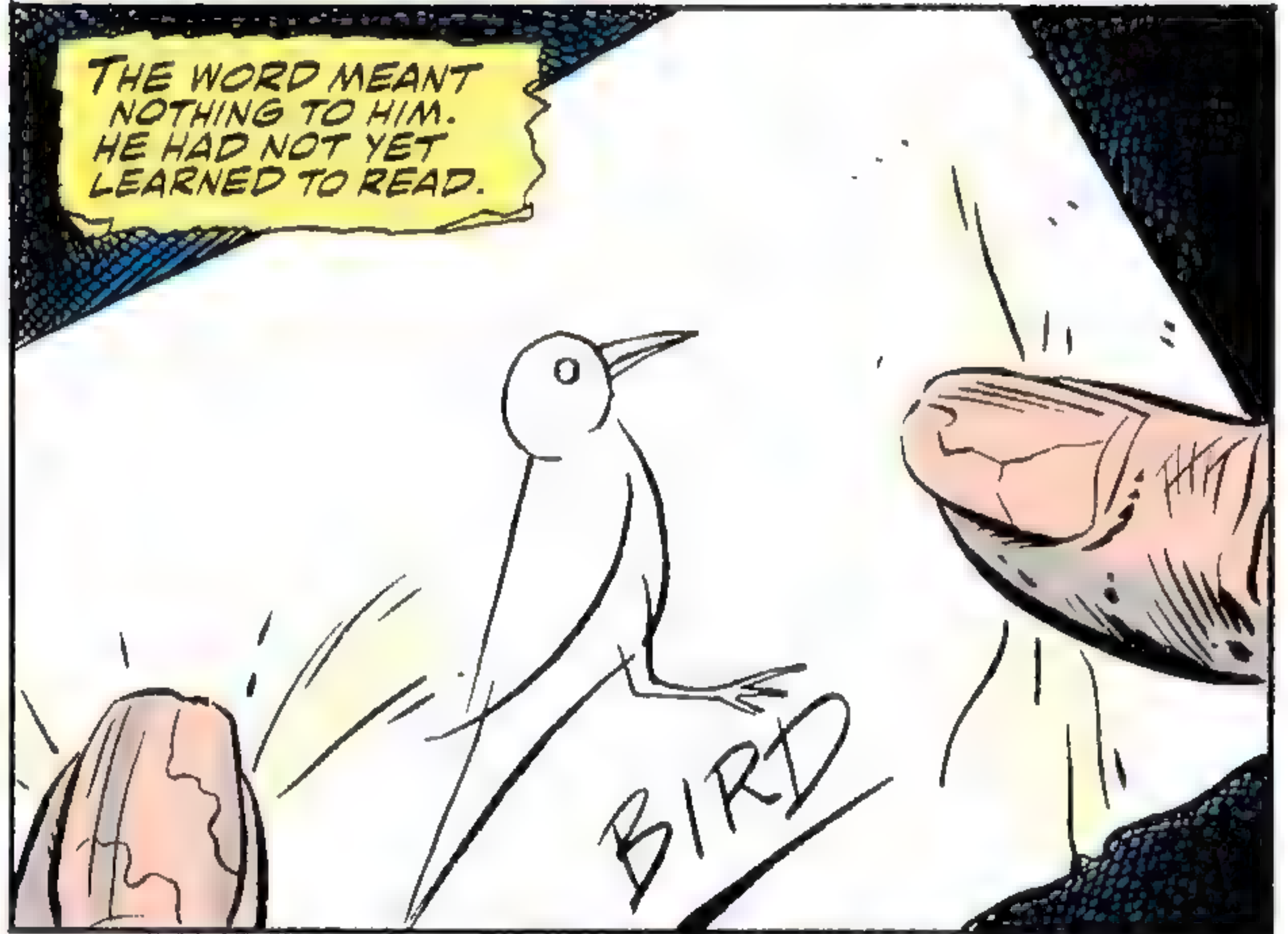
AND THERE HE STOOD
BEFORE IT, STOOD
IN ITS SHADOW AND
DEFIED IT.

AND FINALLY
KILLED IT.



PHWEET
PHWEET

FEAR DIED
IN HIM.







BANE BECAME A MODEL PRISONER... A TAME ANIMAL.

THE WARDEN ALLOWED HIM TO WORK IN THE LIBRARY. ONCE, PART OF THE PRISON HAD BEEN A MONASTERY.

THE MONKS HAD THOUSANDS OF BOOKS...



... AND THE BOOKS BROUGHT THE WORLD TO HIM.

BIRD TAUGHT HIM TO READ.



SOON, HE WAS READING THREE BOOKS A DAY.

HE HAD LEARNED TO READ IN SIX LANGUAGES.



THERE WAS POWER IN KNOWING THINGS.

WHEN HE HAD CONSUMED ALL OF THE PRISON LIBRARY, HE SOUGHT MORE.



WHERE OTHERS HAD DRUGS AND TOBACCO AND SWEETS SMUGGLED IN, BANE USED HIS NETWORK TO BRING HIM BOOKS.

HUNDREDS OF BOOKS ON EVERY SUBJECT MATTER.

AND AS HE IMPROVED
HIS MIND, HE IMPROVED
HIS BODY.

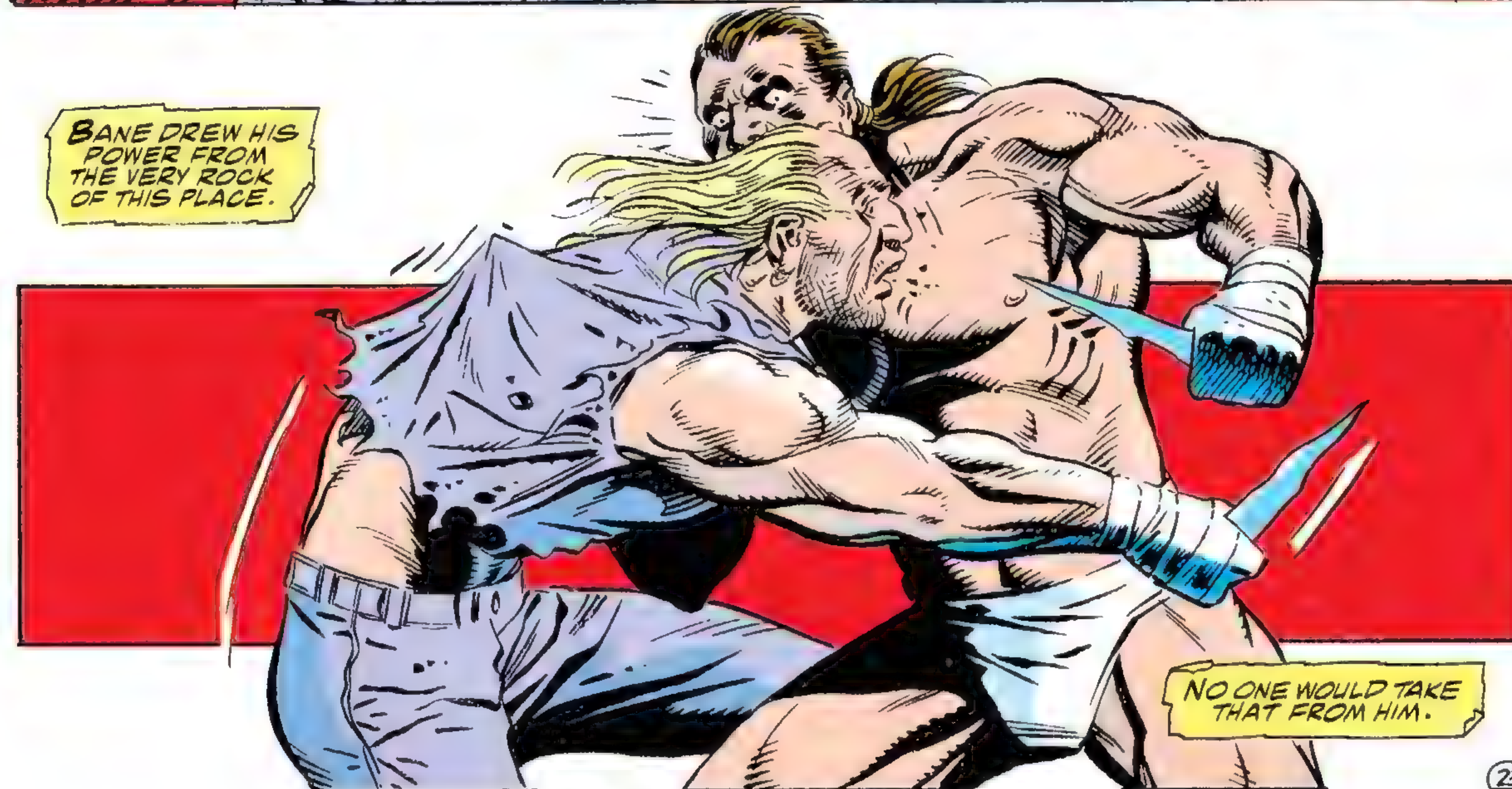
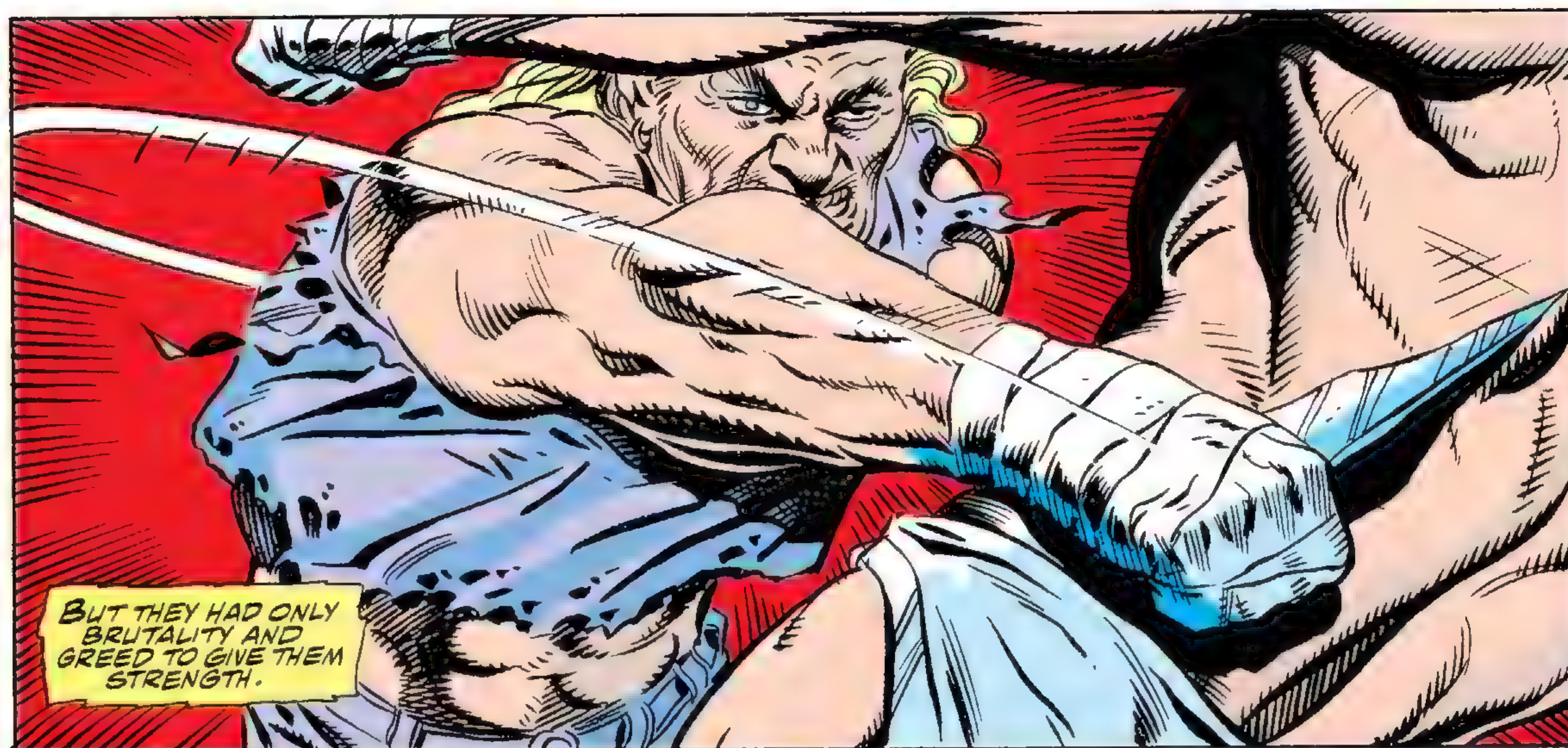
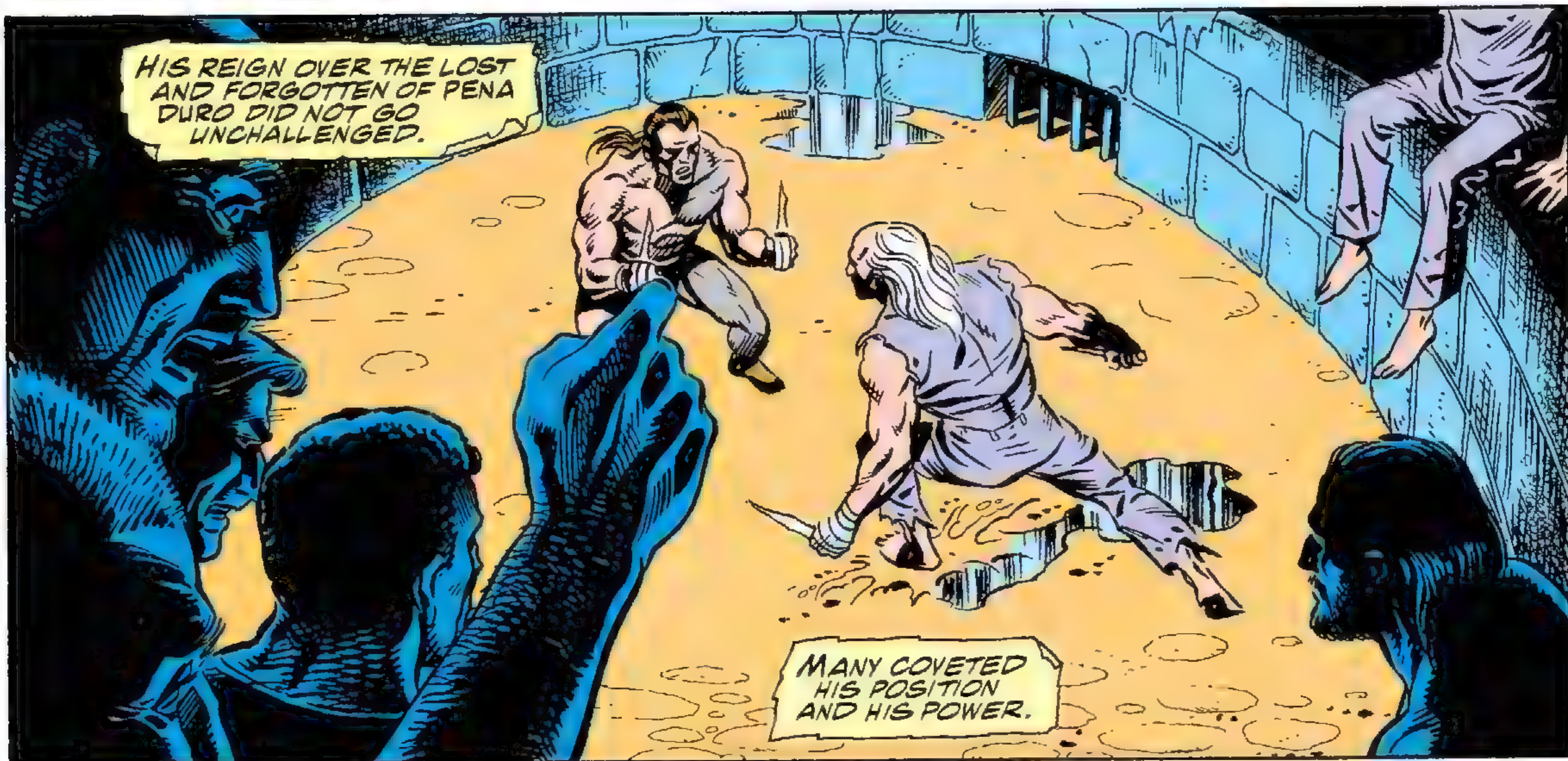
A THOUSAND
PUSH-UPS
EACH DAY.

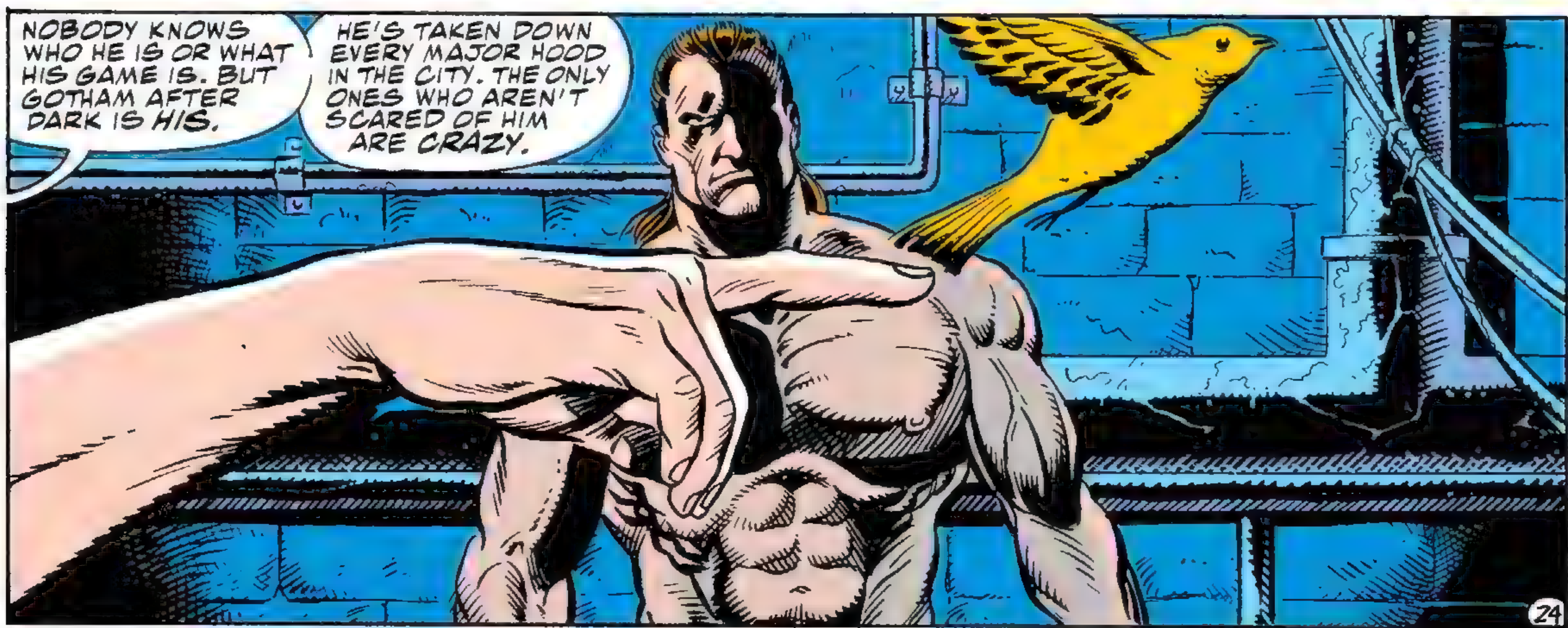
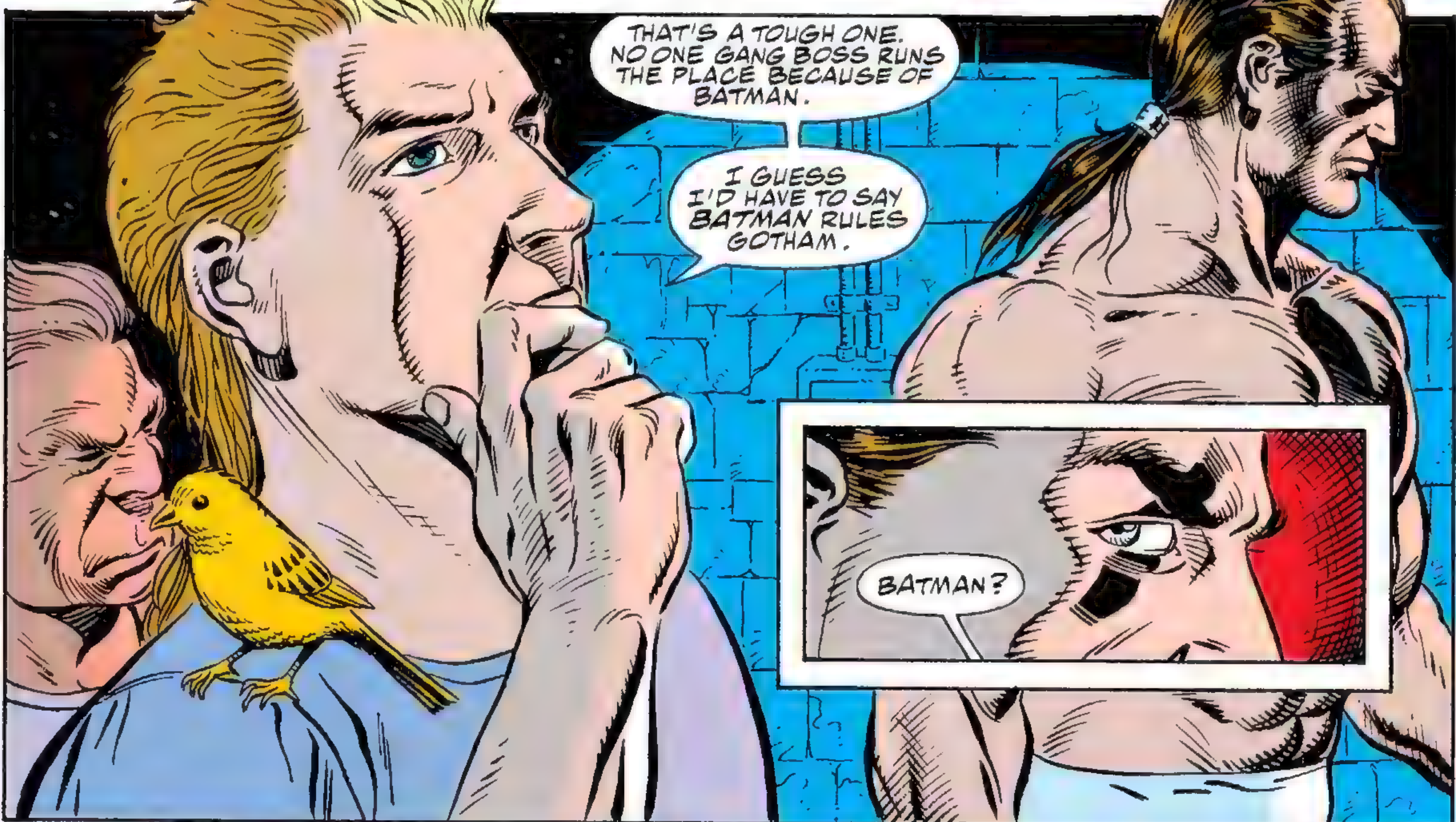
A THOUSAND
SIT-UPS.

A THOUSAND
PULL-UPS.

AND INSTEAD OF
SLEEP HE
MEDITATED FOUR
HOURS EACH NIGHT.

AND EACH DAY OF EACH
YEAR BROUGHT HIM
CLOSER TO THE IMAGE OF
PERFECTION IN HIS MIND.

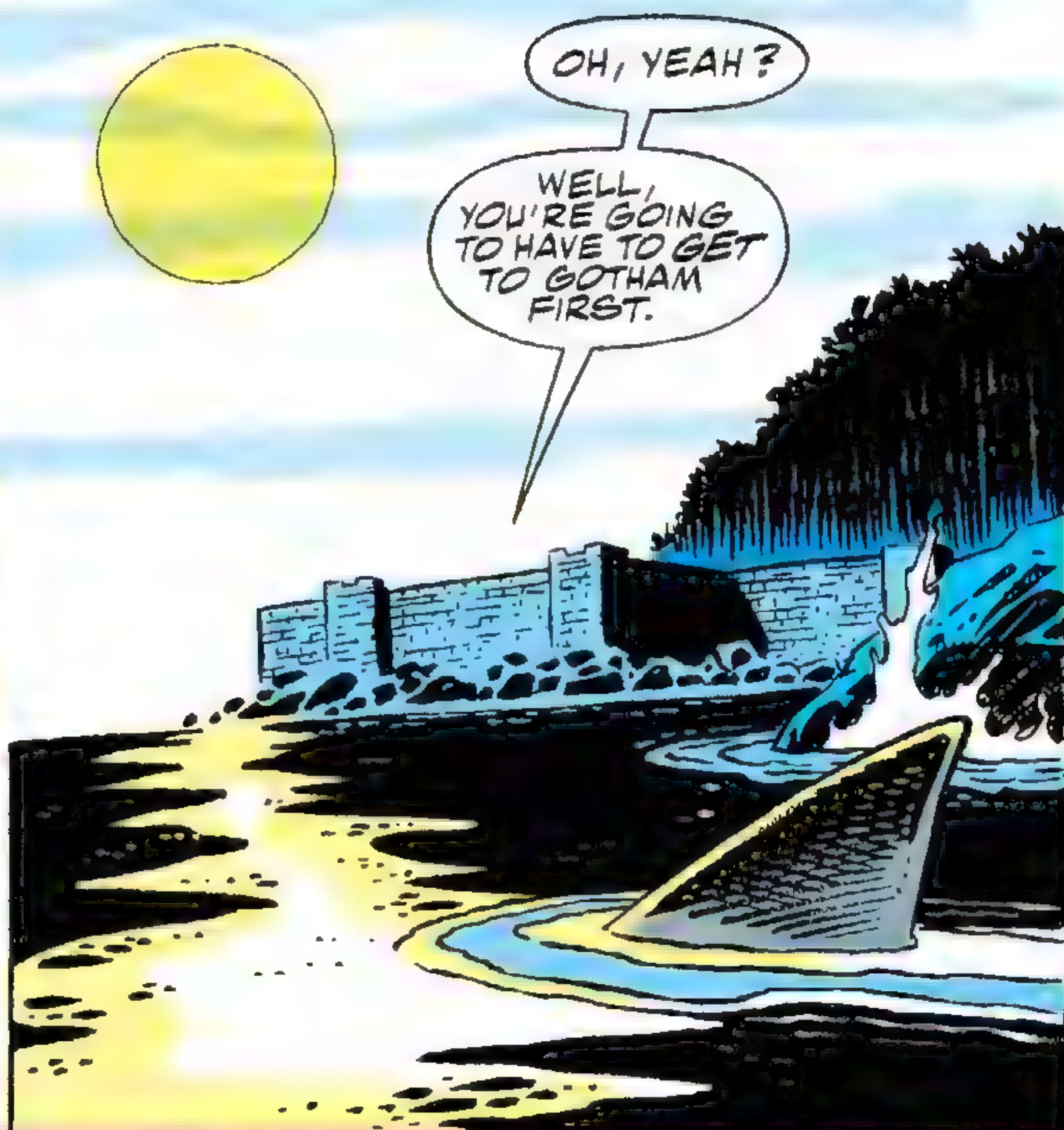






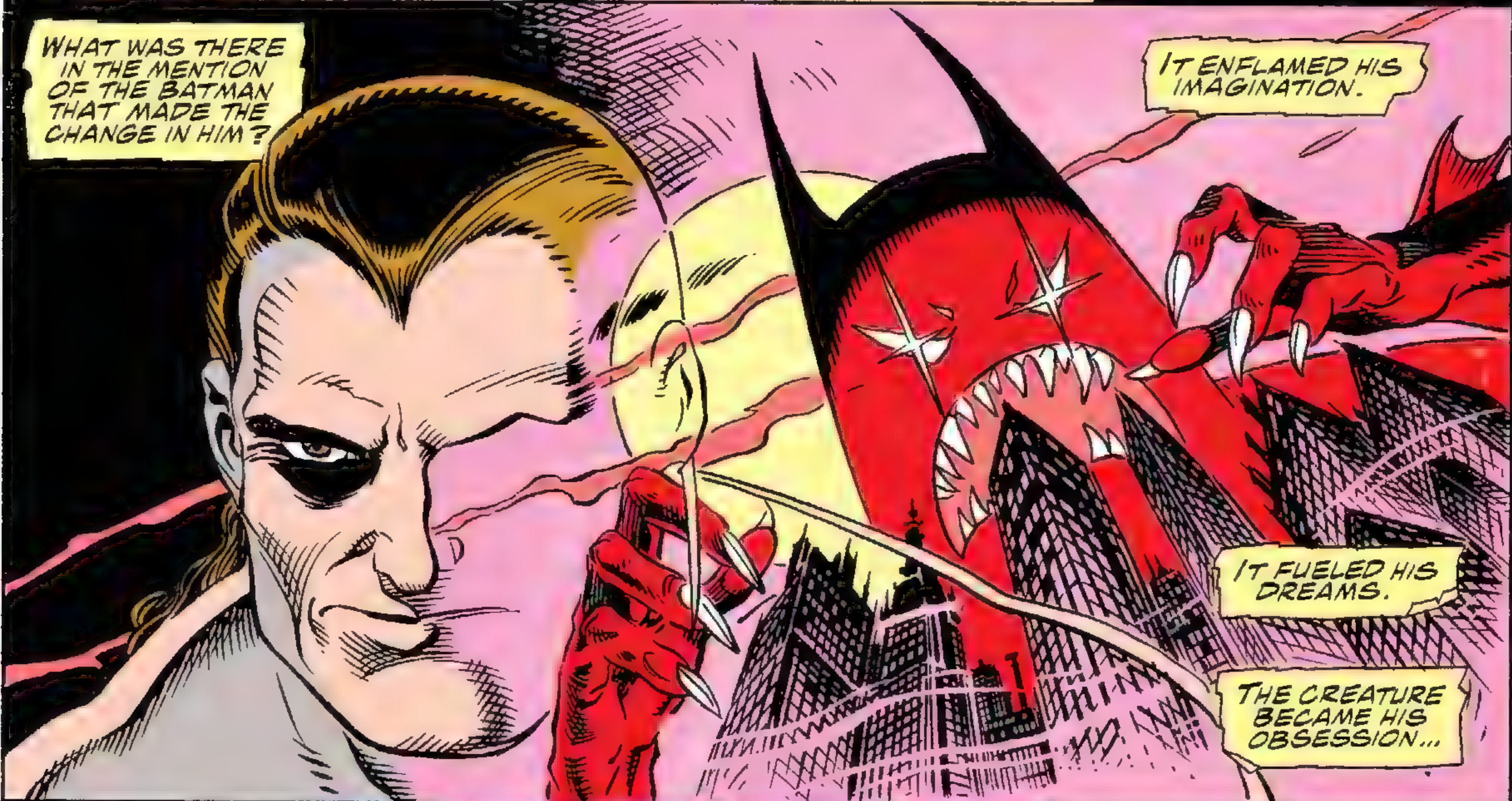
I WILL MEET THIS BATMAN SOME DAY.

I WILL DESTROY HIM.



OH, YEAH?

WELL, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET TO GOTHAM FIRST.



WHAT WAS THERE IN THE MENTION OF THE BATMAN THAT MADE THE CHANGE IN HIM?

IT ENFLAMED HIS IMAGINATION.

IT FUELED HIS DREAMS.

THE CREATURE BECAME HIS OBSESSION...



... AND HIS PURPOSE.

STILL THE EVENTS OF
HIS LIFE WERE
BEYOND HIS CONTROL.

AND THIS
CAUSED HIM
FRUSTRATION,
AND THIS
SPENT ITSELF...

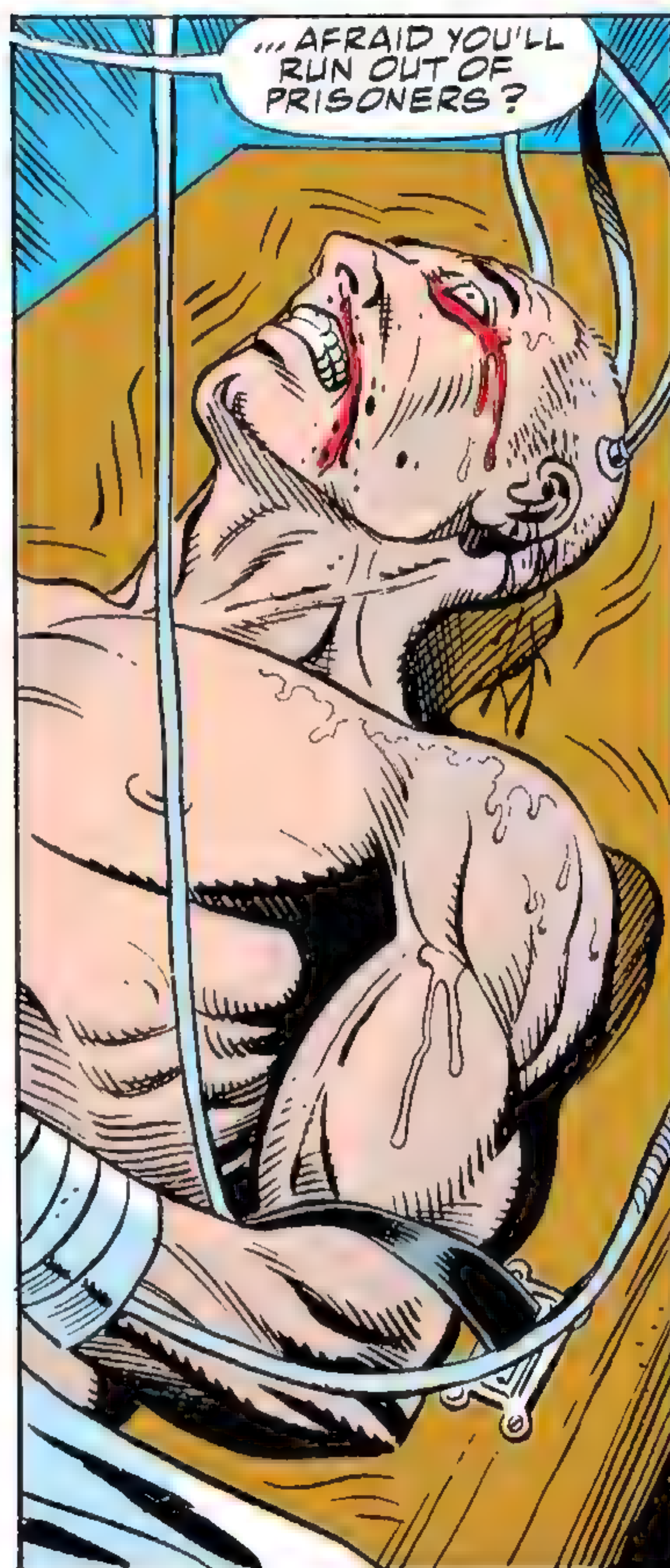
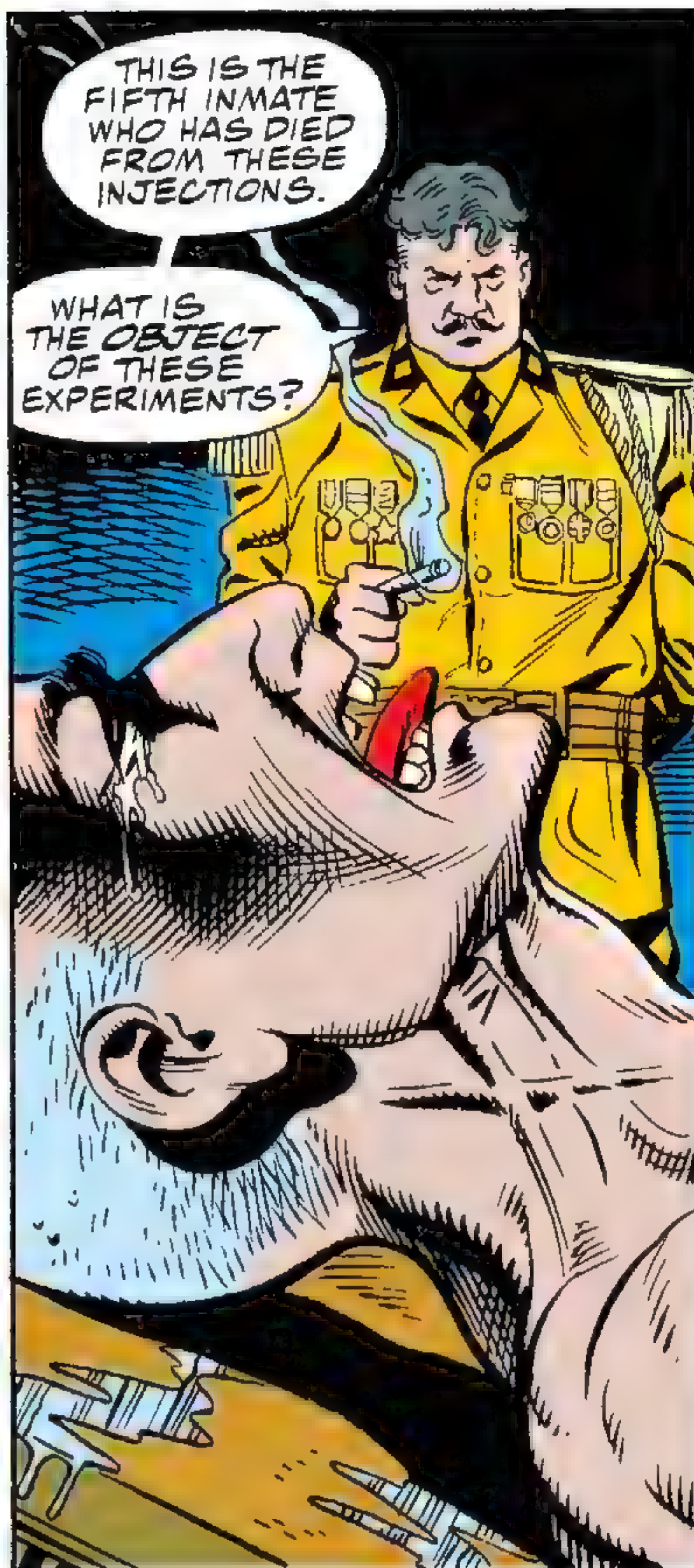
...AS RAGE.

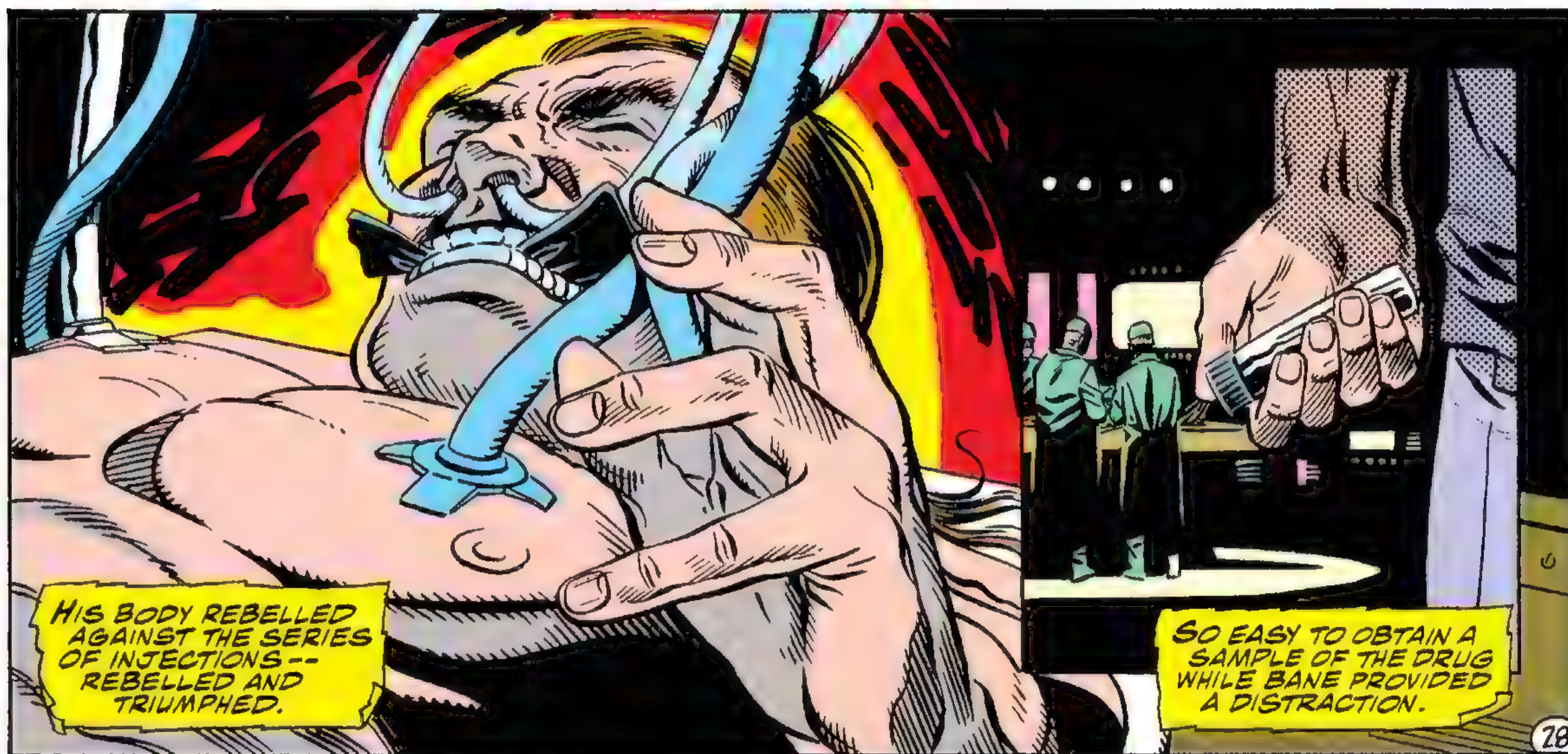
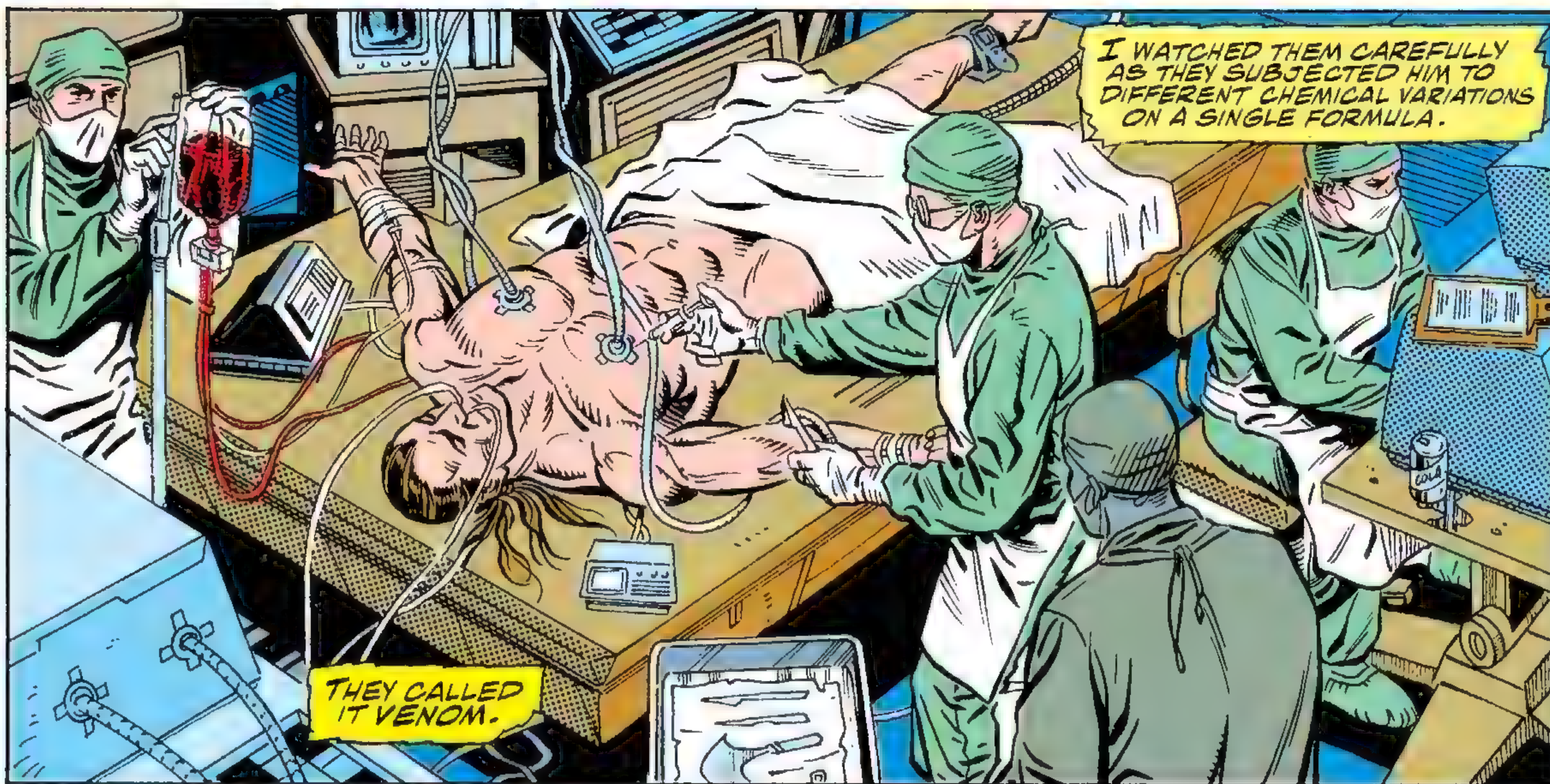
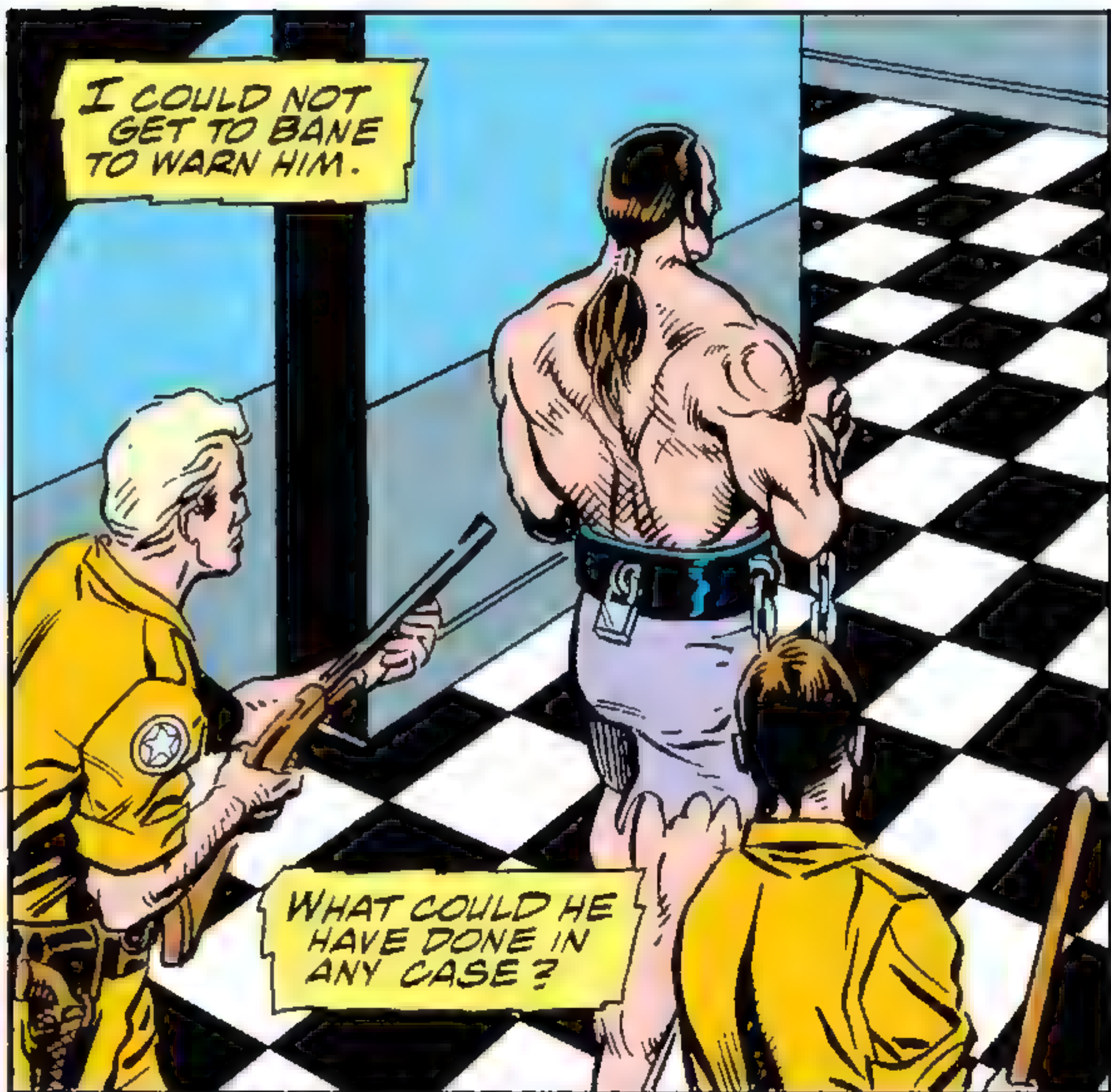
THE WARDEN WAS MORE
THAN SATISFIED TO SEE
THE INMATES ANNIHILATE
ONE ANOTHER.

BUT WHEN BANE'S BODY
COUNT REACHED MORE
THAN THIRTY MEN IT
BECAME A SERIOUS MATTER.

THEY BROUGHT
HIM DOWN LIKE
AN ANIMAL.

THEY REMOVED HIM
TO ISOLATION.



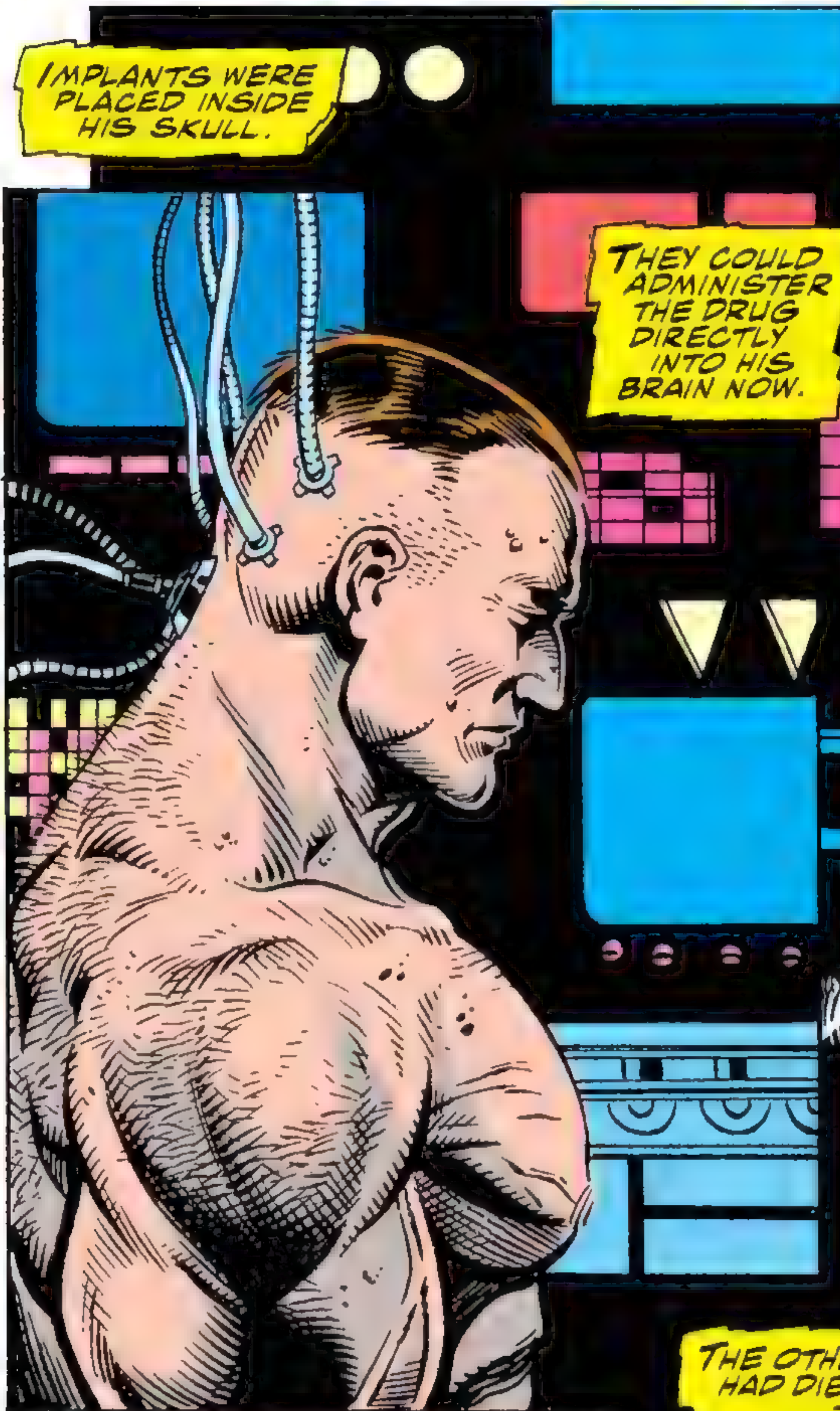




THE EXPERIMENTERS
WERE PLEASED AT
HIS PROGRESS.

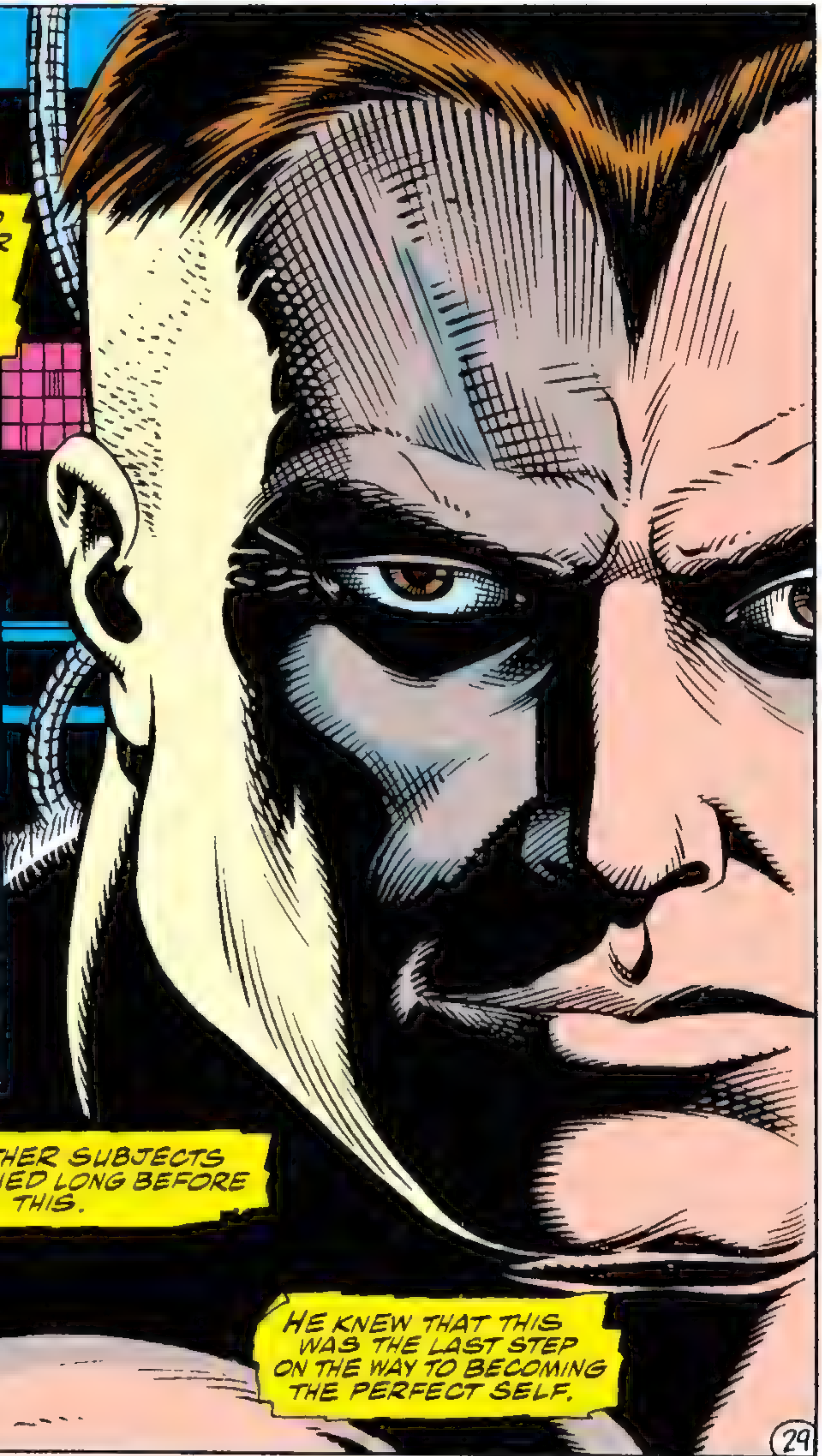


WHEN HE
SURVIVED
THE DRUGS,
THE SURGERY
BEGAN.



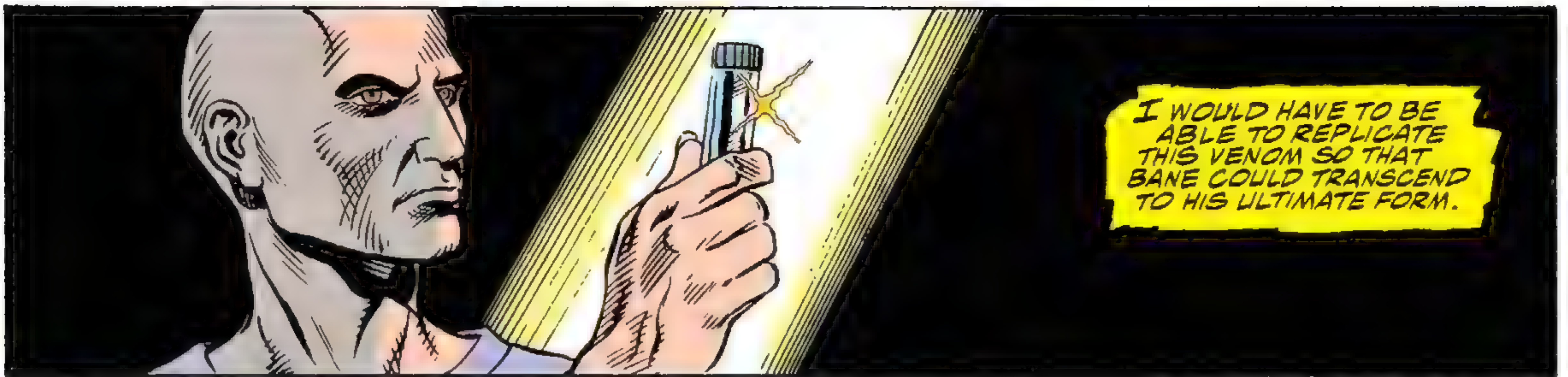
IMPLANTS WERE
PLACED INSIDE
HIS SKULL.

THEY COULD
ADMINISTER
THE DRUG
DIRECTLY
INTO HIS
BRAIN NOW.

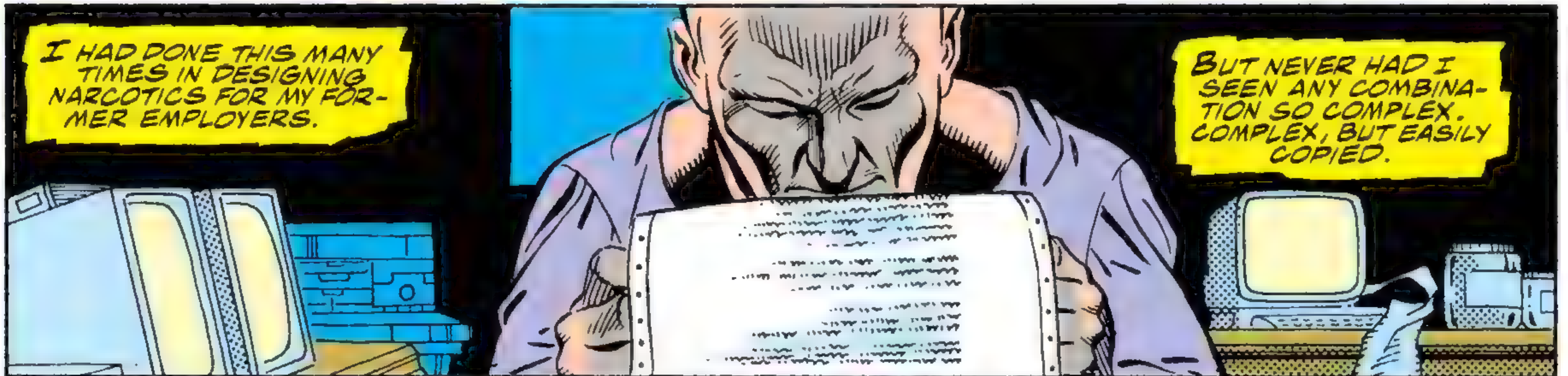


THE OTHER SUBJECTS
HAD DIED LONG BEFORE
THIS.

HE KNEW THAT THIS
WAS THE LAST STEP
ON THE WAY TO BECOMING
THE PERFECT SELF.

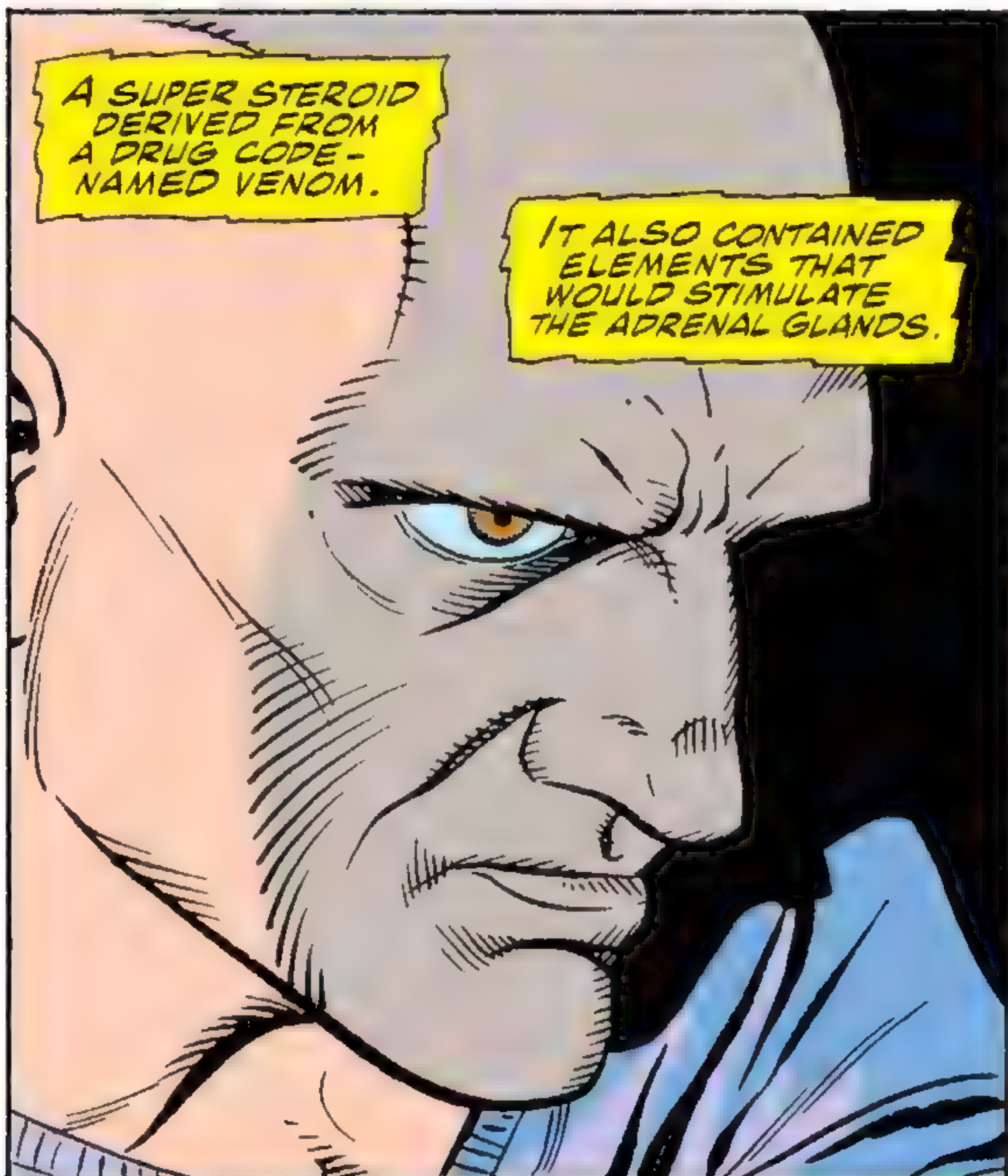


I WOULD HAVE TO BE ABLE TO REPLICATE THIS VENOM SO THAT BANE COULD TRANSCEND TO HIS ULTIMATE FORM.



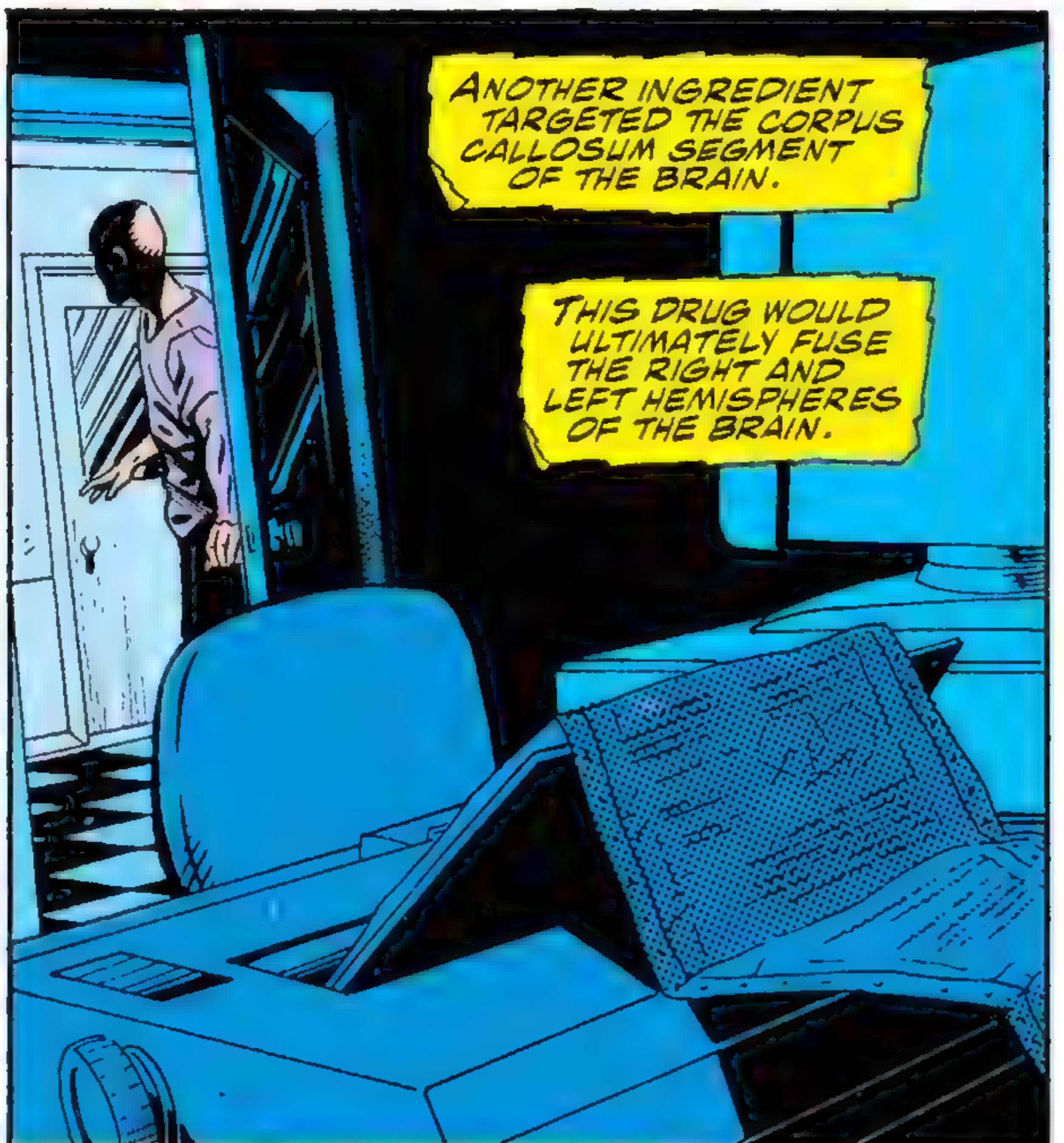
I HAD DONE THIS MANY TIMES IN DESIGNING NARCOTICS FOR MY FORMER EMPLOYERS.

BUT NEVER HAD I SEEN ANY COMBINATION SO COMPLEX. COMPLEX, BUT EASILY COPIED.



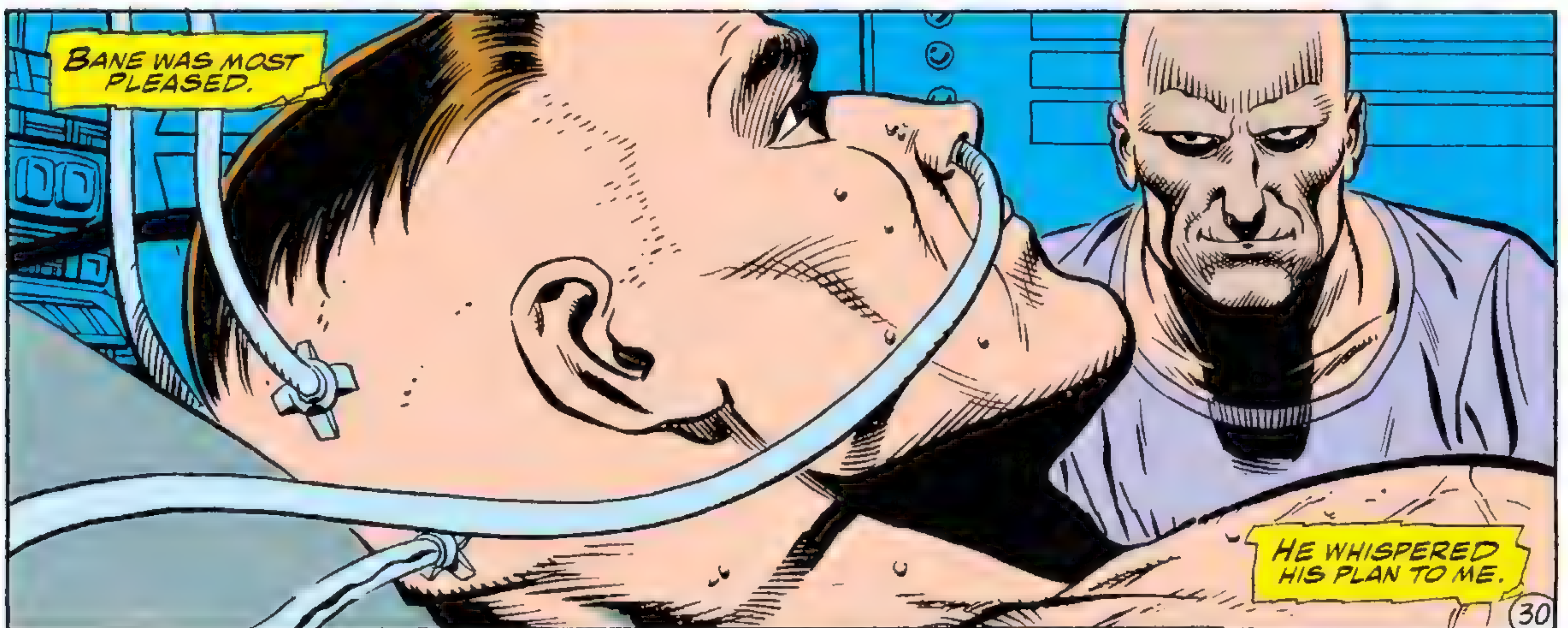
A SUPER STEROID DERIVED FROM A DRUG CODE-NAMED VENOM.

IT ALSO CONTAINED ELEMENTS THAT WOULD STIMULATE THE ADRENAL GLANDS.



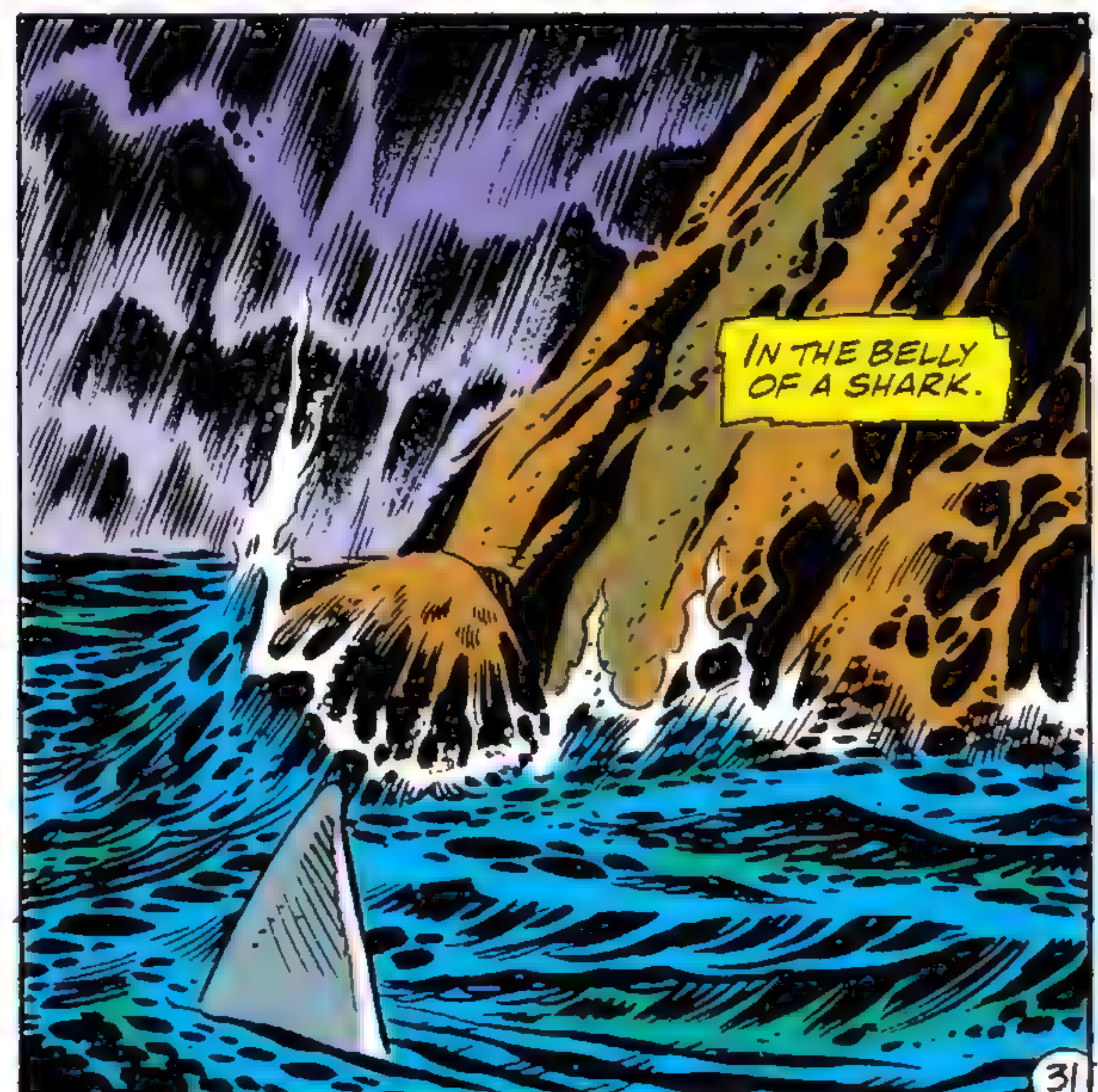
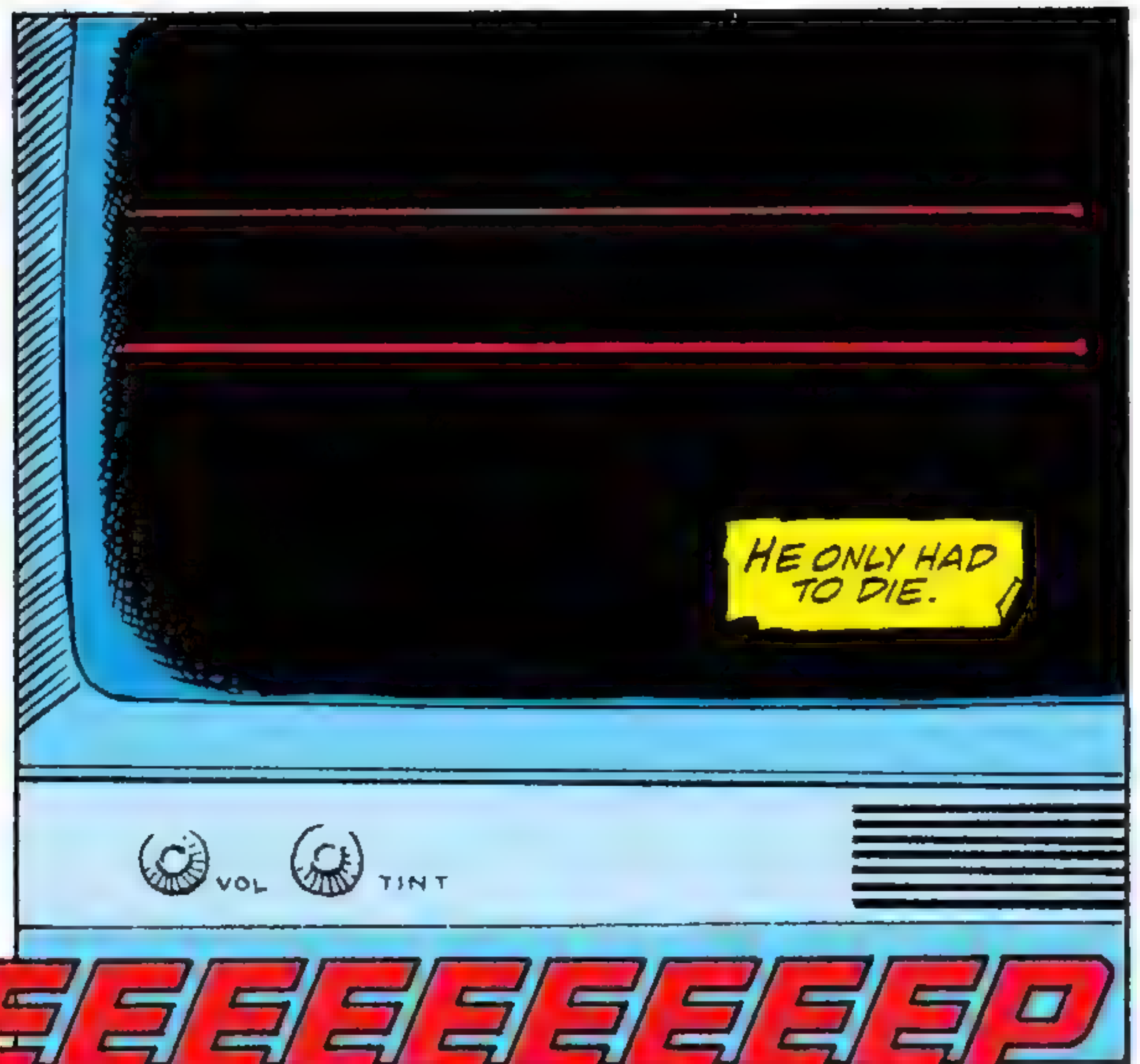
ANOTHER INGREDIENT TARGETED THE CORPUS CALLOSUM SEGMENT OF THE BRAIN.

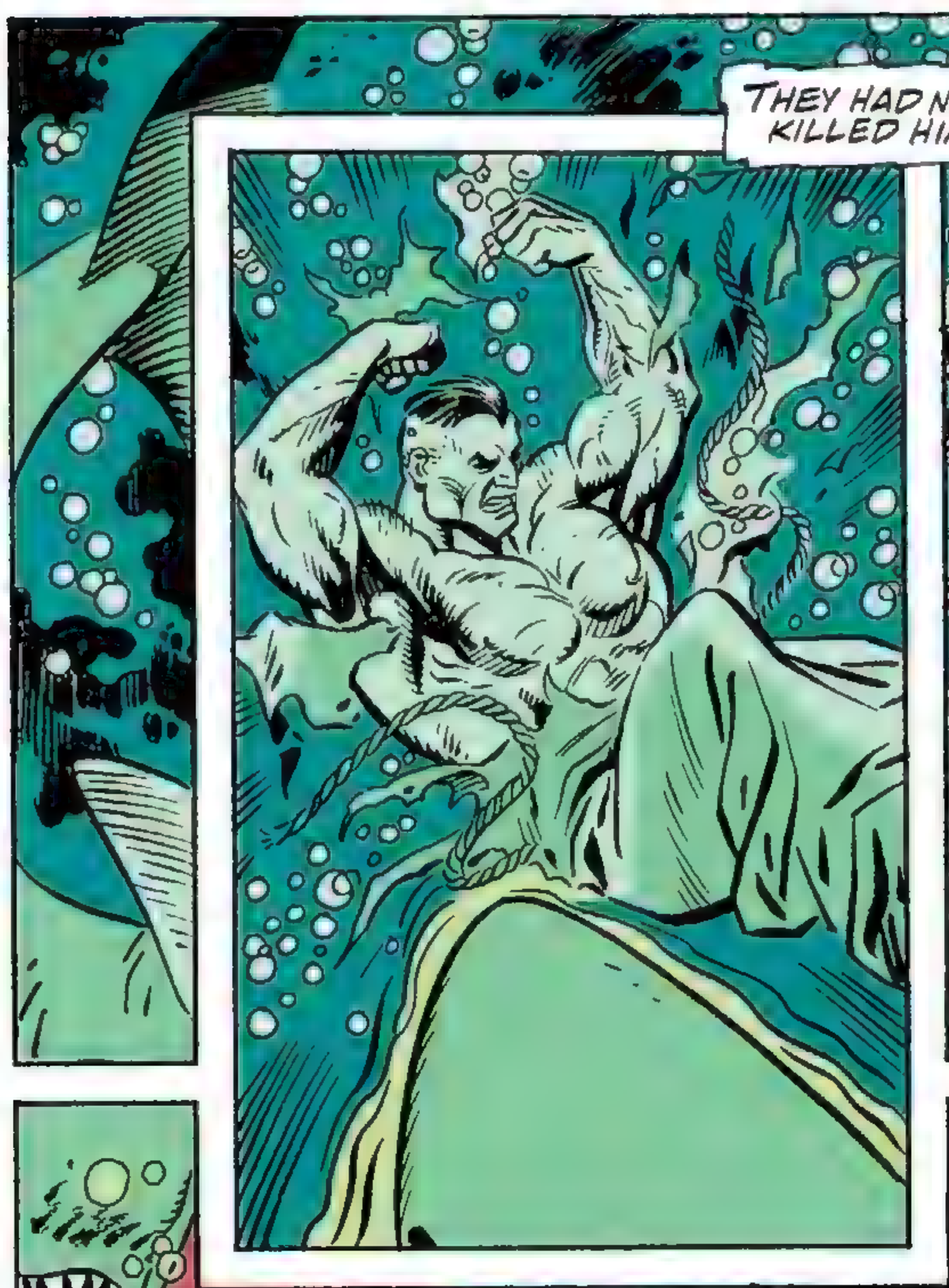
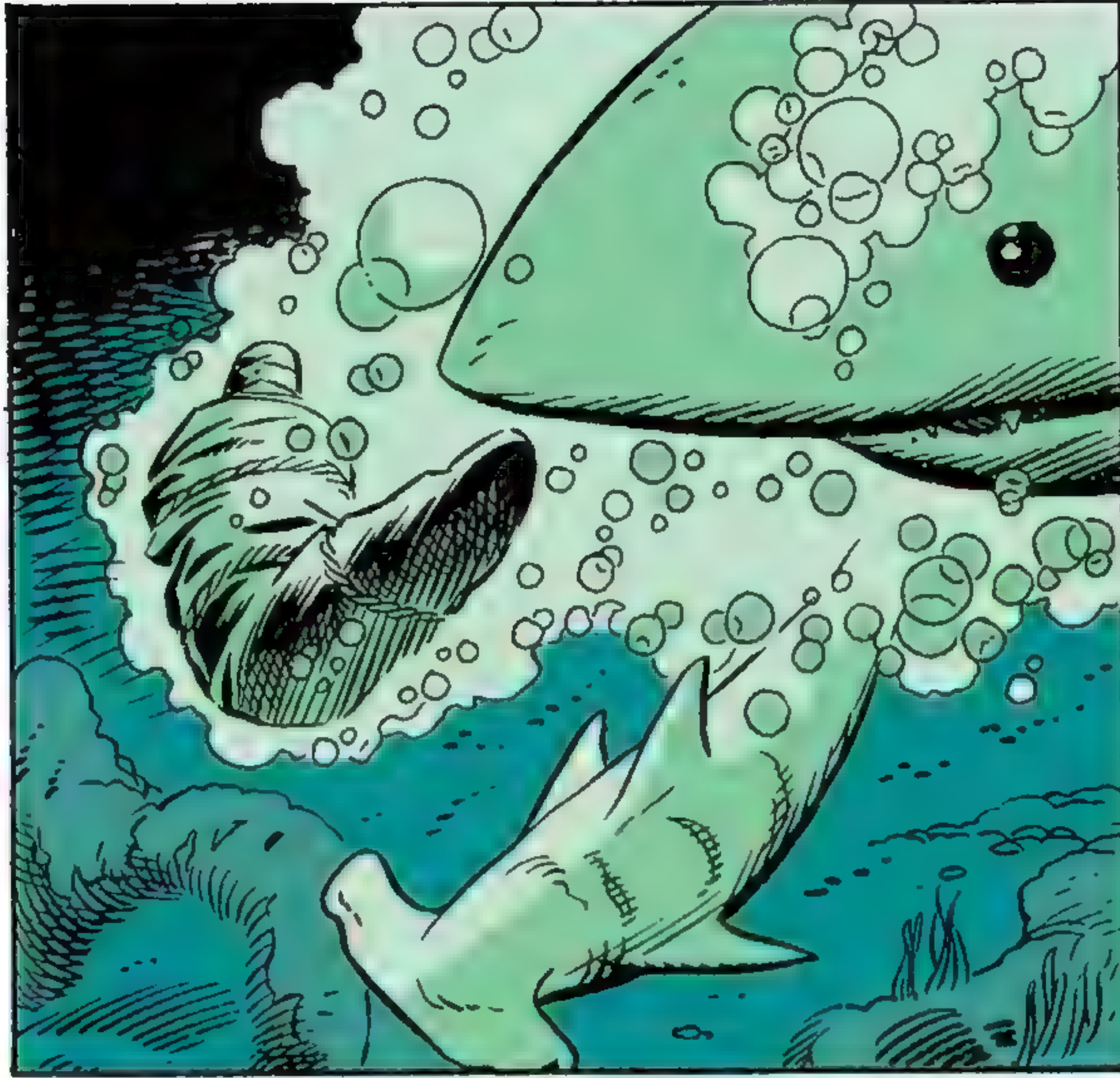
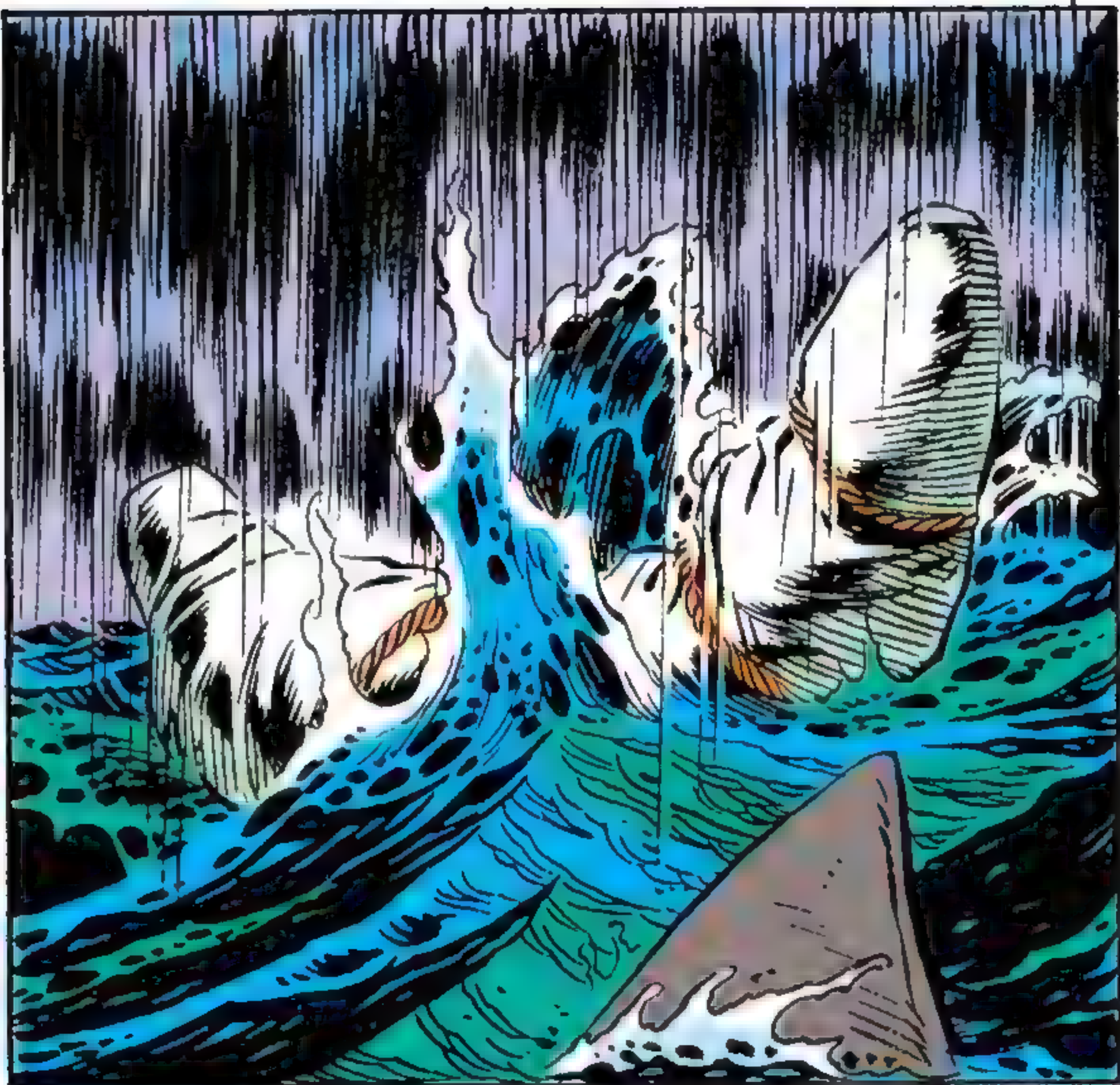
THIS DRUG WOULD ULTIMATELY FUSE THE RIGHT AND LEFT HEMISPHERES OF THE BRAIN.



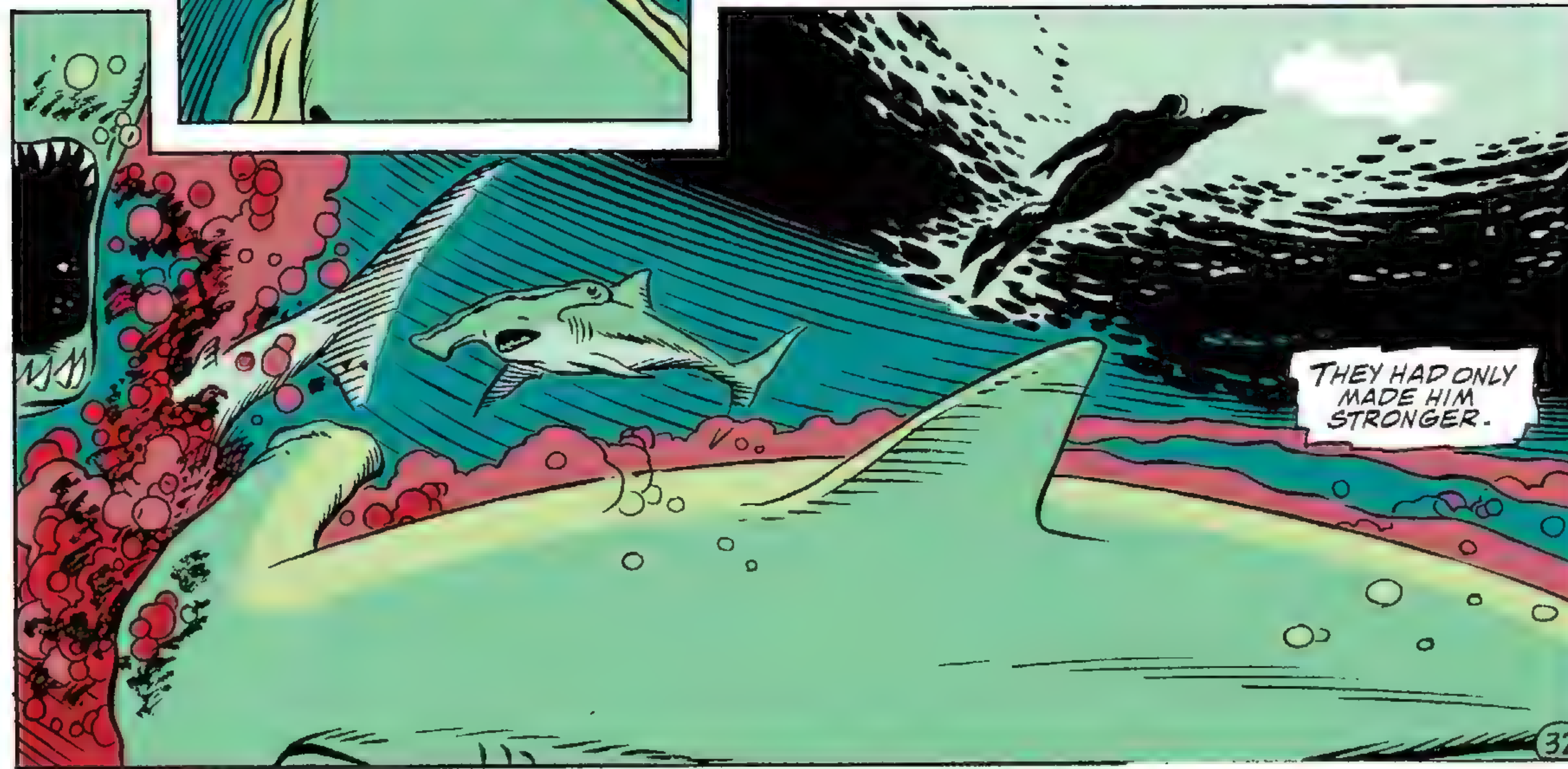
BANE WAS MOST PLEASED.

HE WHISPERED HIS PLAN TO ME.

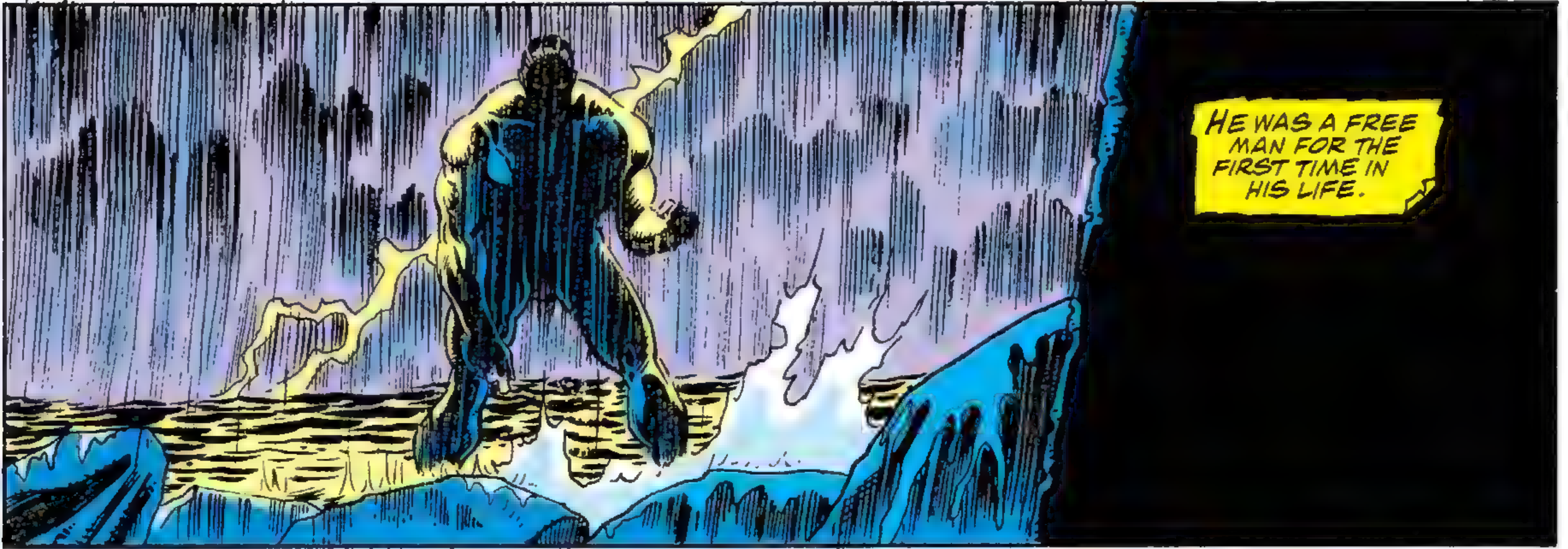




THEY HAD NOT
KILLED HIM.



THEY HAD ONLY
MADE HIM
STRONGER.



HE WAS A FREE
MAN FOR THE
FIRST TIME IN
HIS LIFE.



AND YET HE
RETURNED
TO PENA DURO.



HE RETURNED
FROM THE DEAD.

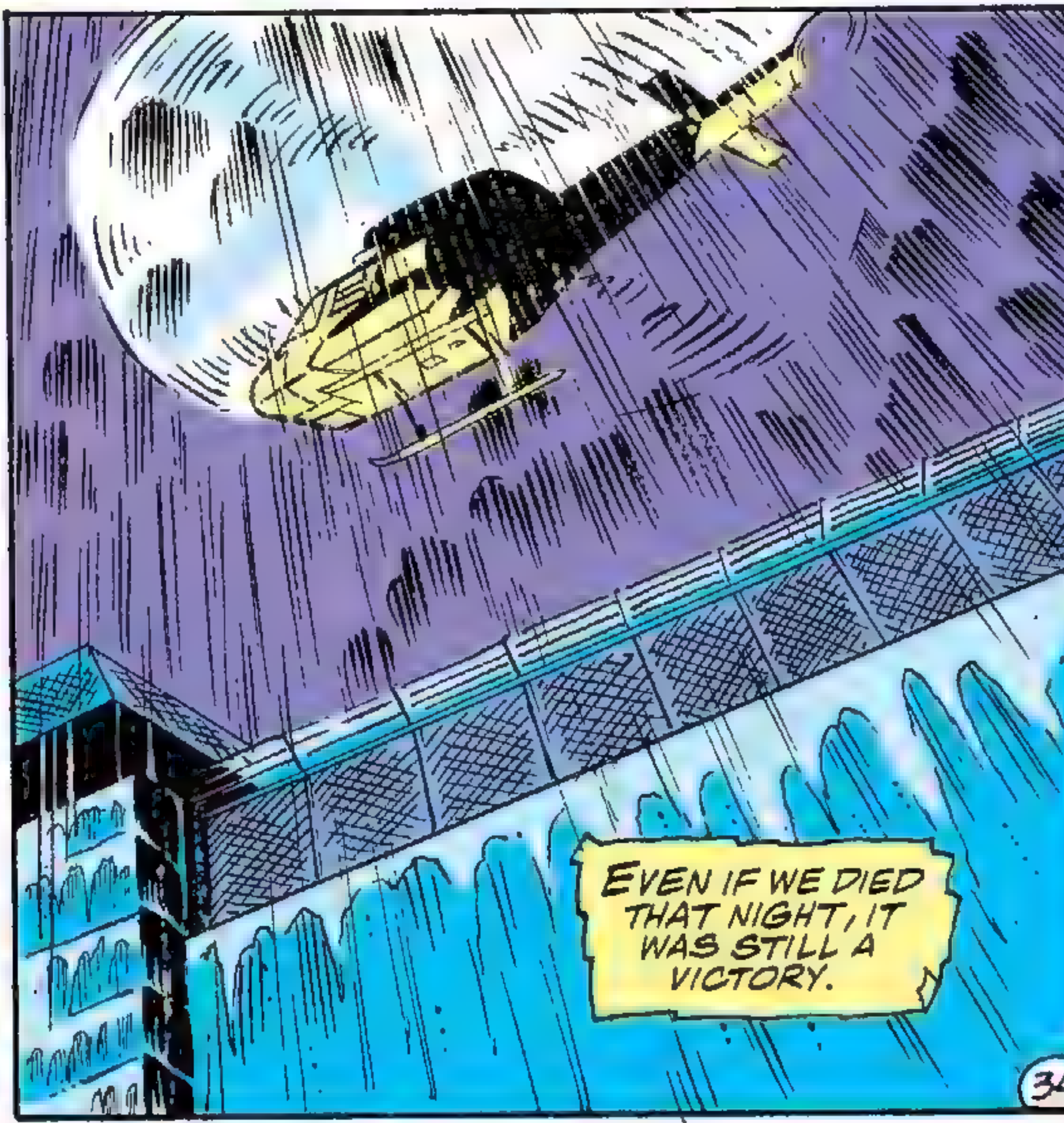
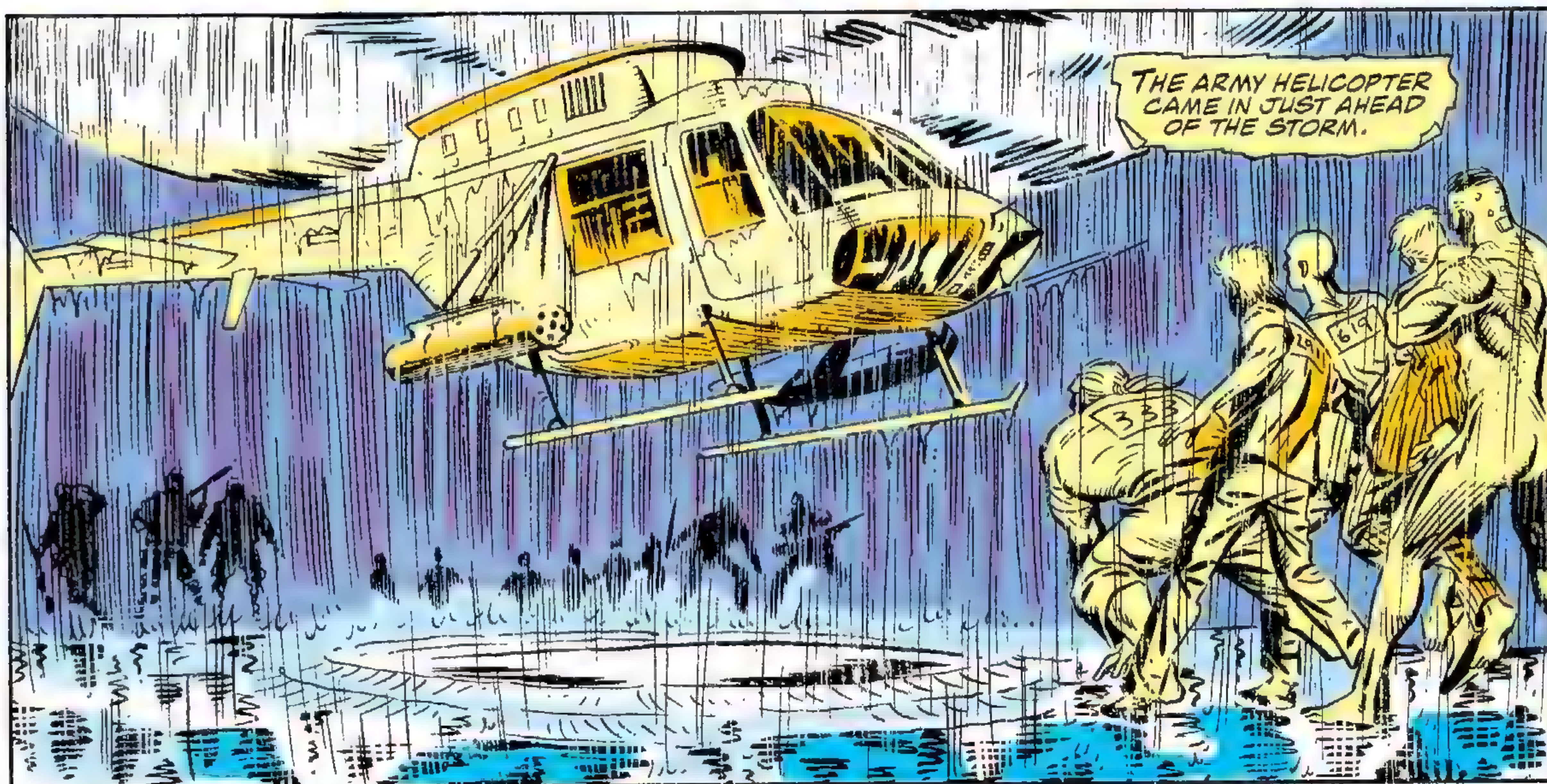
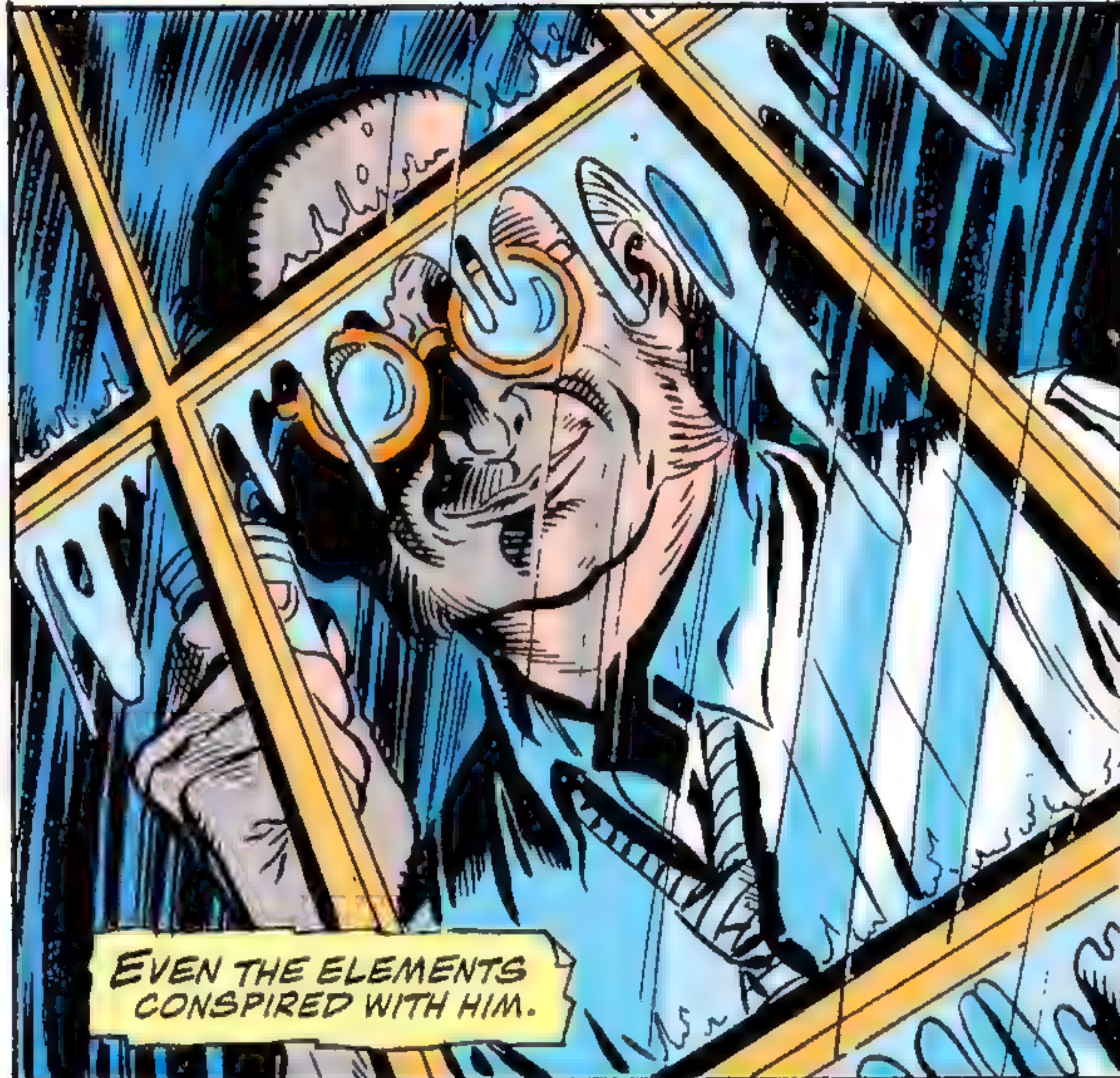
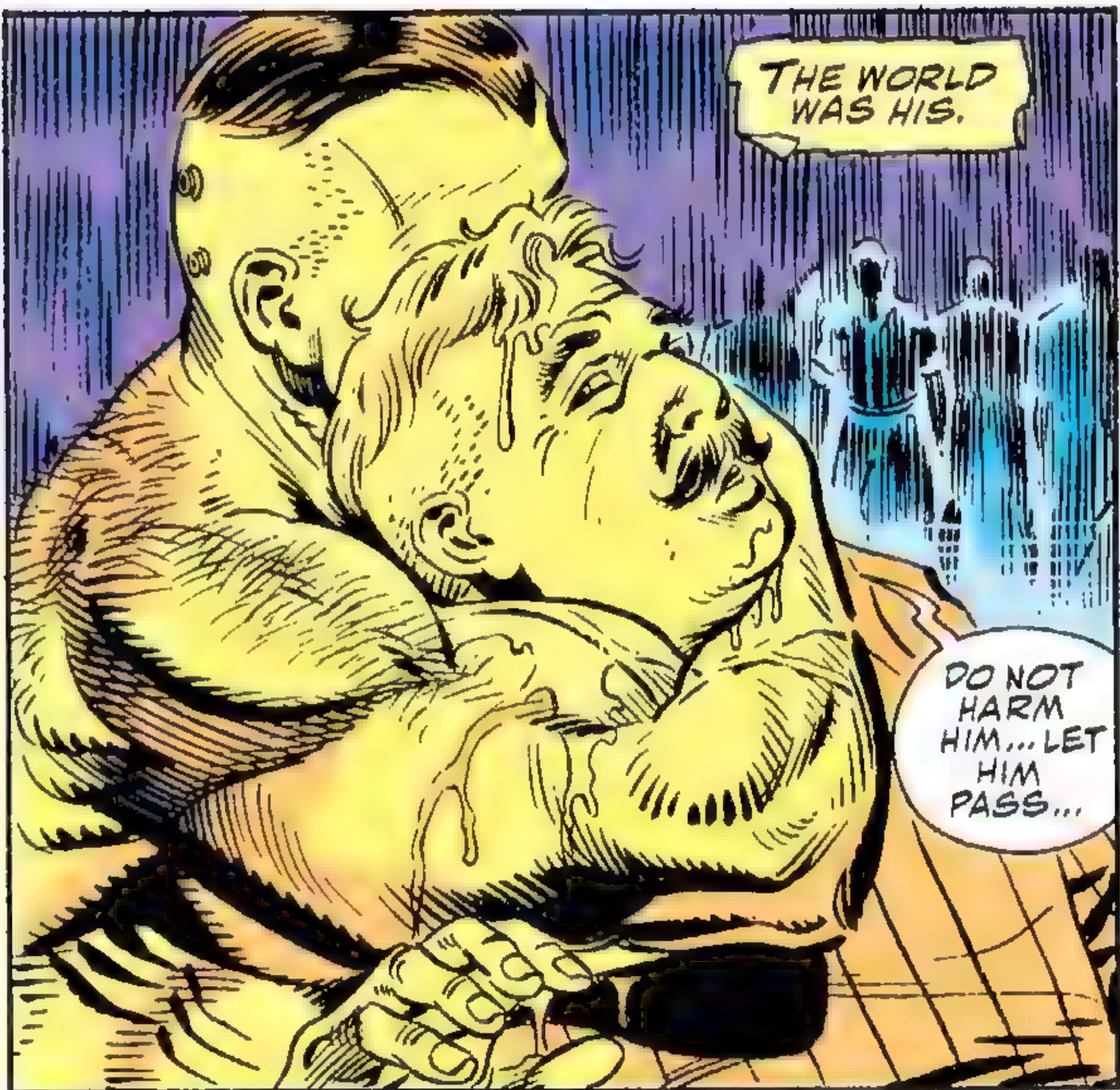
HE RETURNED
FROM FREEDOM.

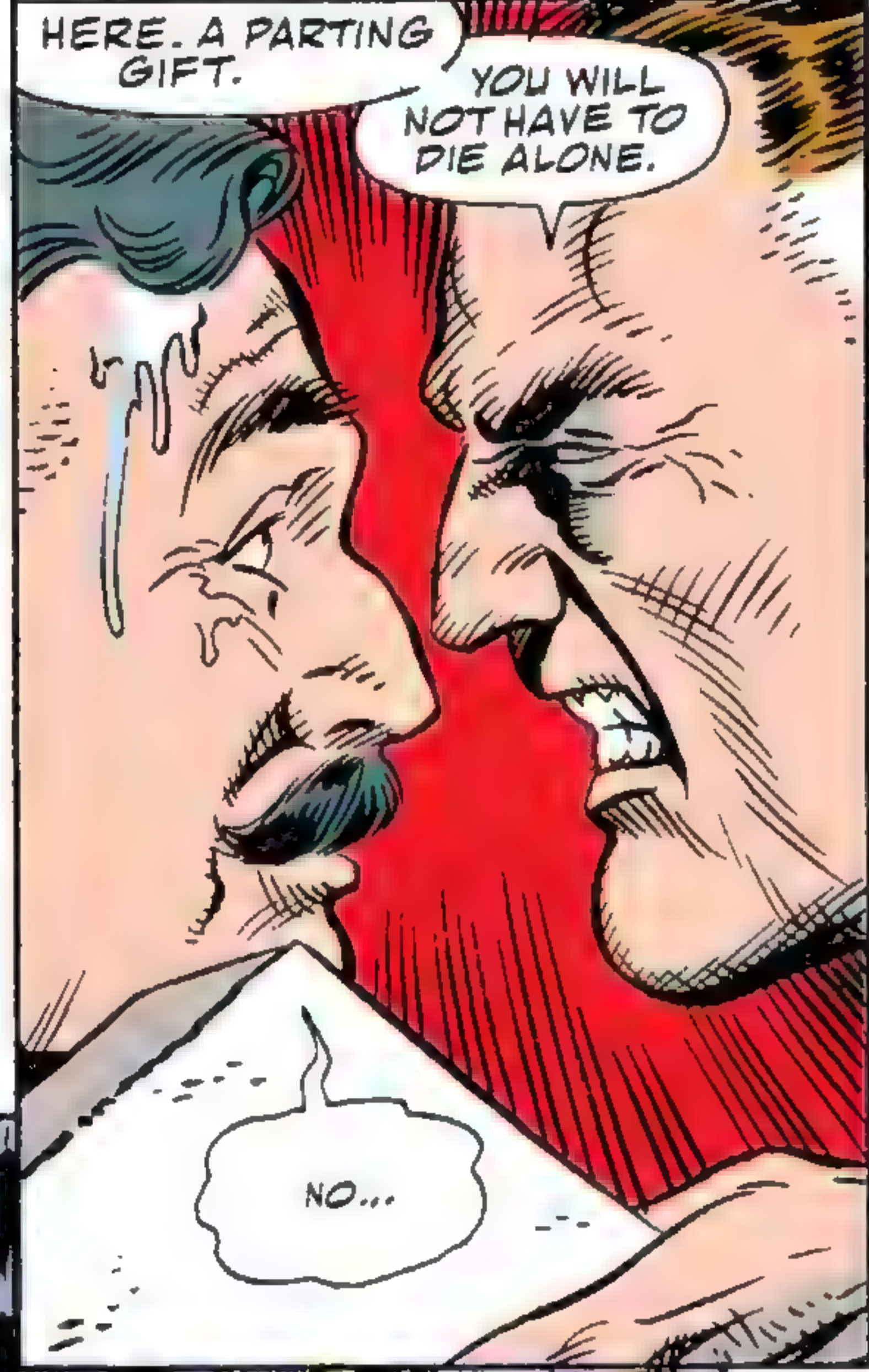
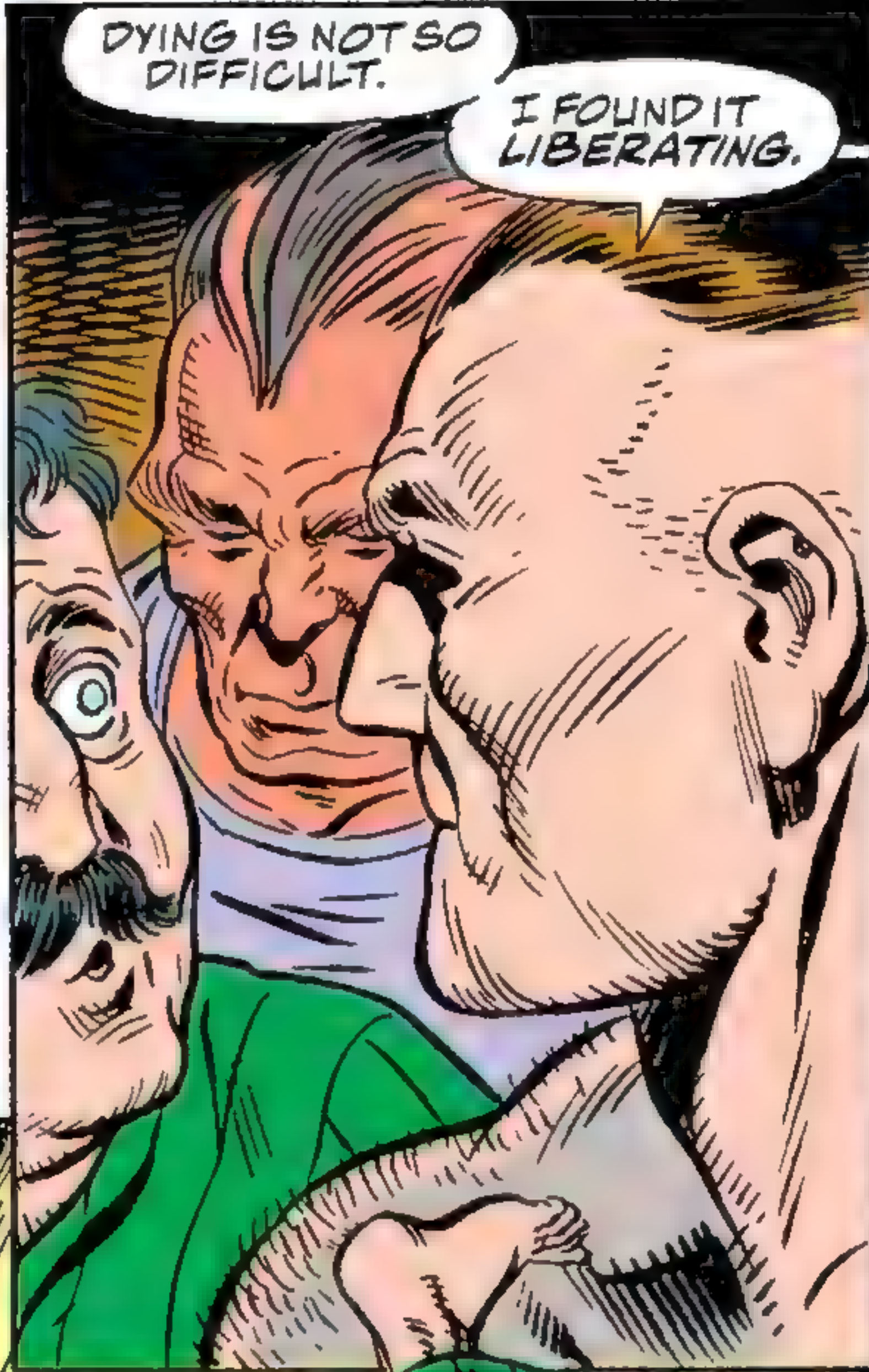
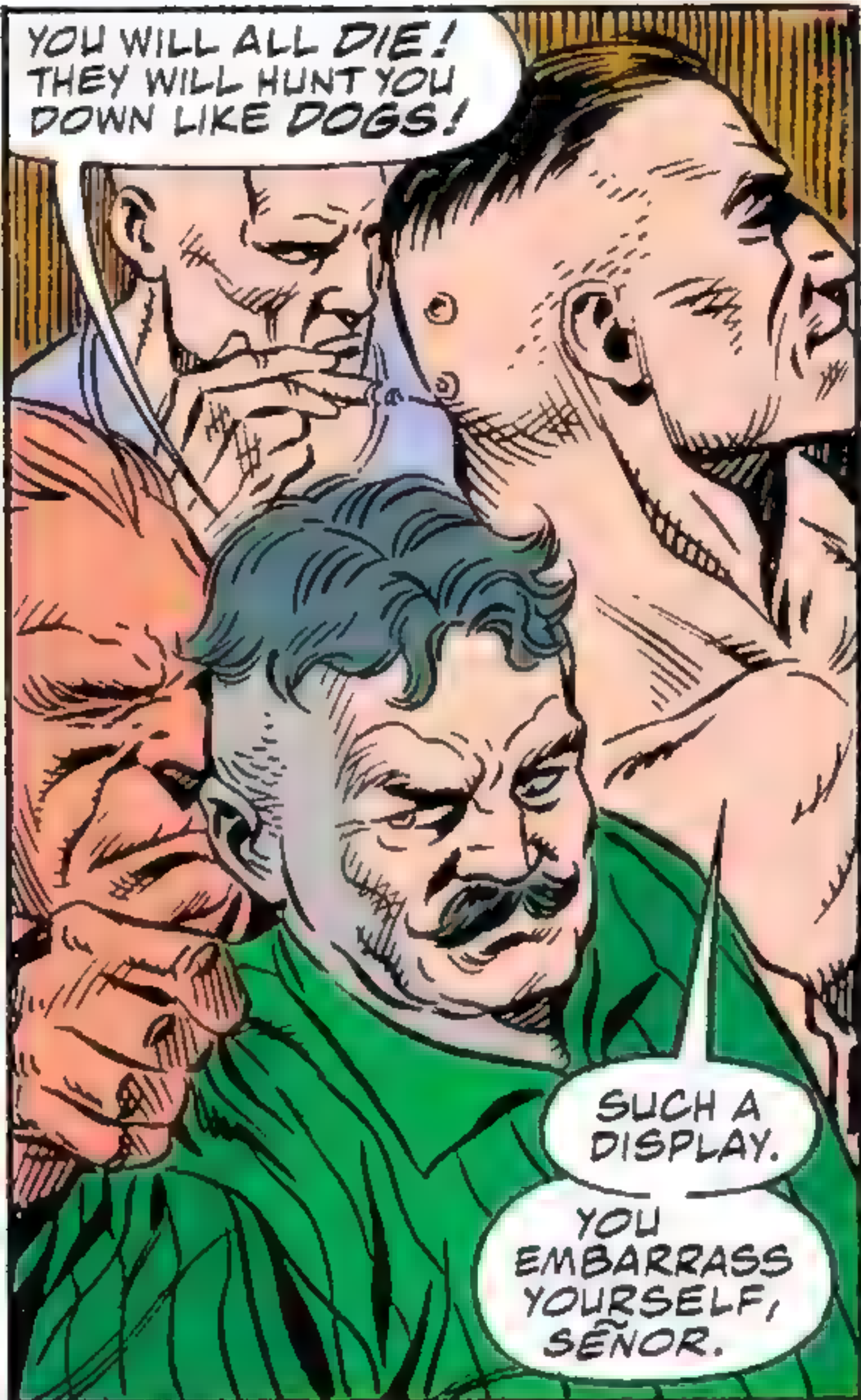


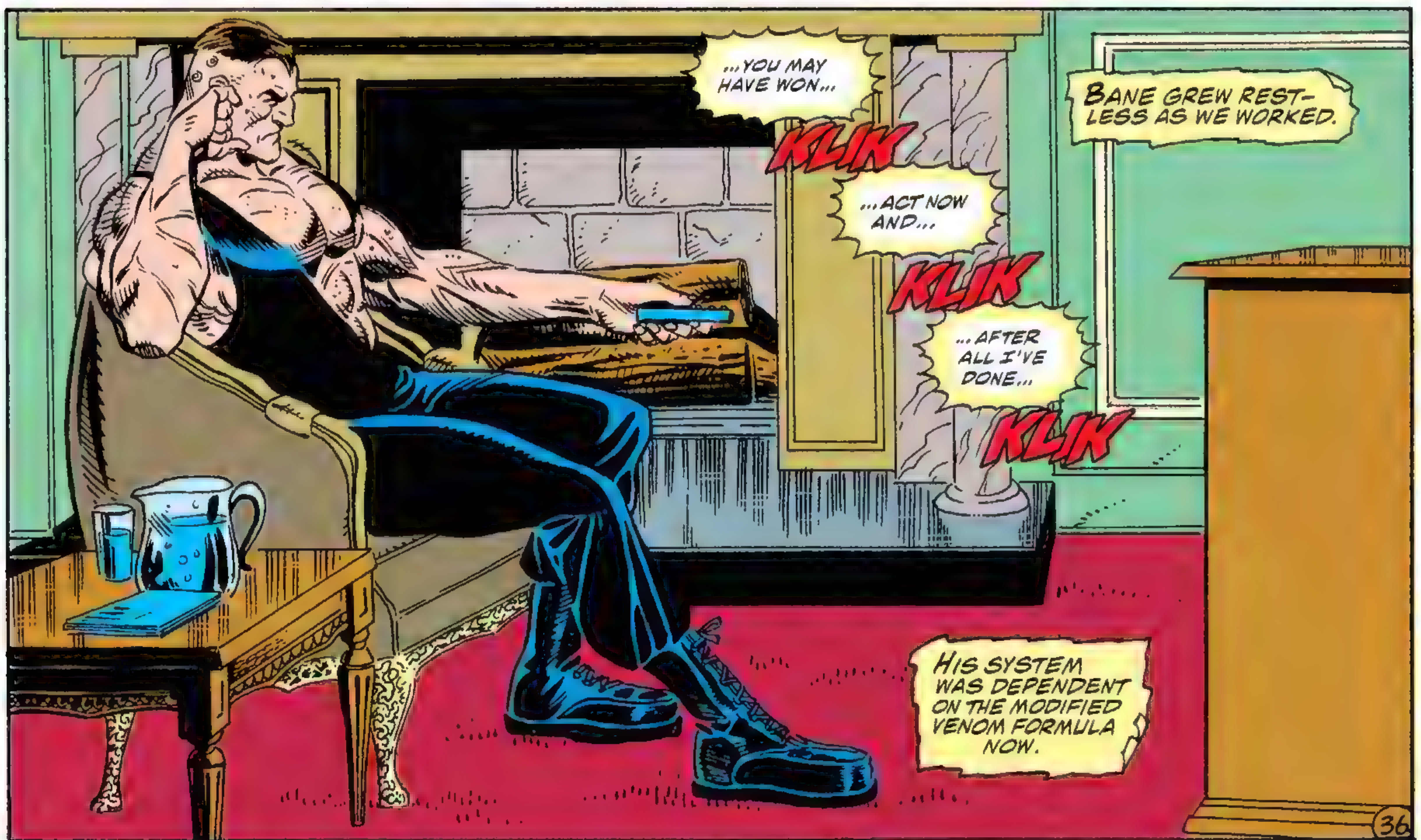
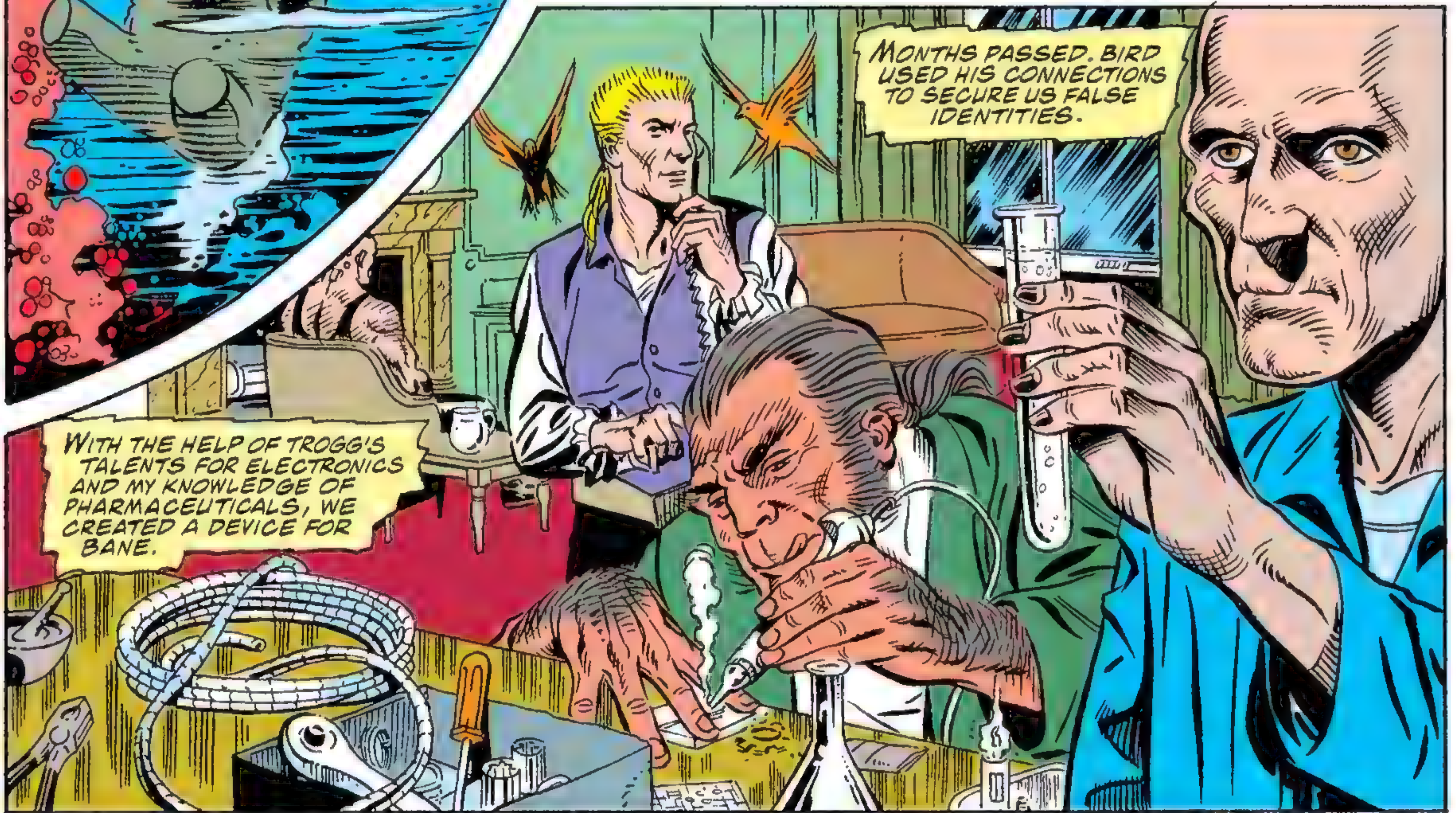
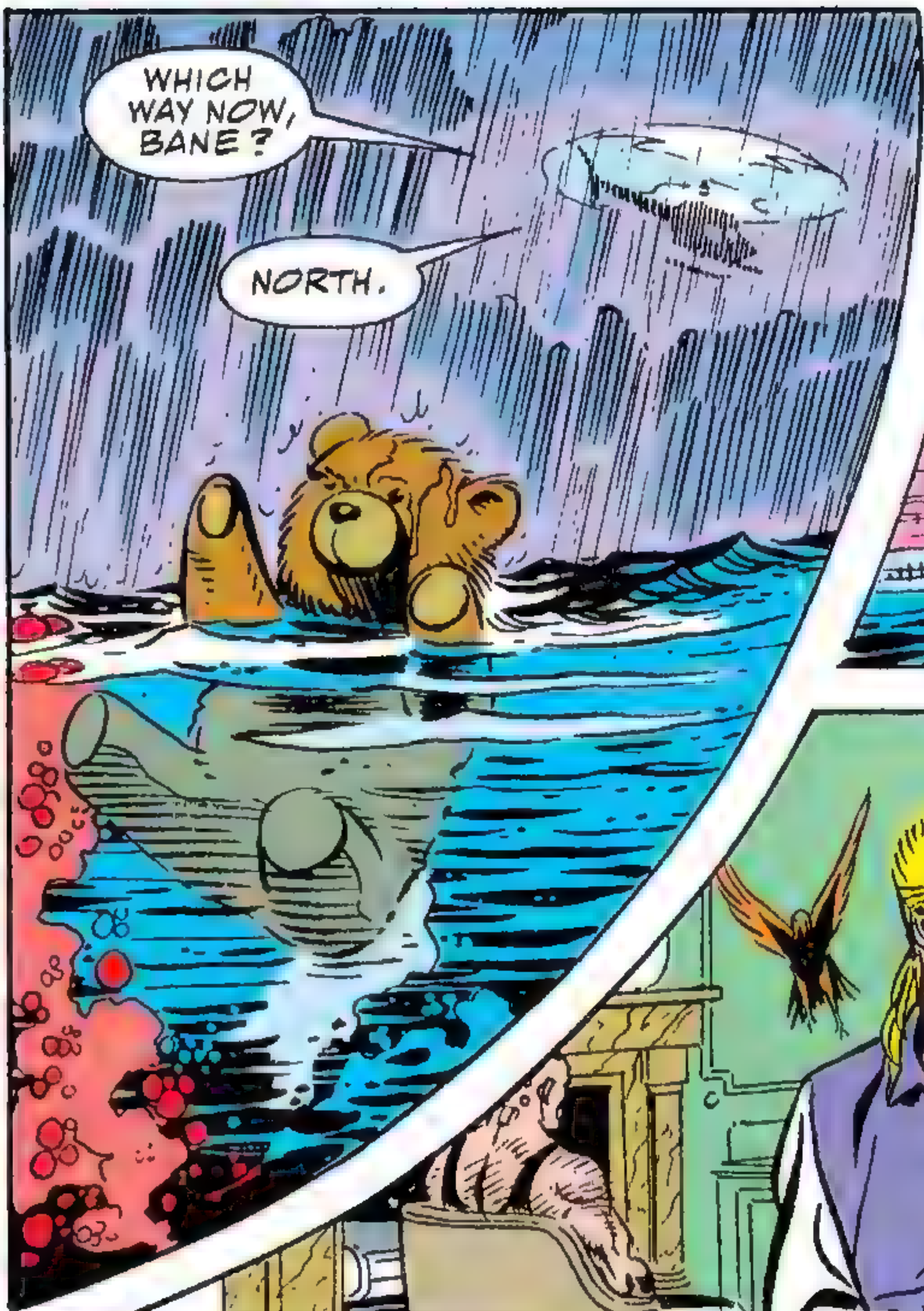
HE RETURNED FOR US.

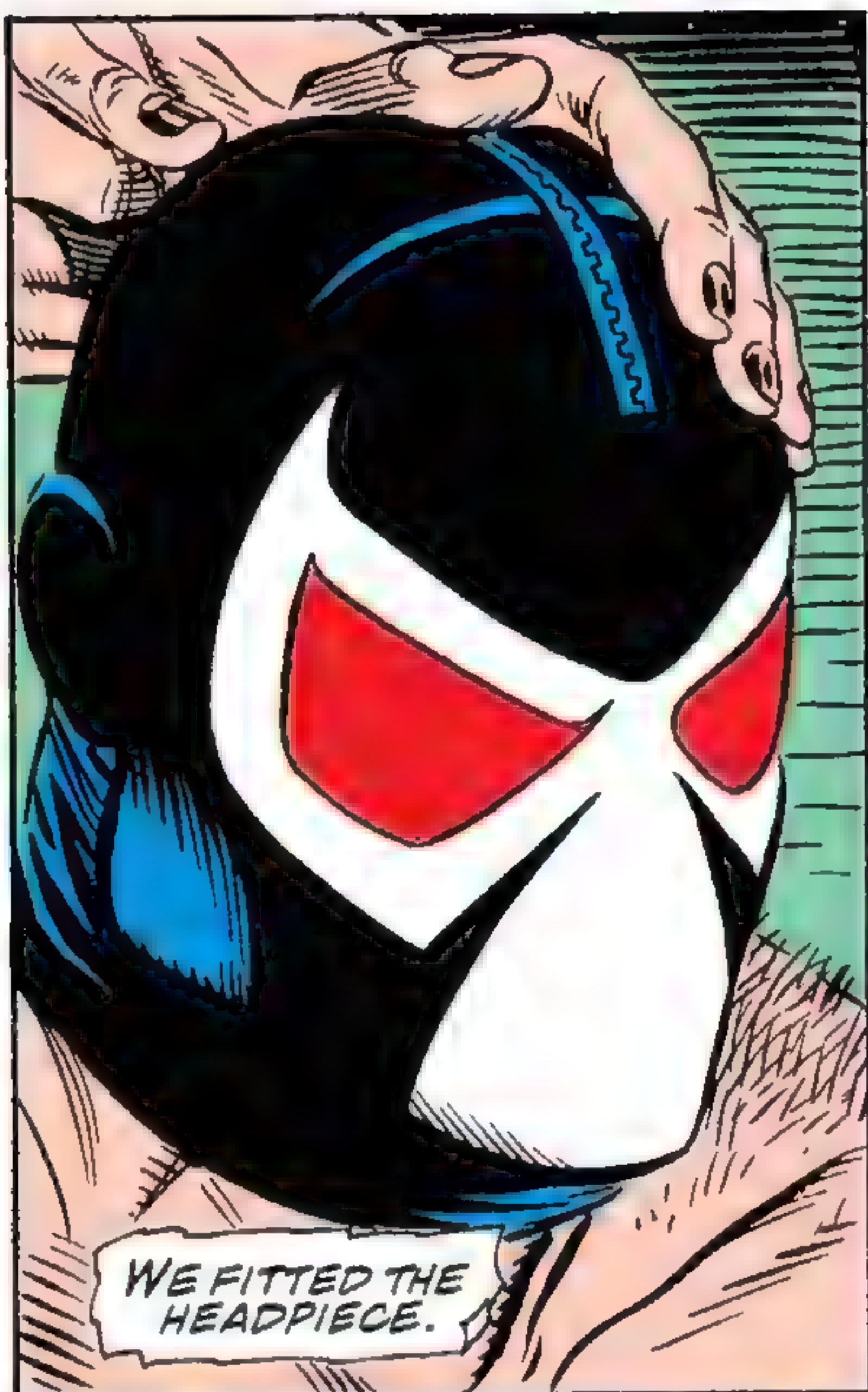


AND OUR LOYALTY
TO HIM GREW EVEN
STRONGER.









WE FITTED THE
HEADPIECE.

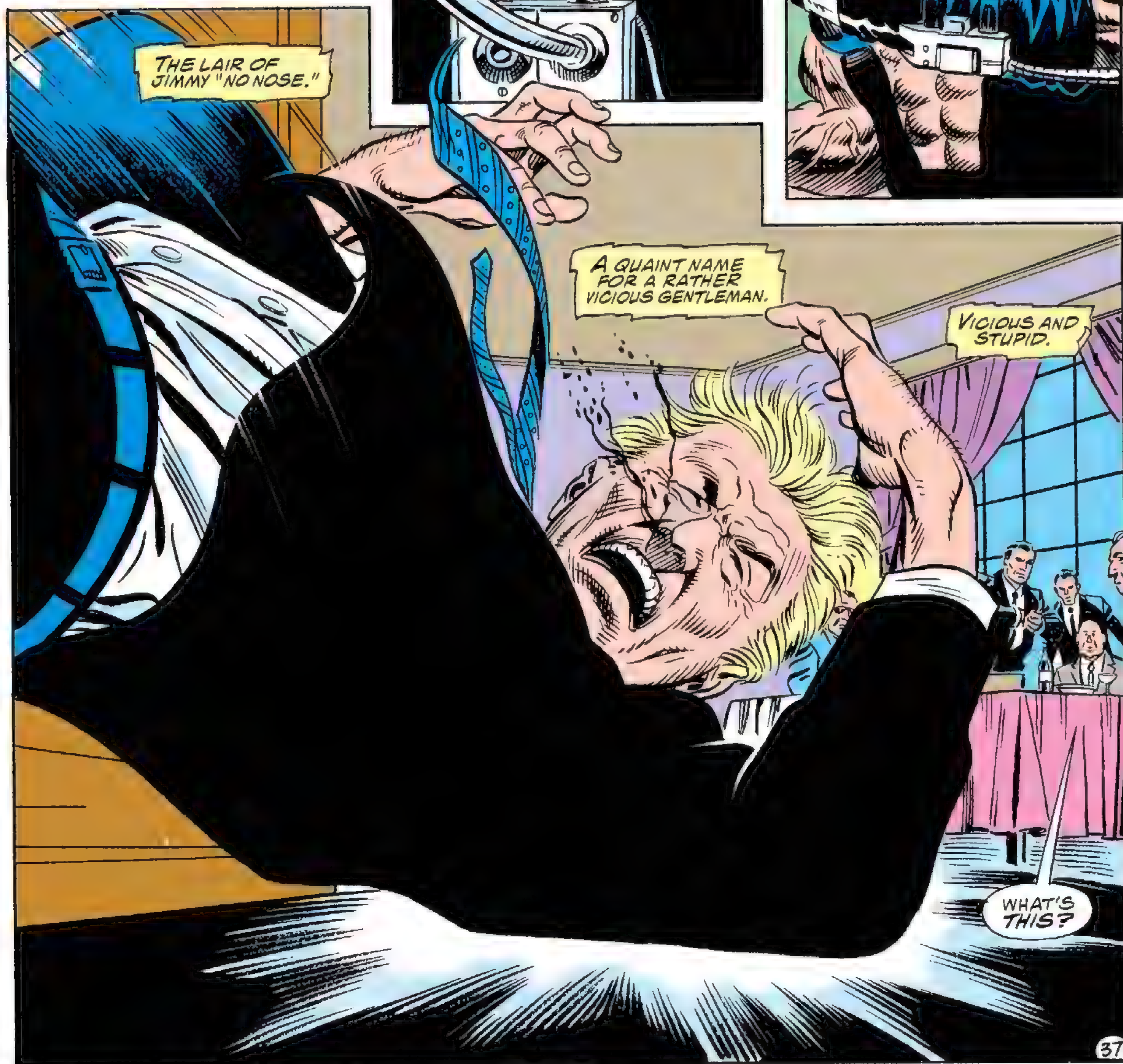


WE ATTACHED THE
FEED PORTS.



AND WE GAVE HIM A WAY
TO SUPPLY HIMSELF
WITH THE VENOM AT WILL.

I AM
COMPLETE.



THE LAIR OF
JIMMY "NO NOSE."

A QUAIN NAME
FOR A RATHER
VICIOUS GENTLEMAN.

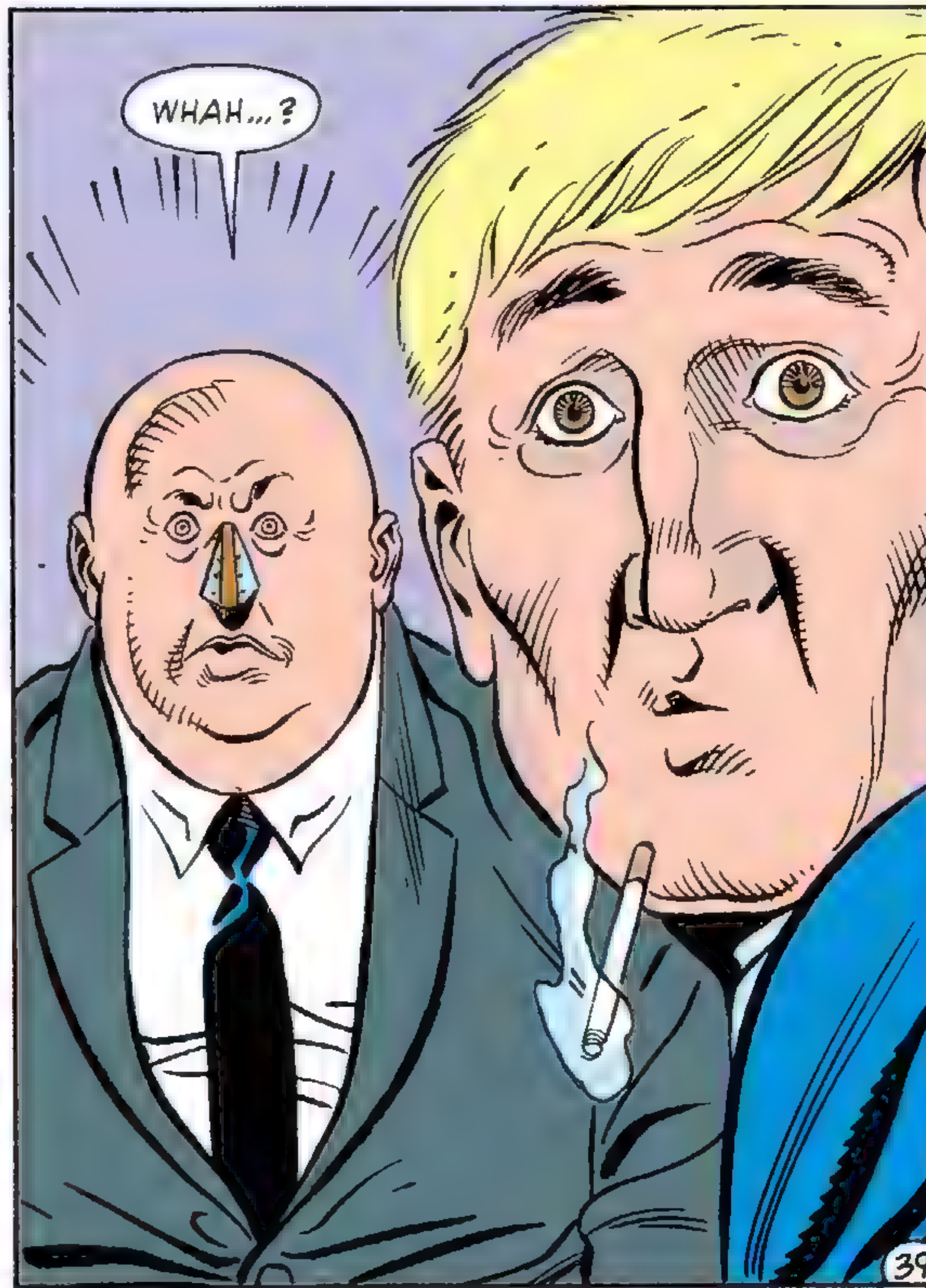
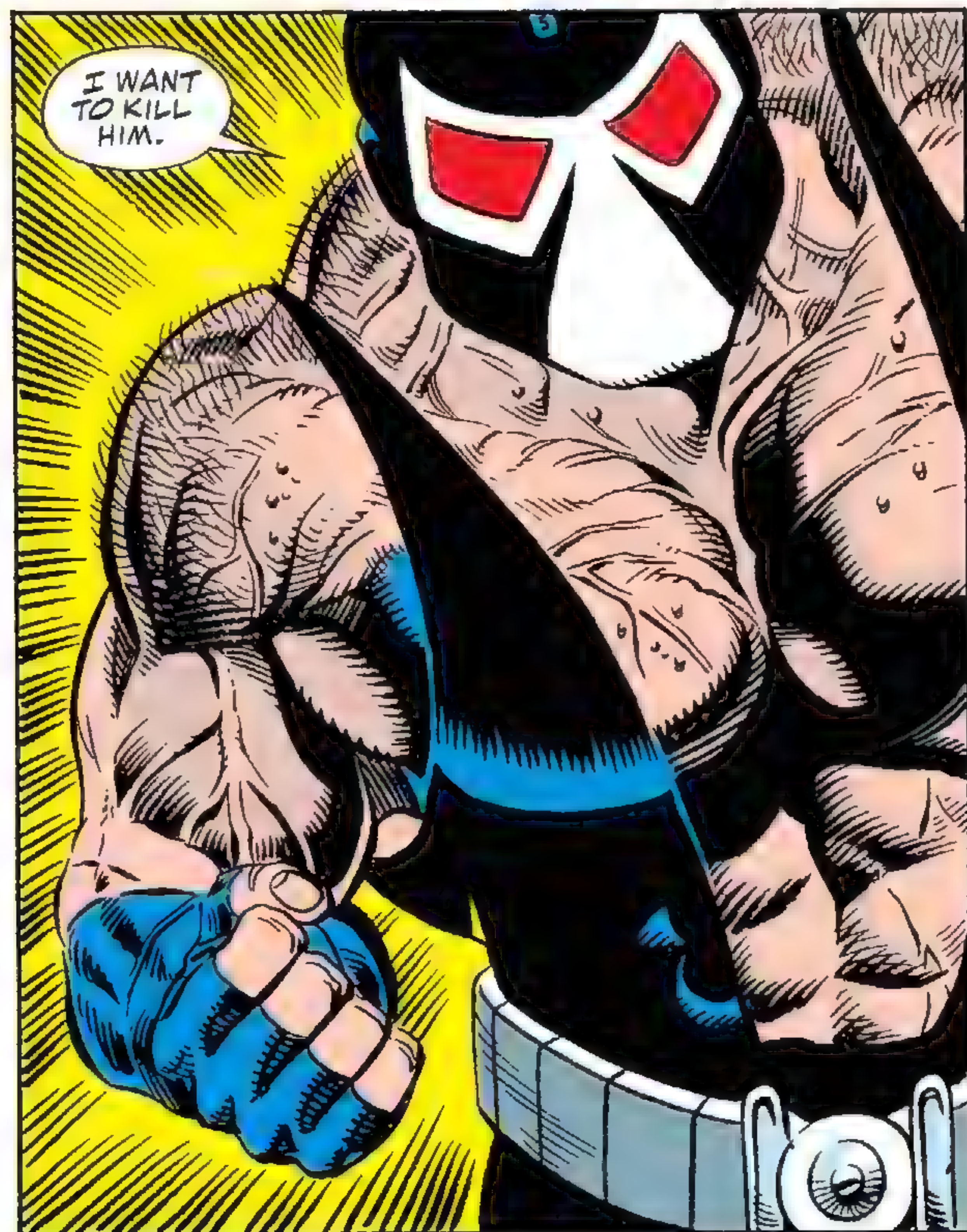
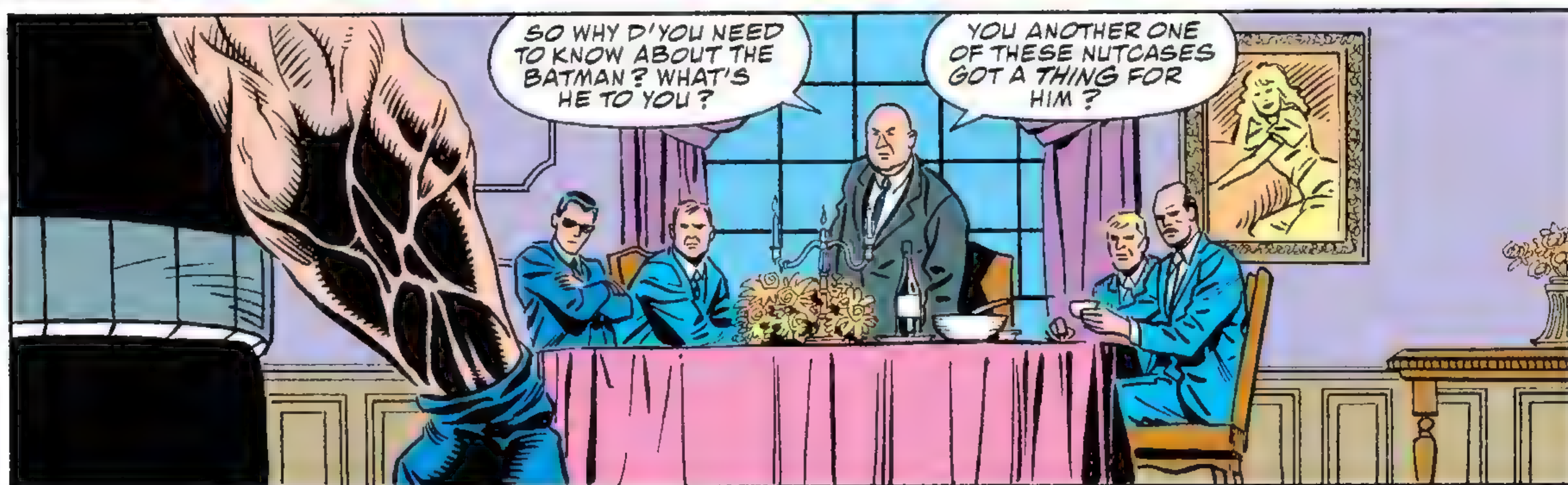
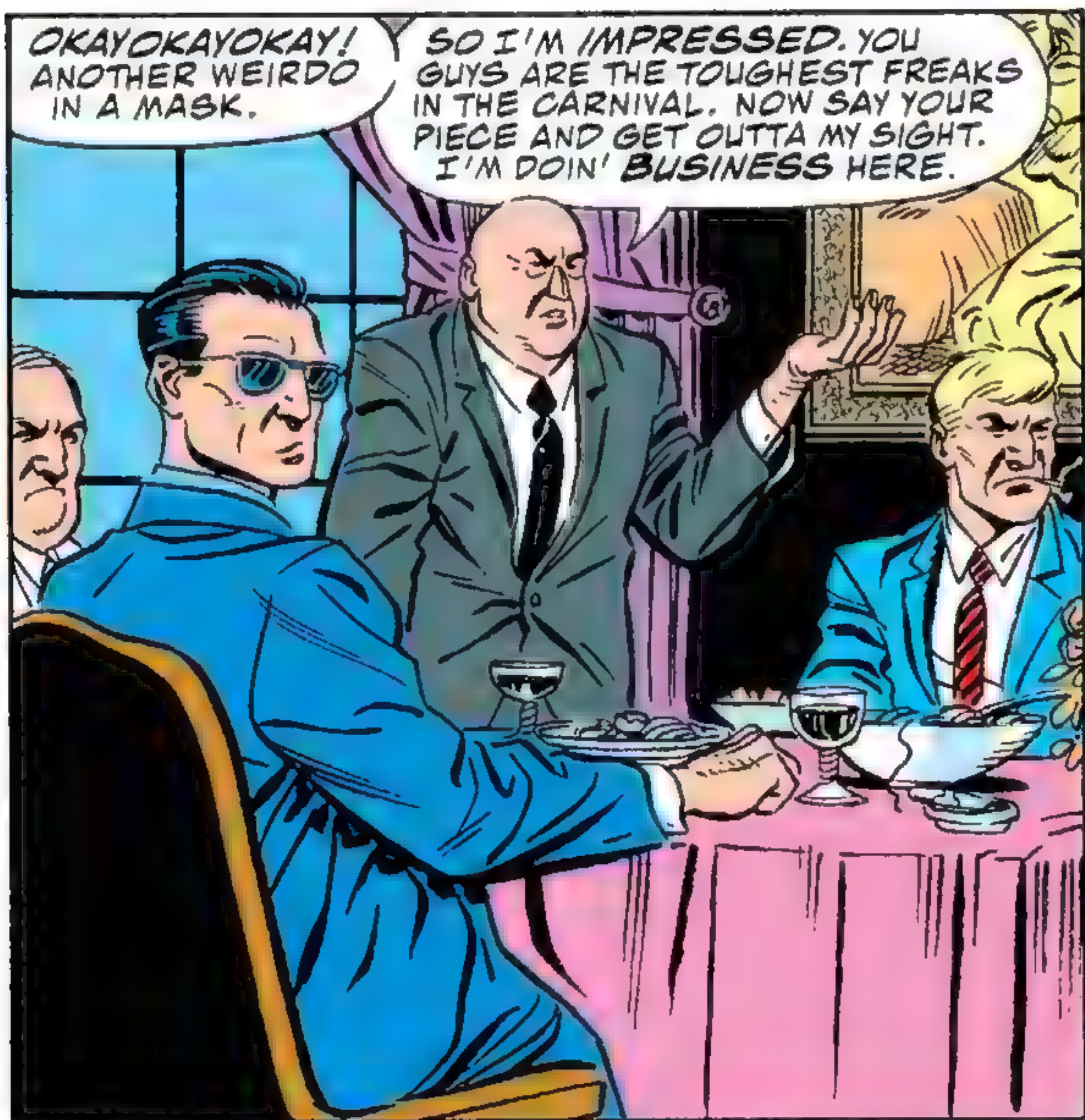
VICIOUS AND
STUPID.

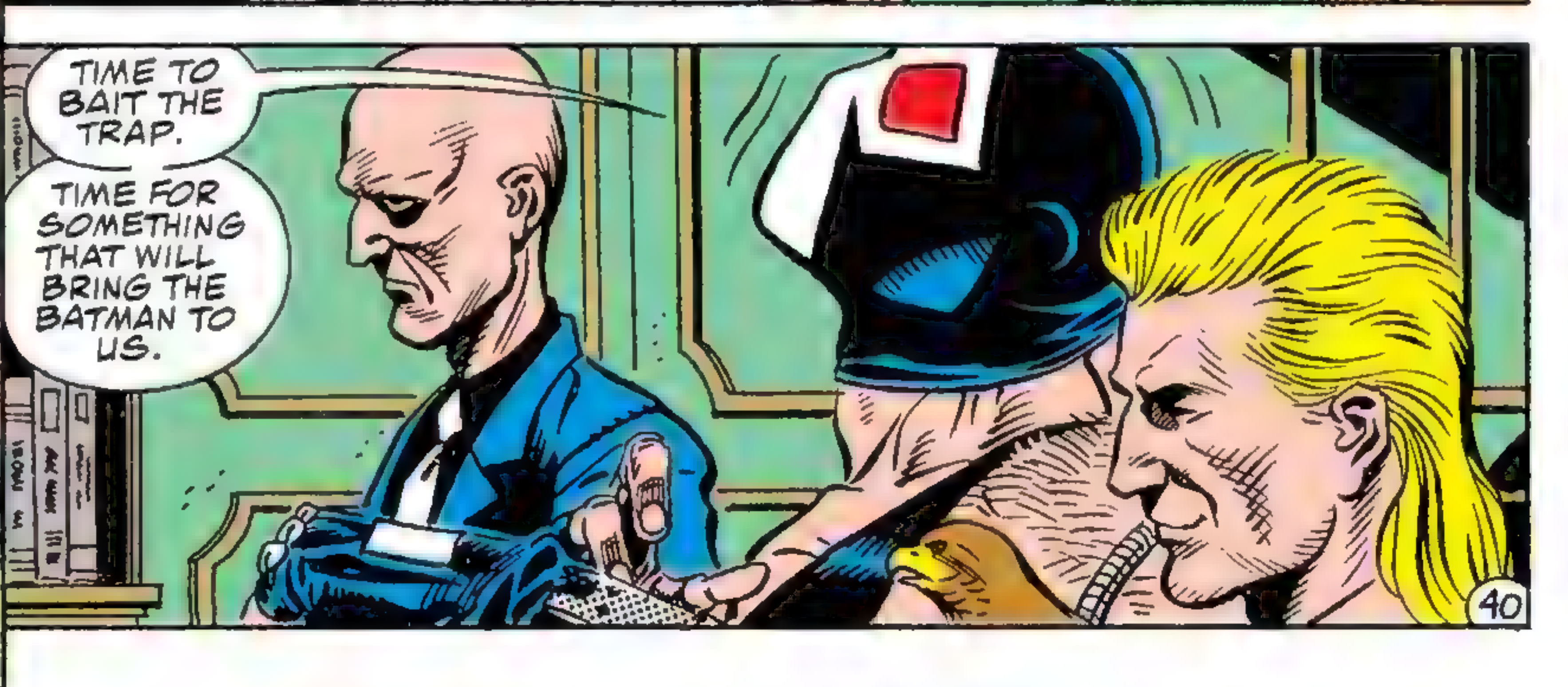
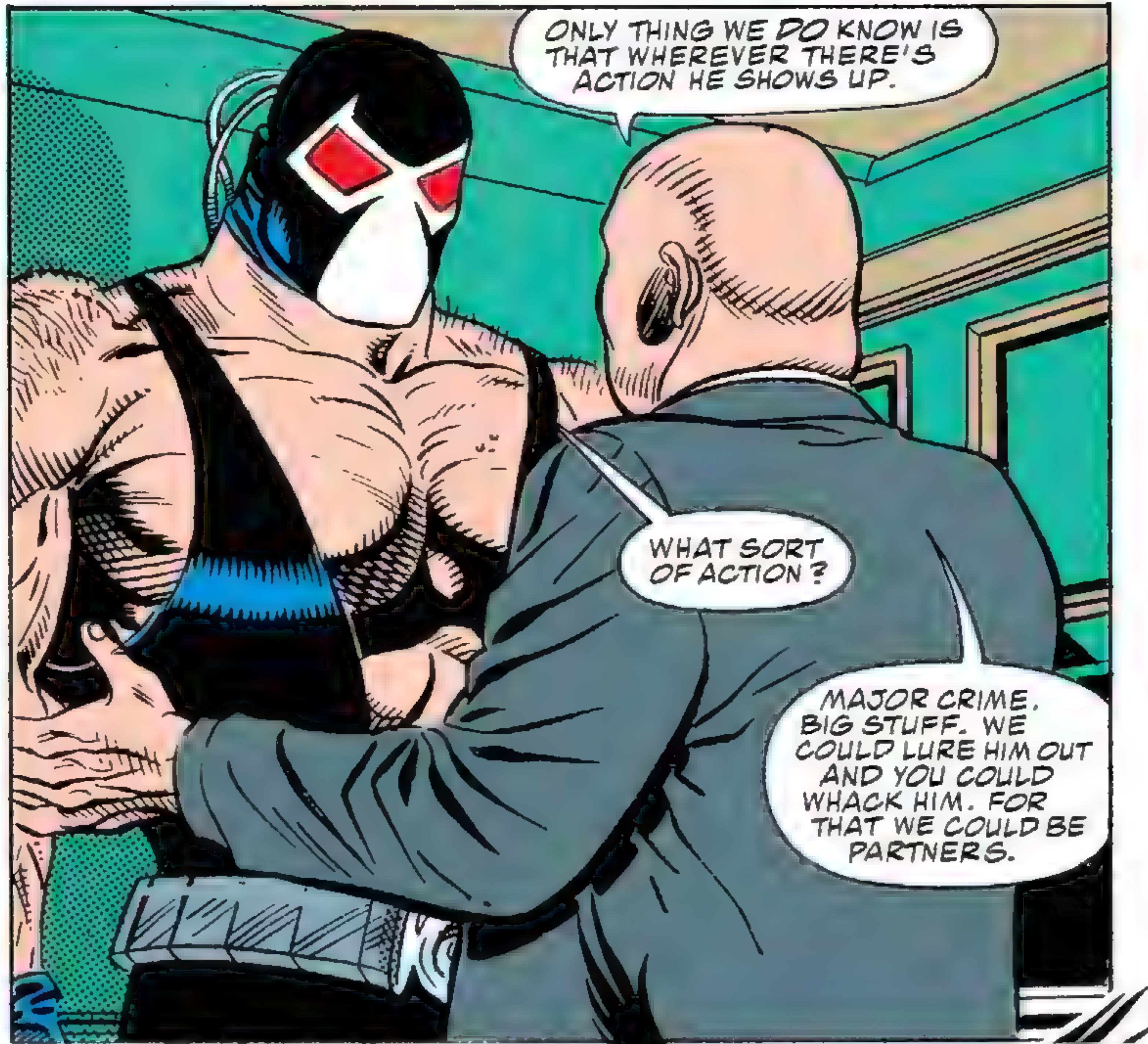
WHAT'S
THIS?

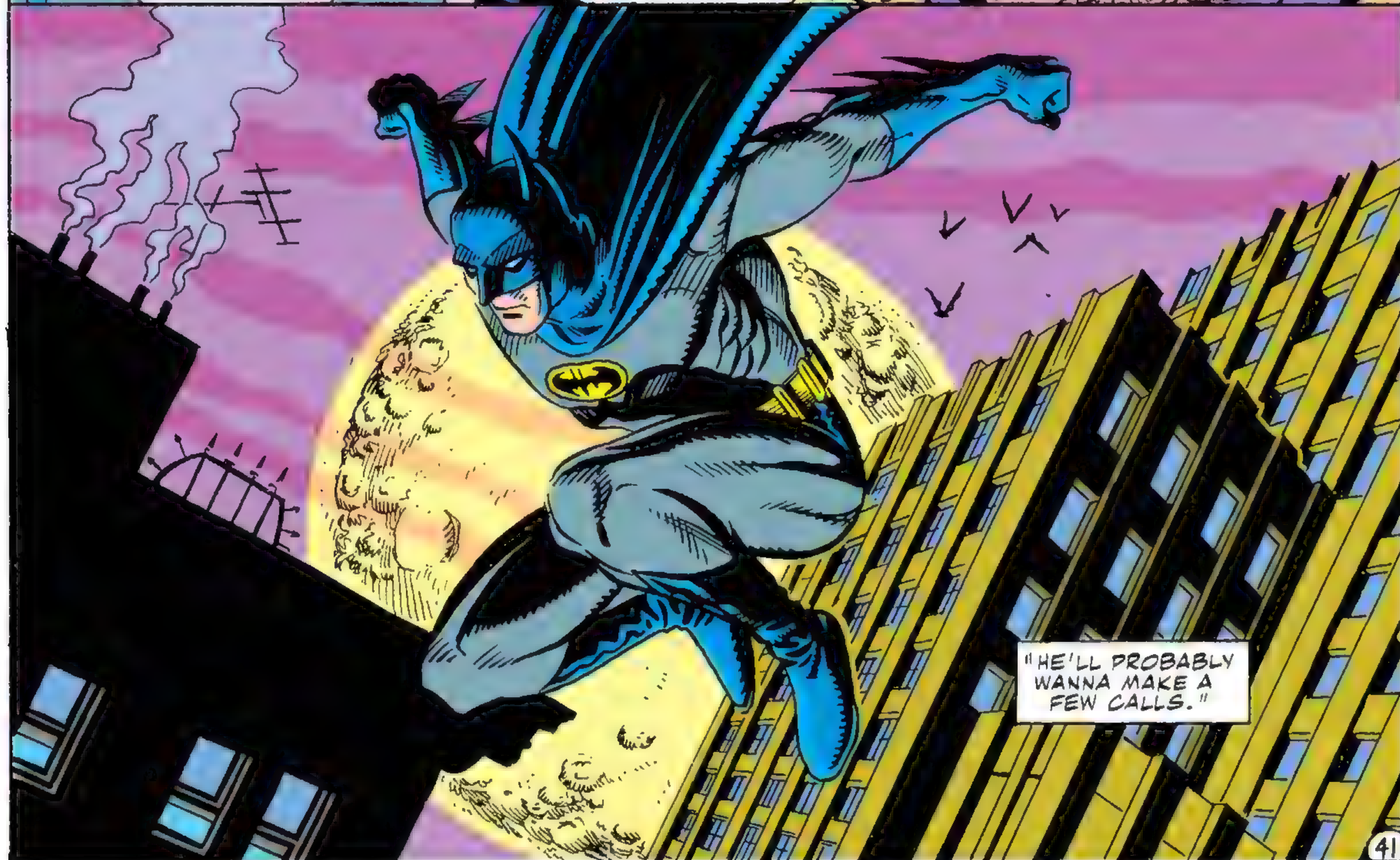
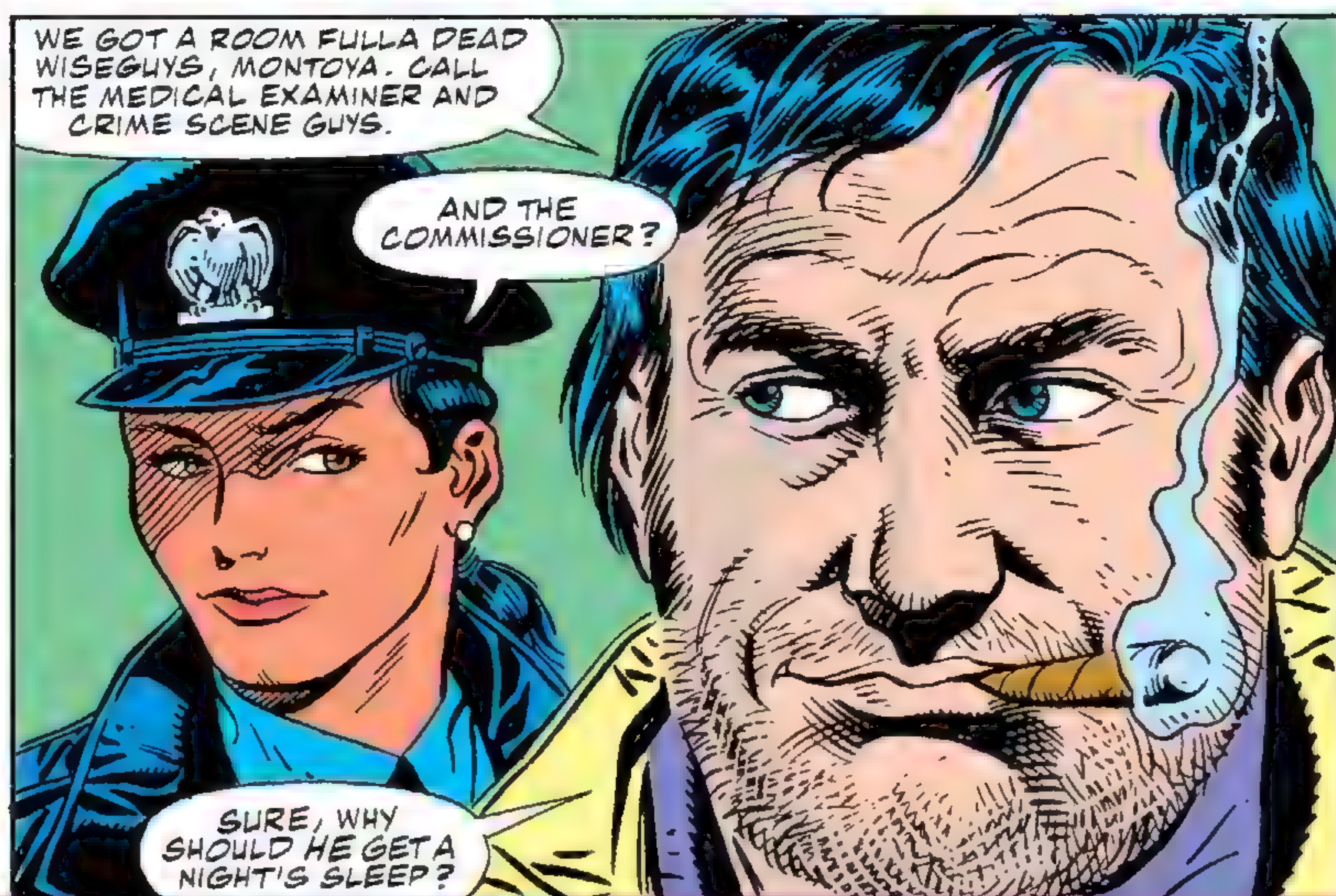
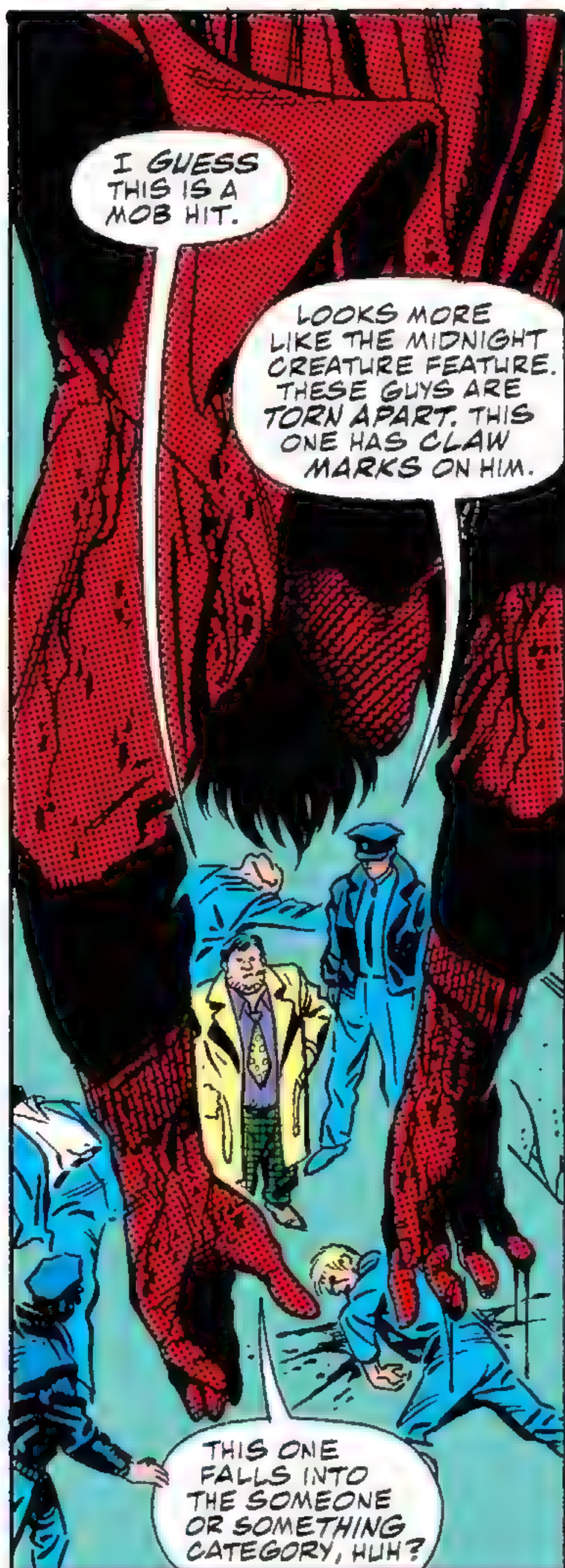


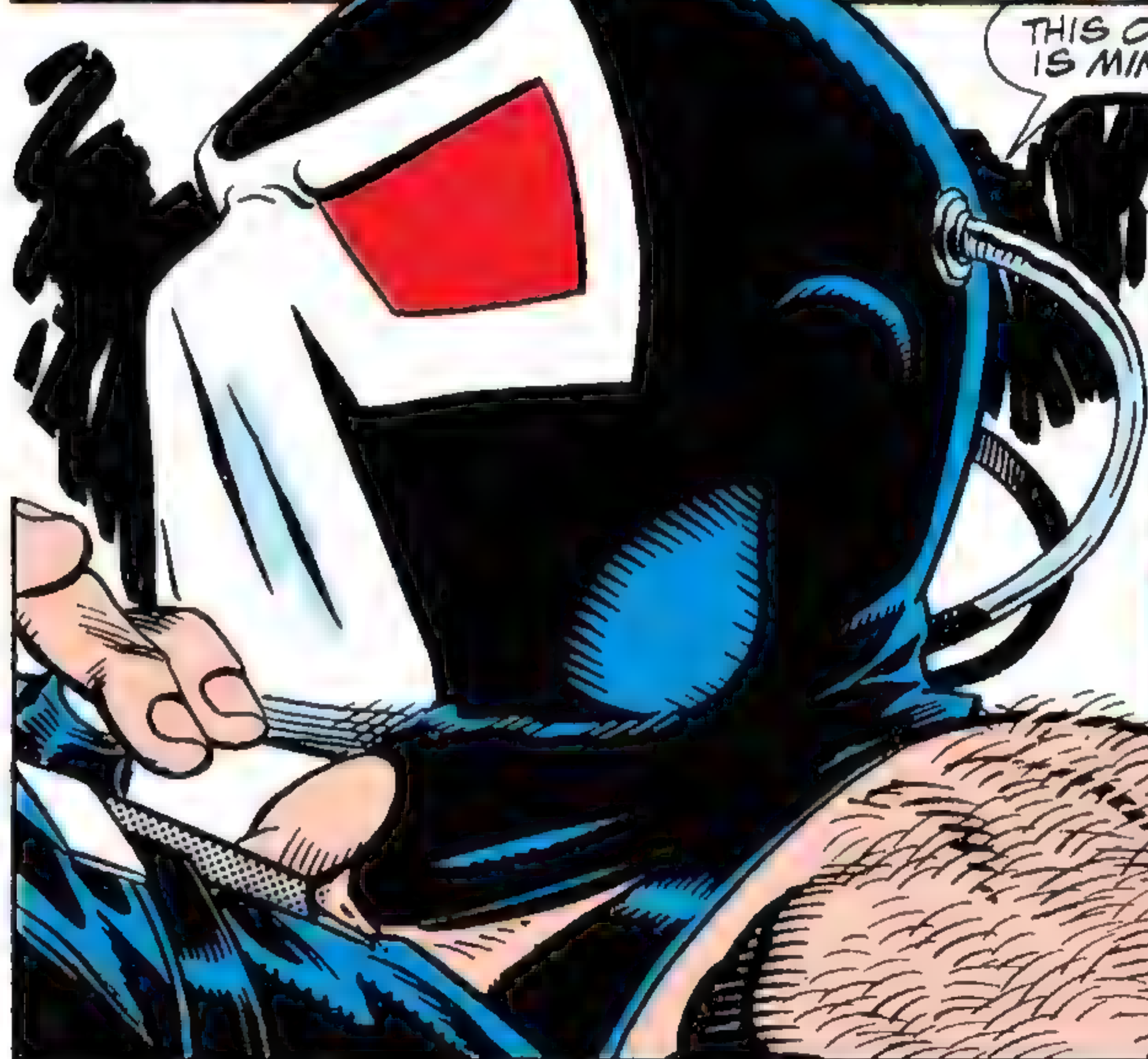
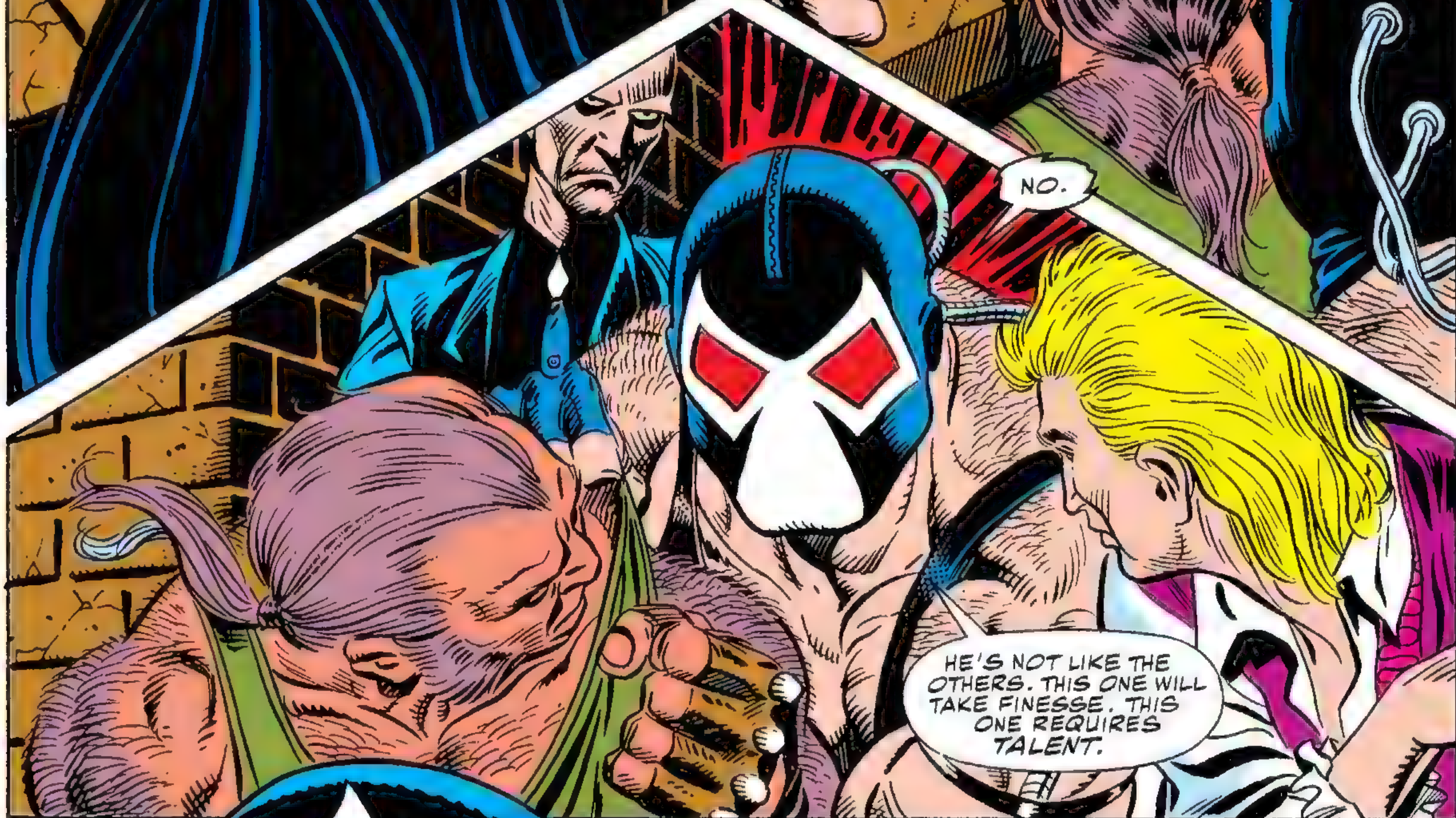
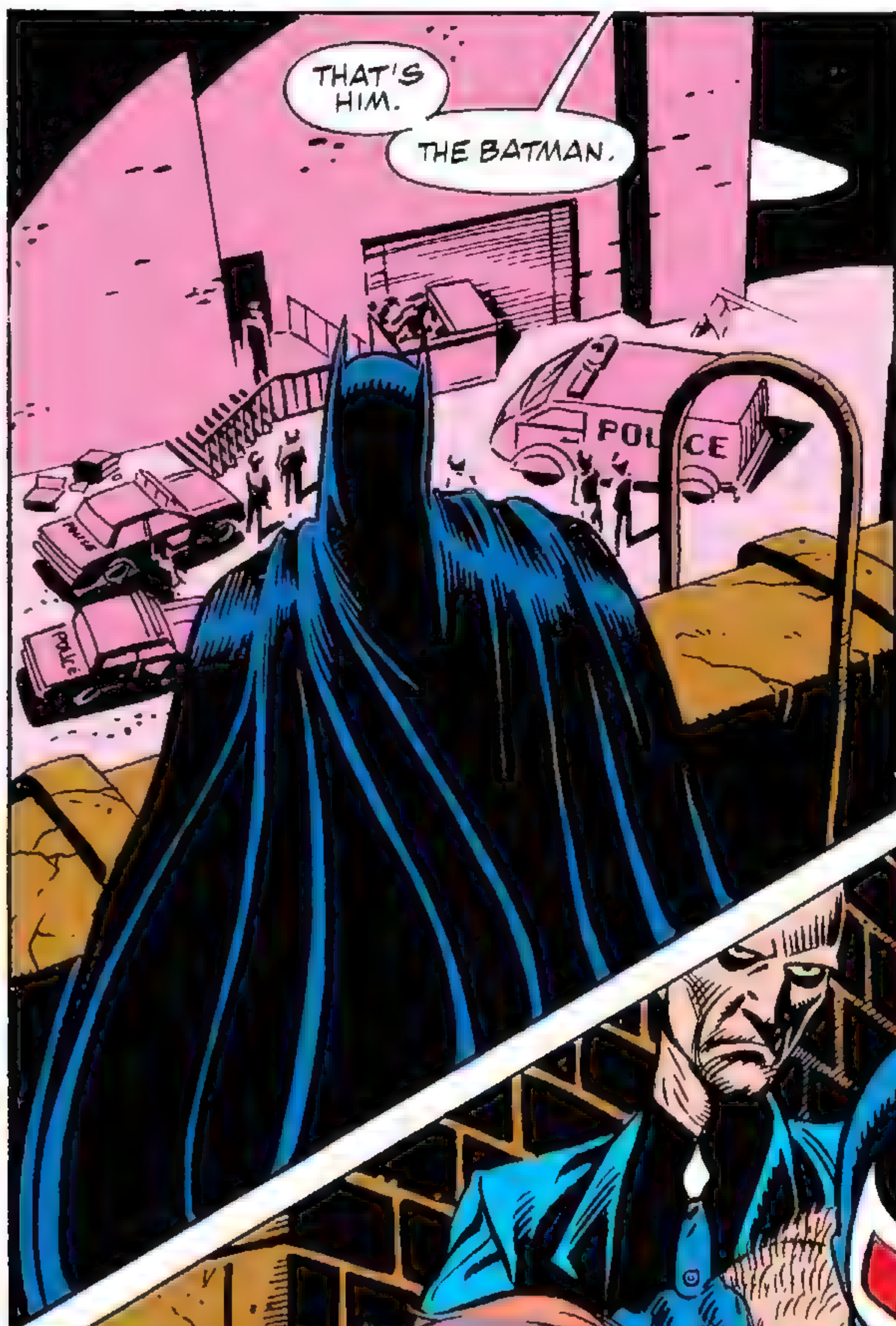
YOUR BUSINESS IS WITH ME.

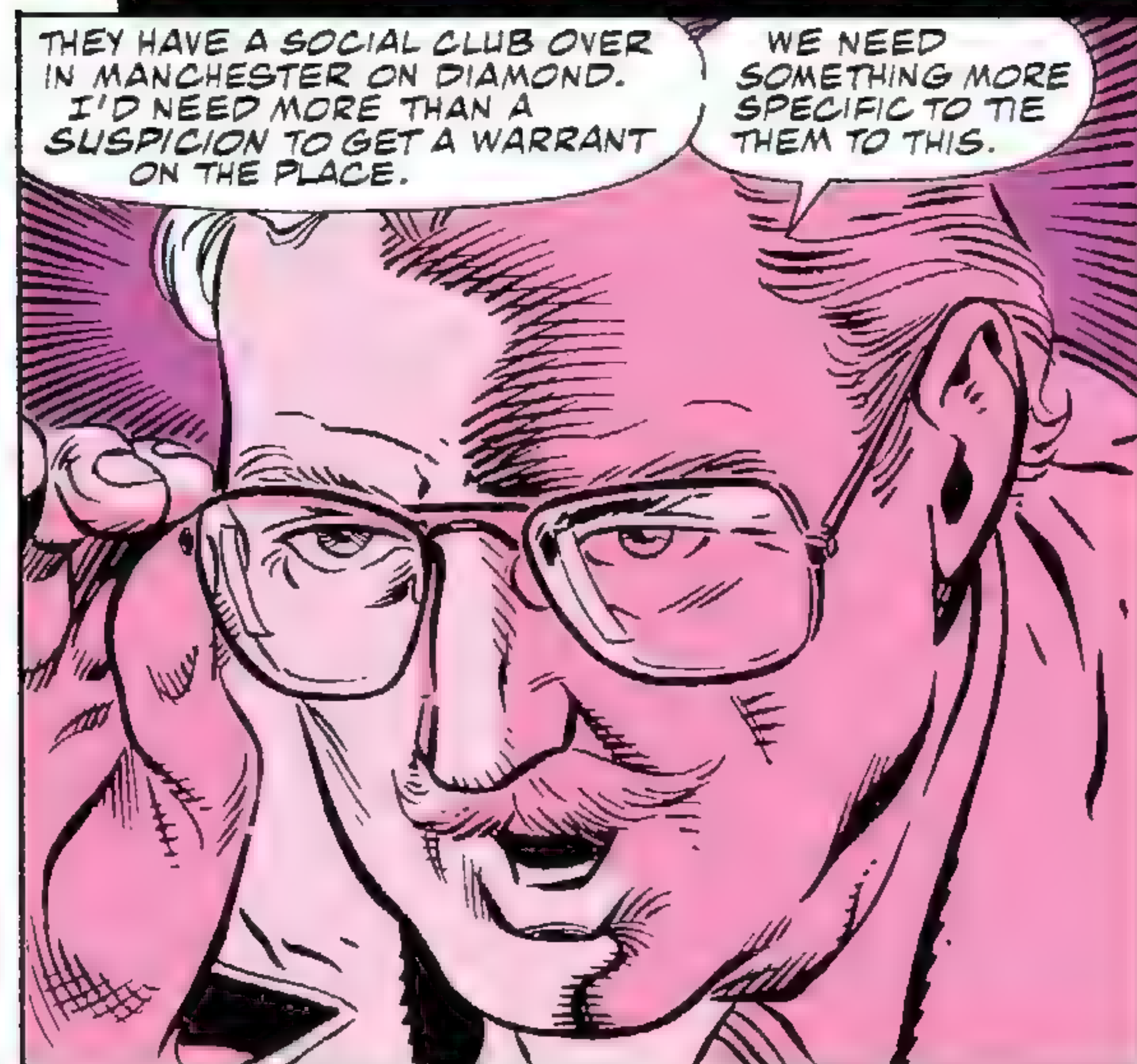
I WANT ONLY ONE THING FROM YOU.







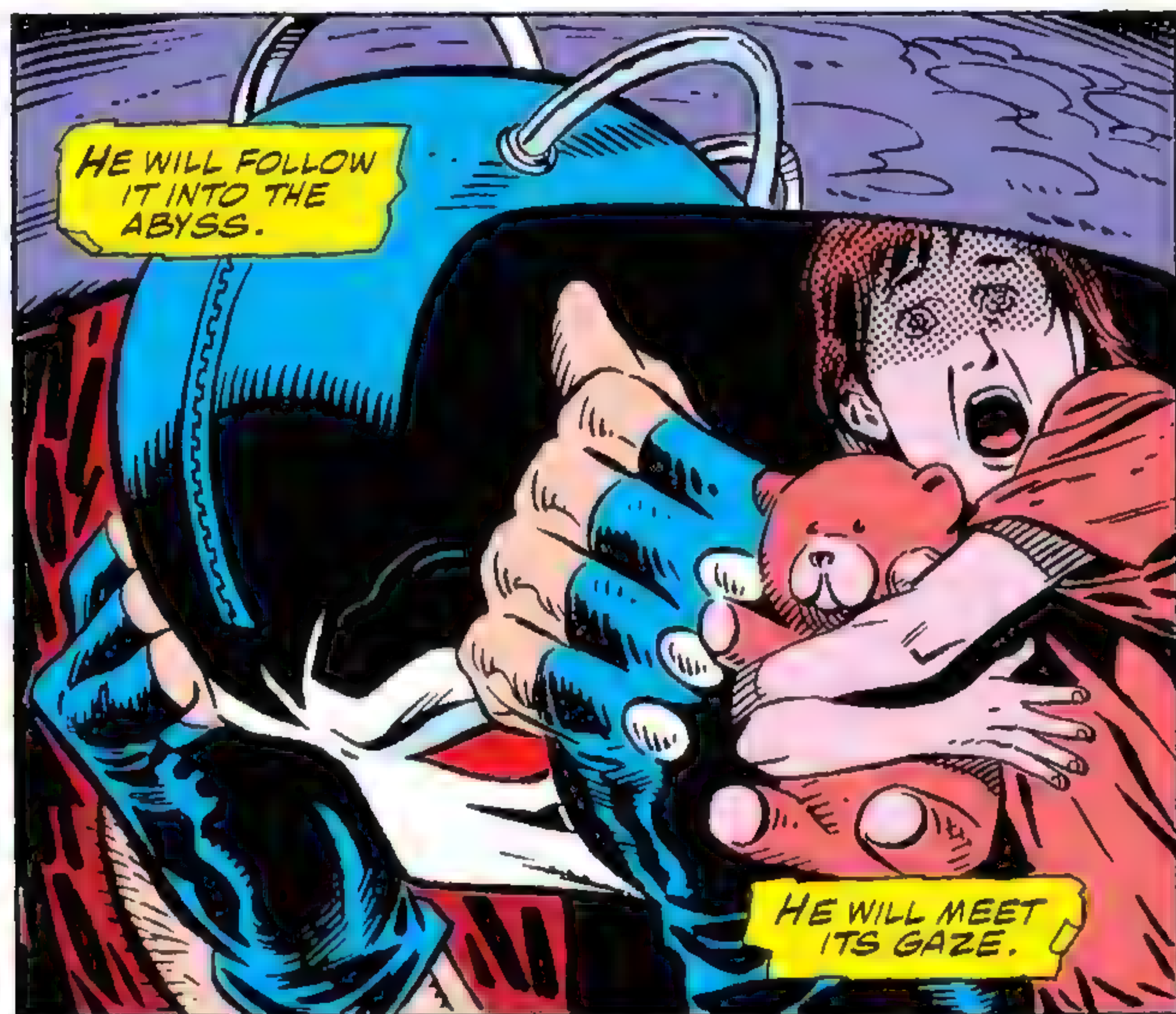






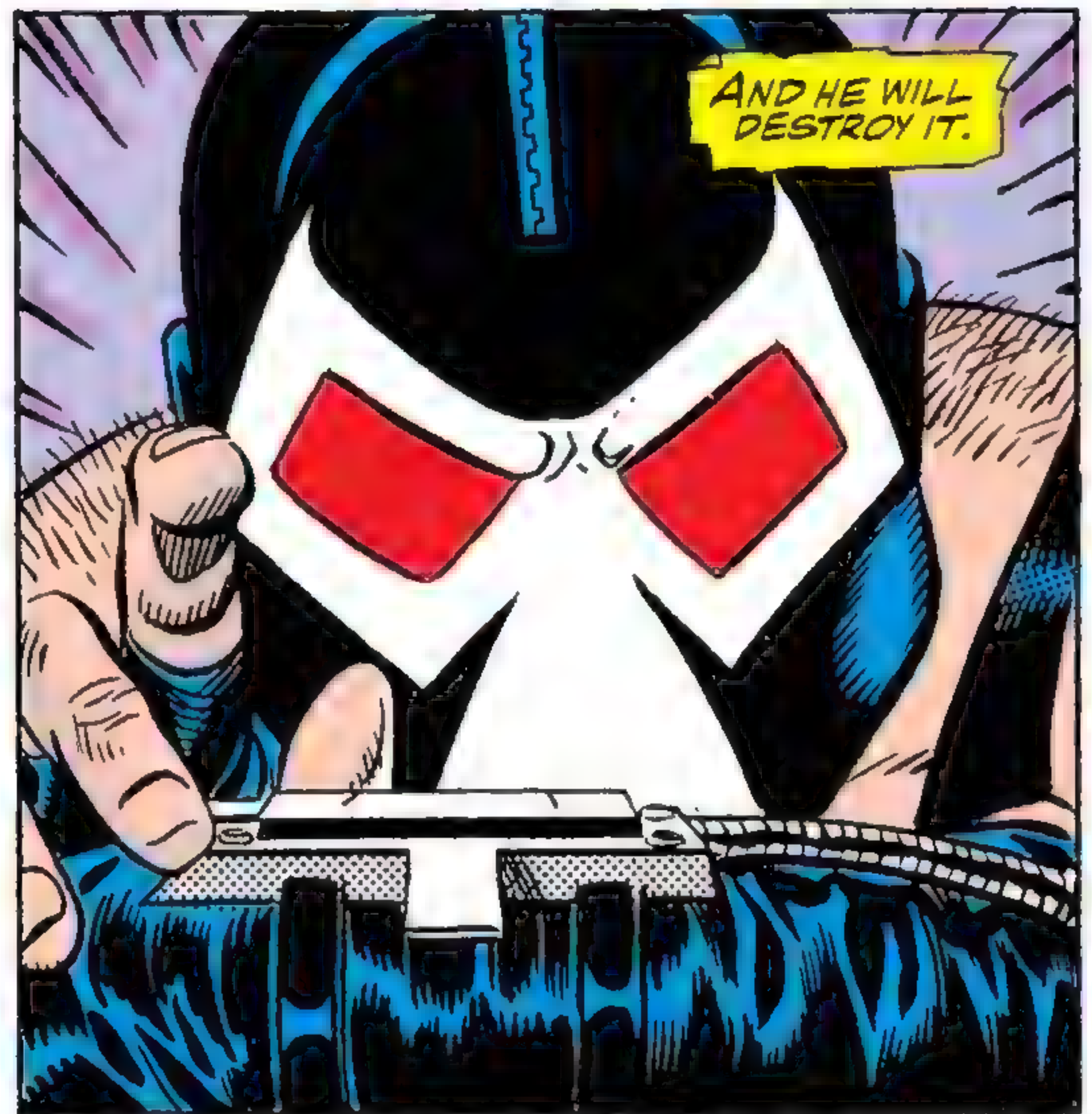


HE WILL CONFRONT
THIS CREATURE
ON HIS OWN.

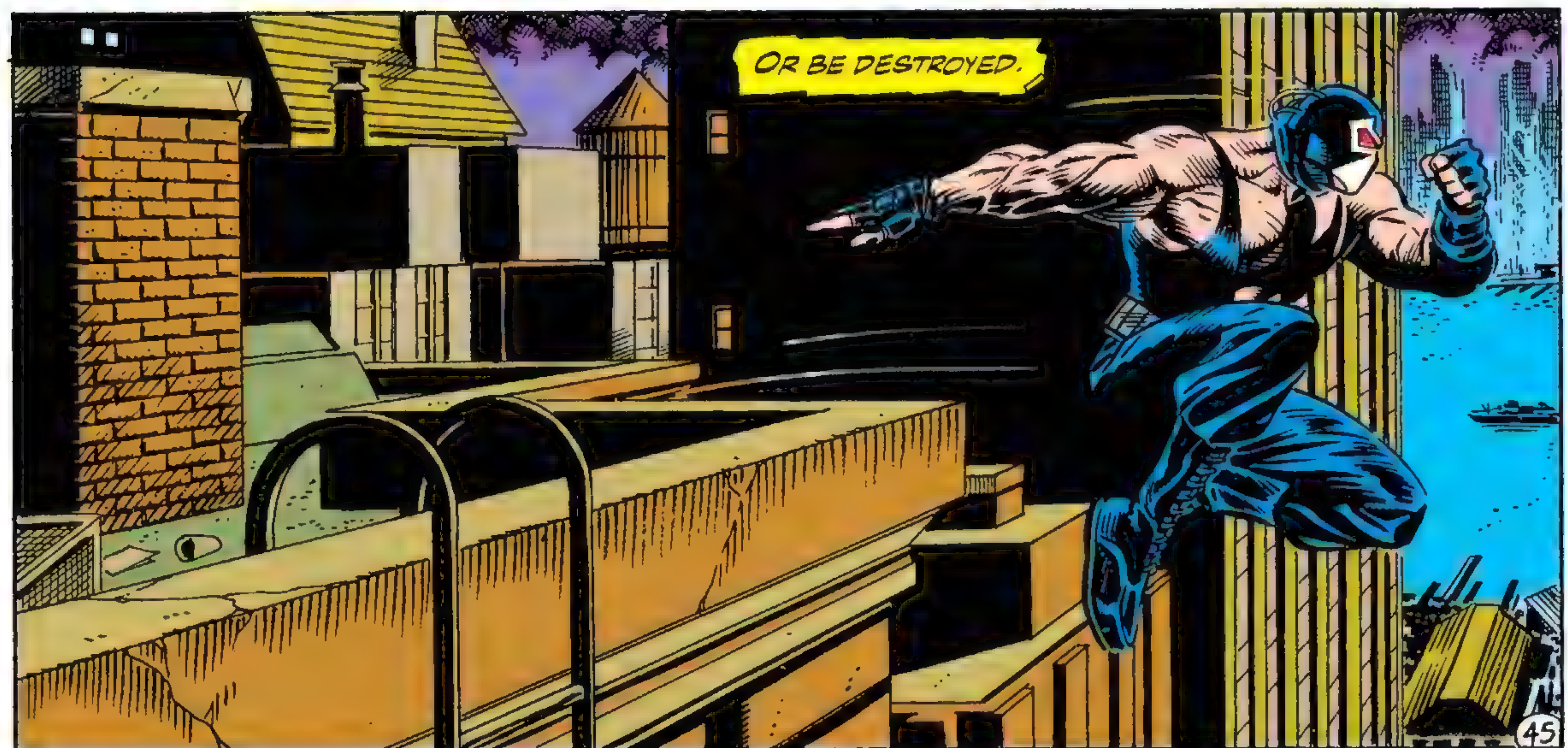


HE WILL FOLLOW
IT INTO THE
ABYSS.

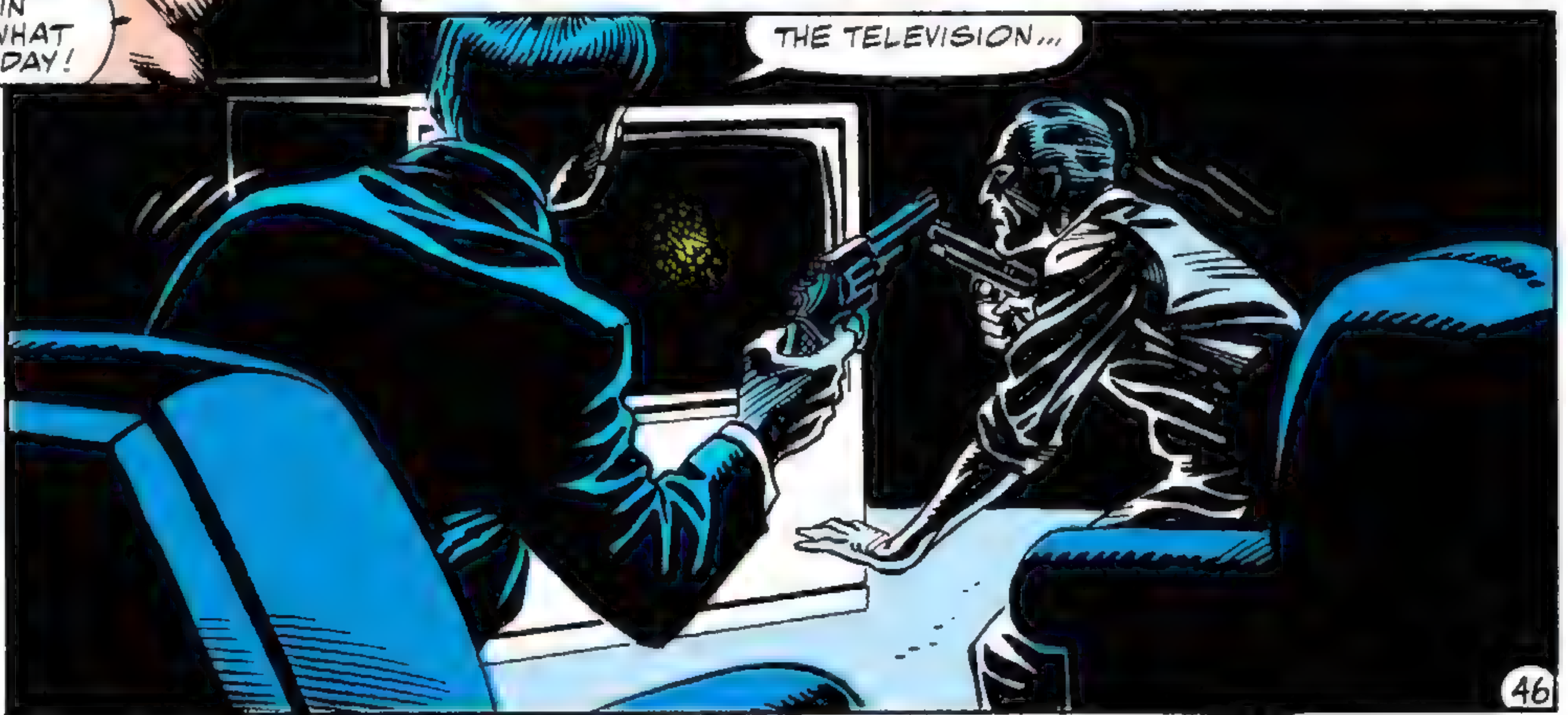
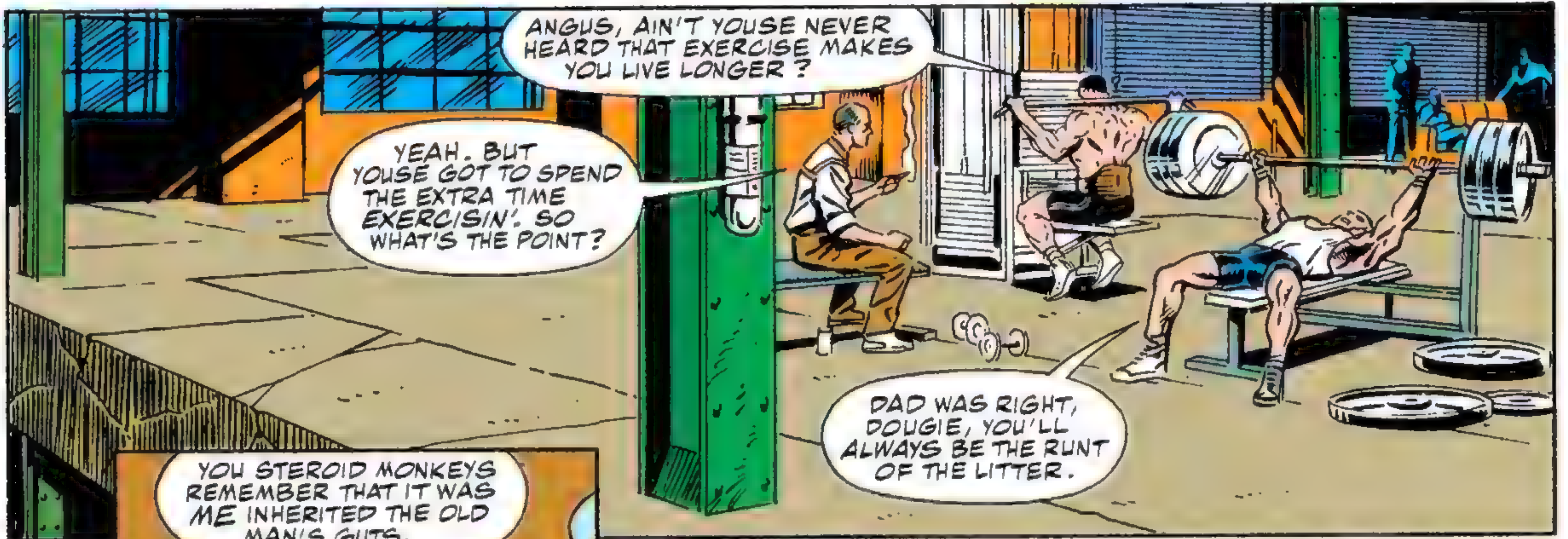
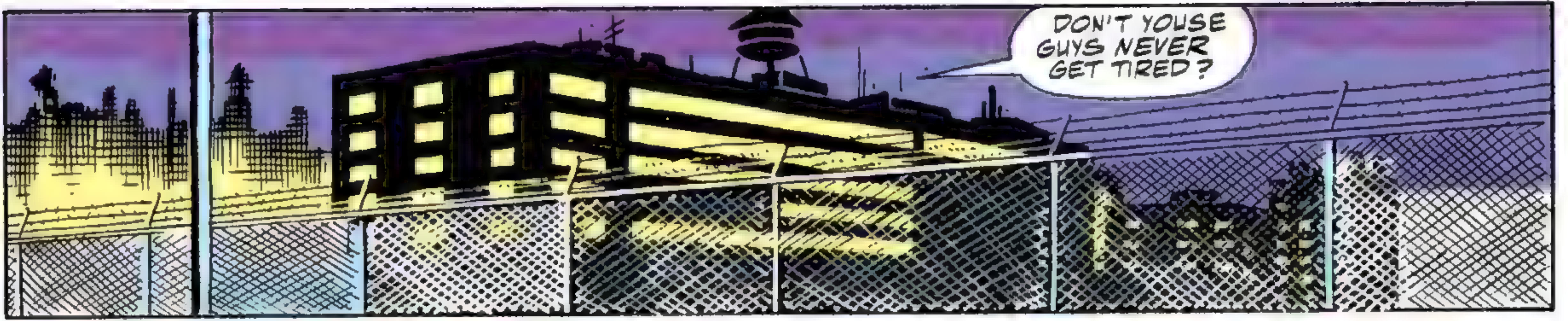
HE WILL MEET
ITS GAZE.

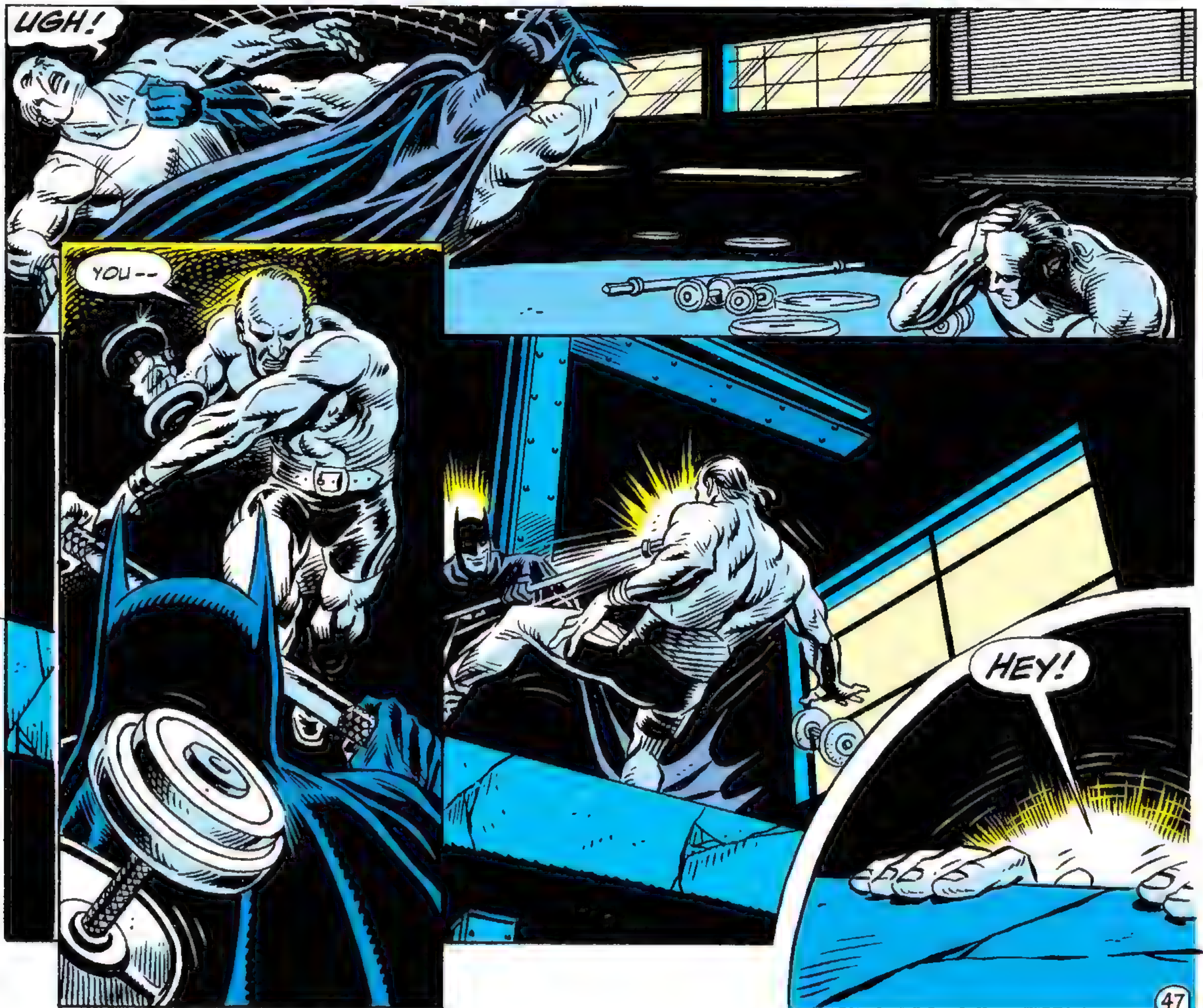
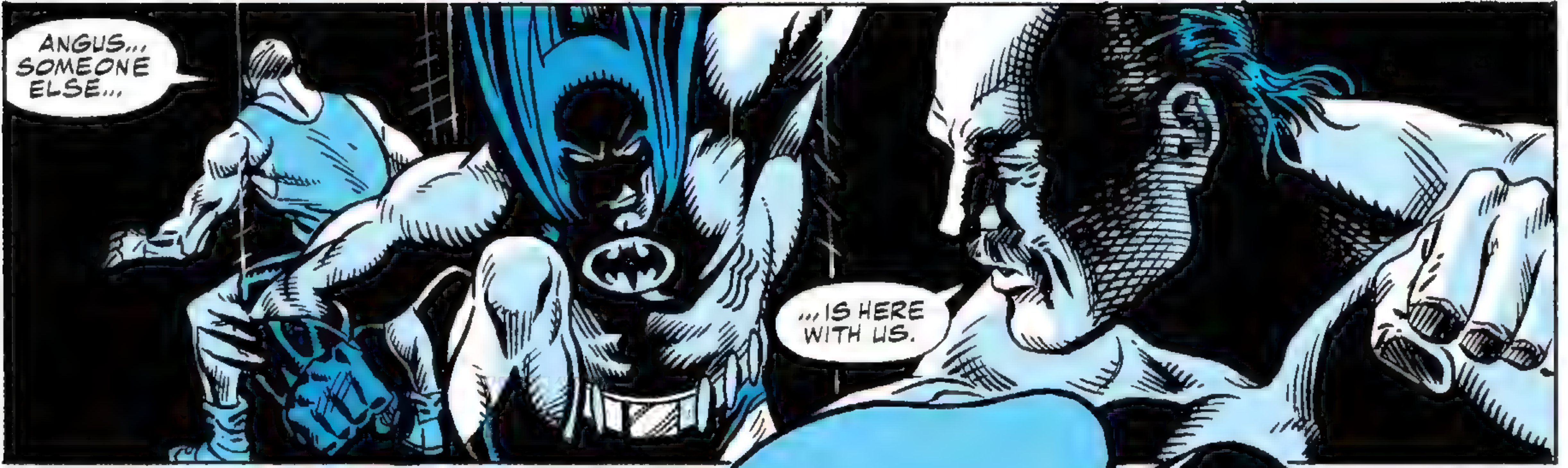


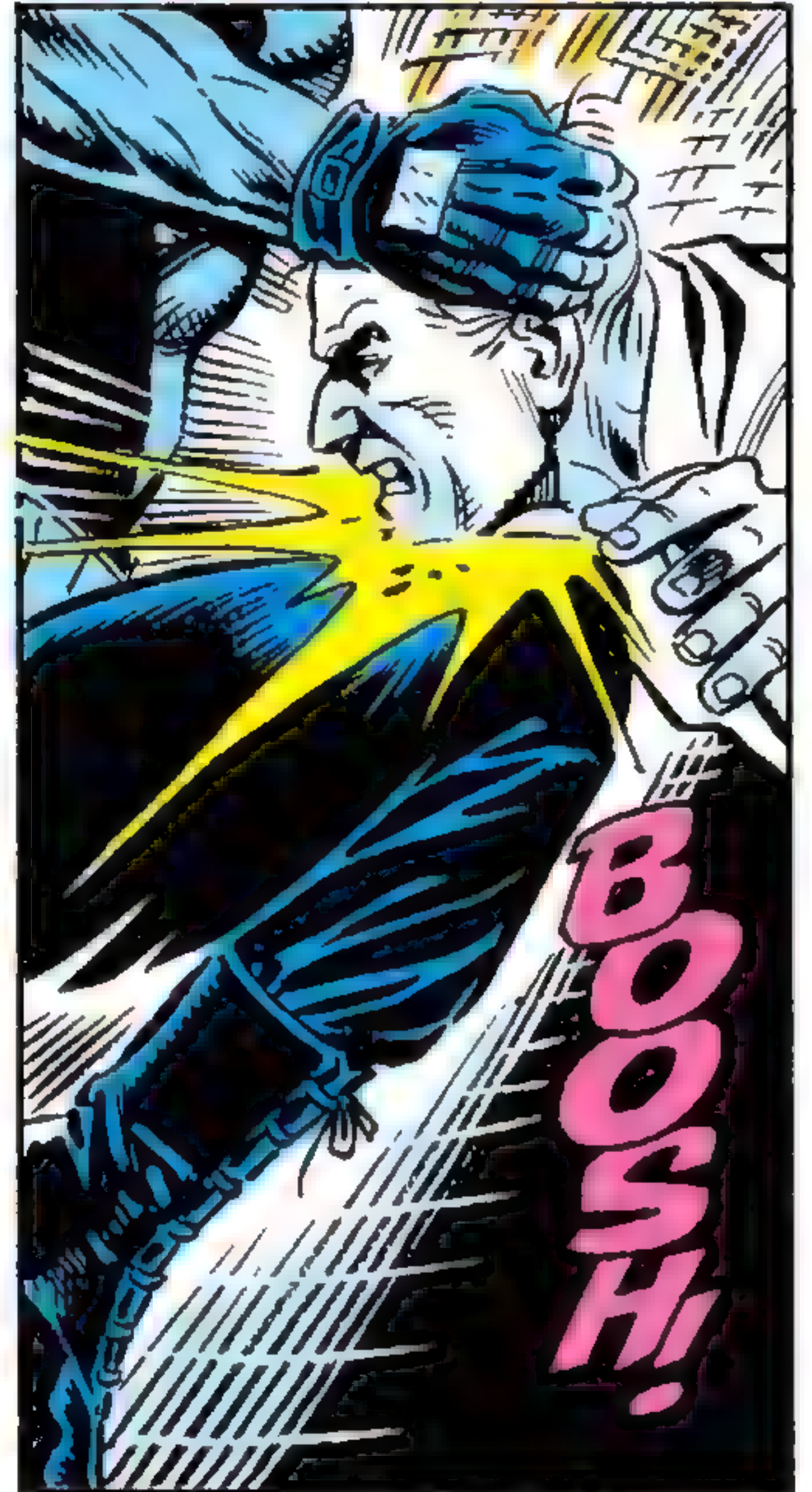
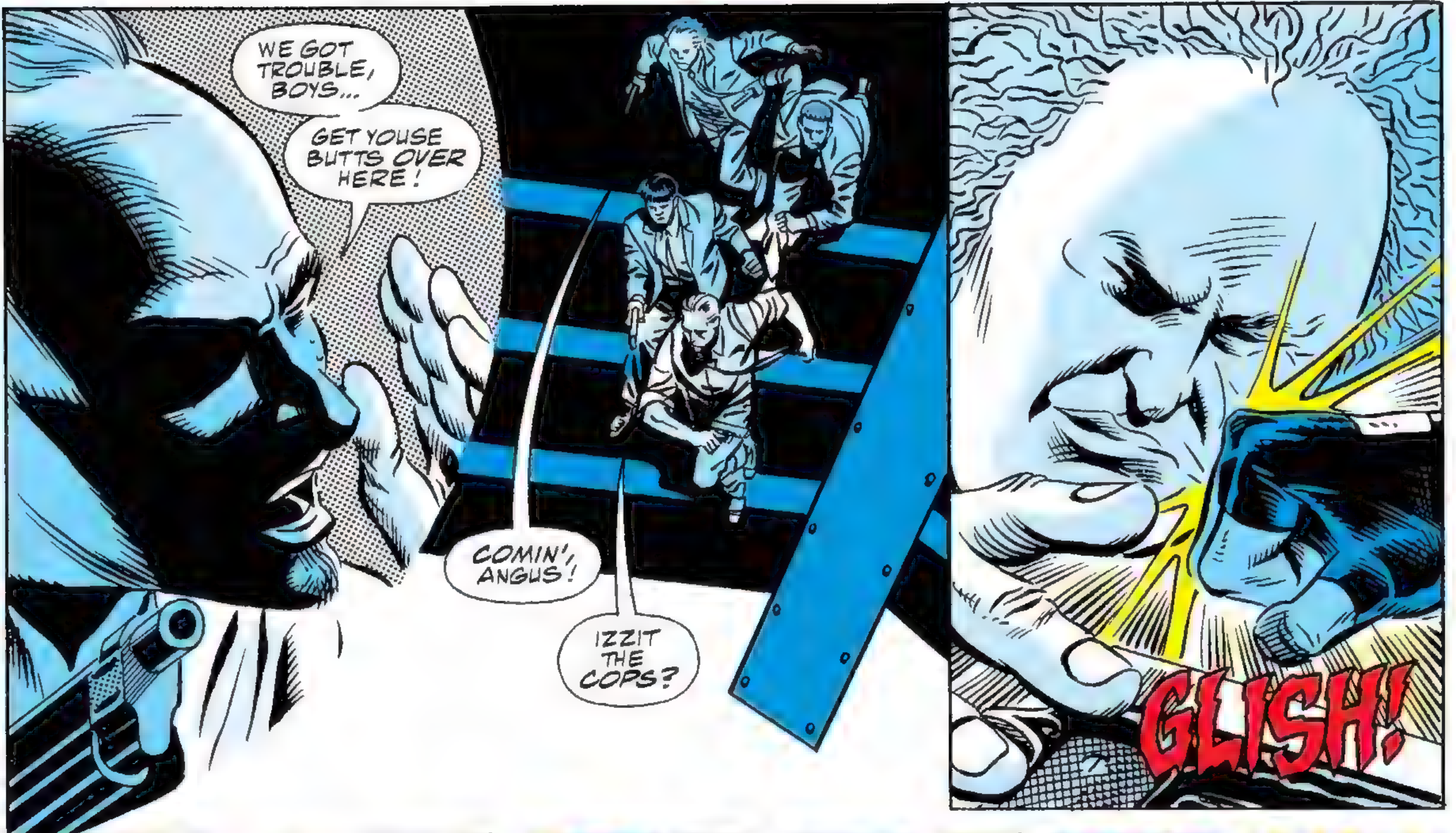
AND HE WILL
DESTROY IT.

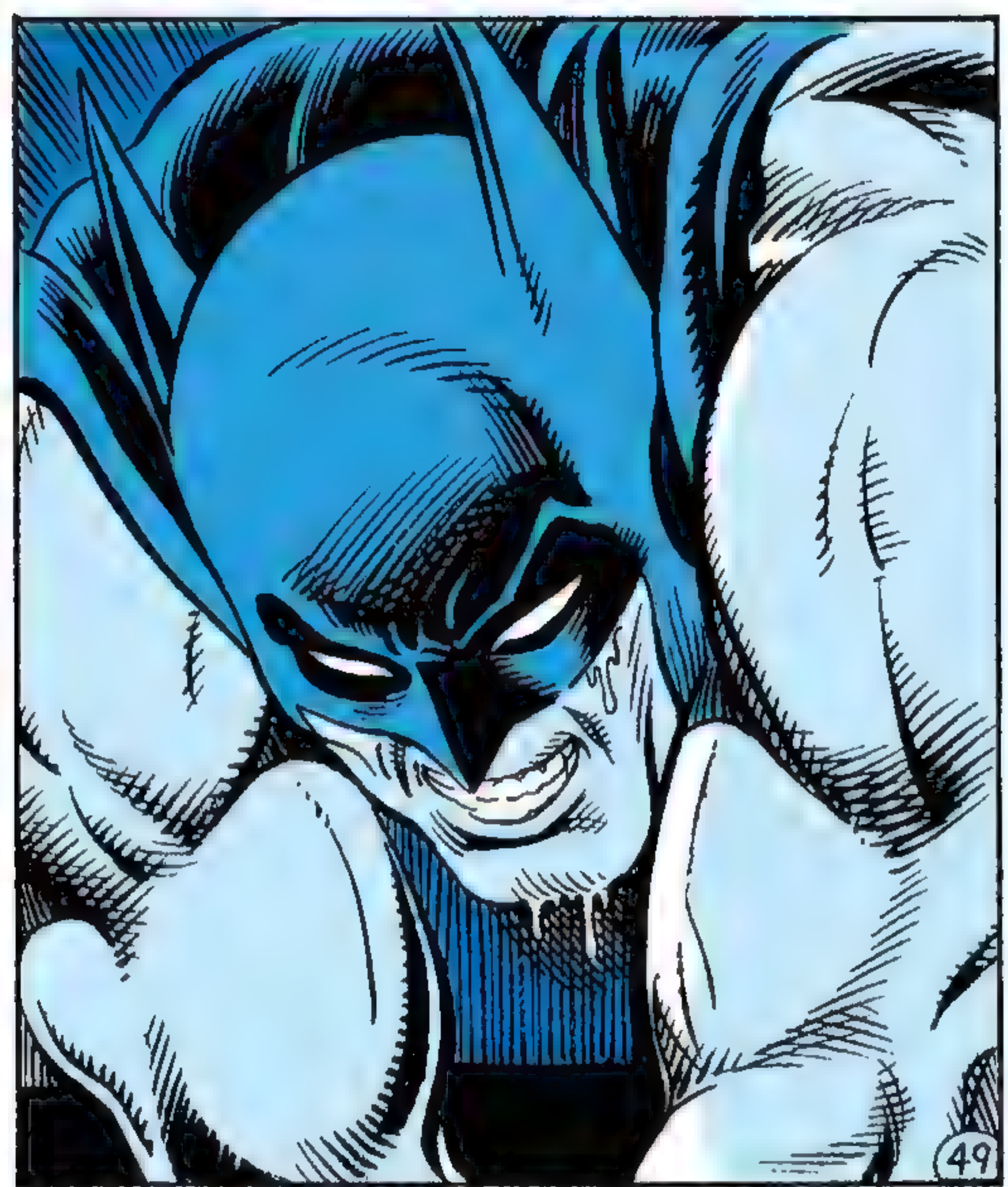
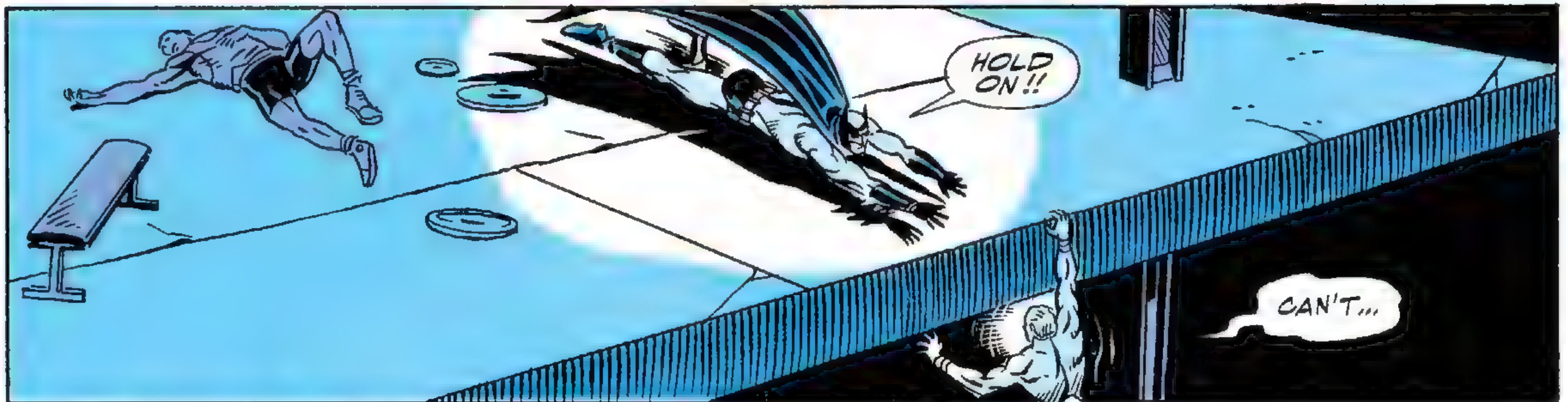
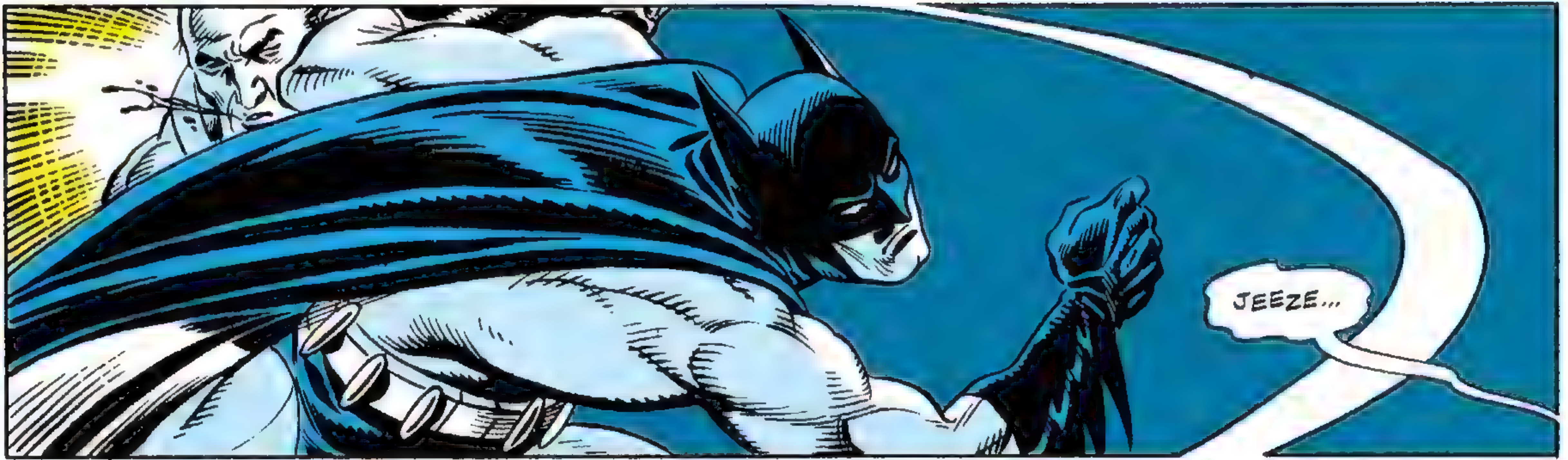


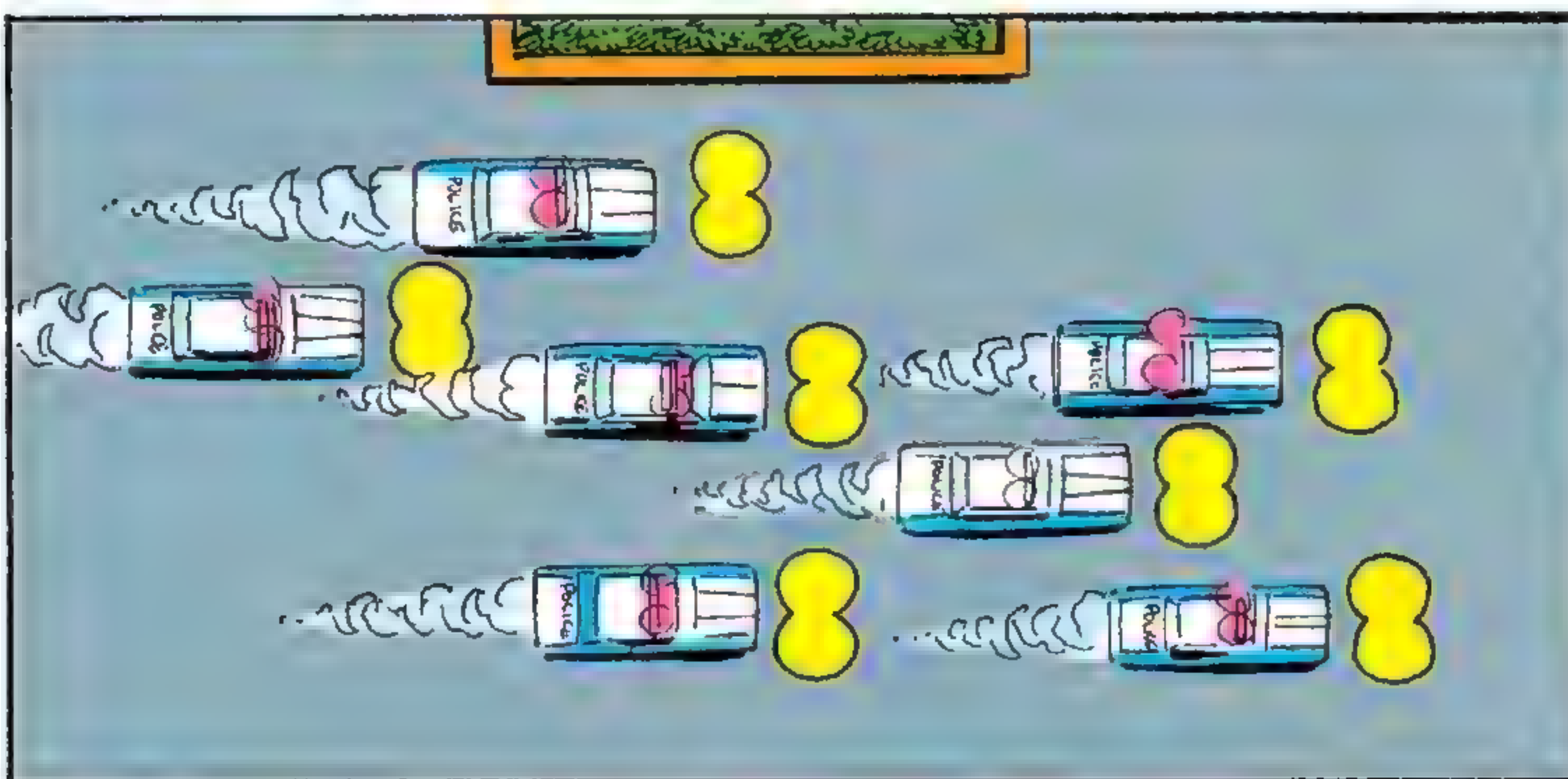
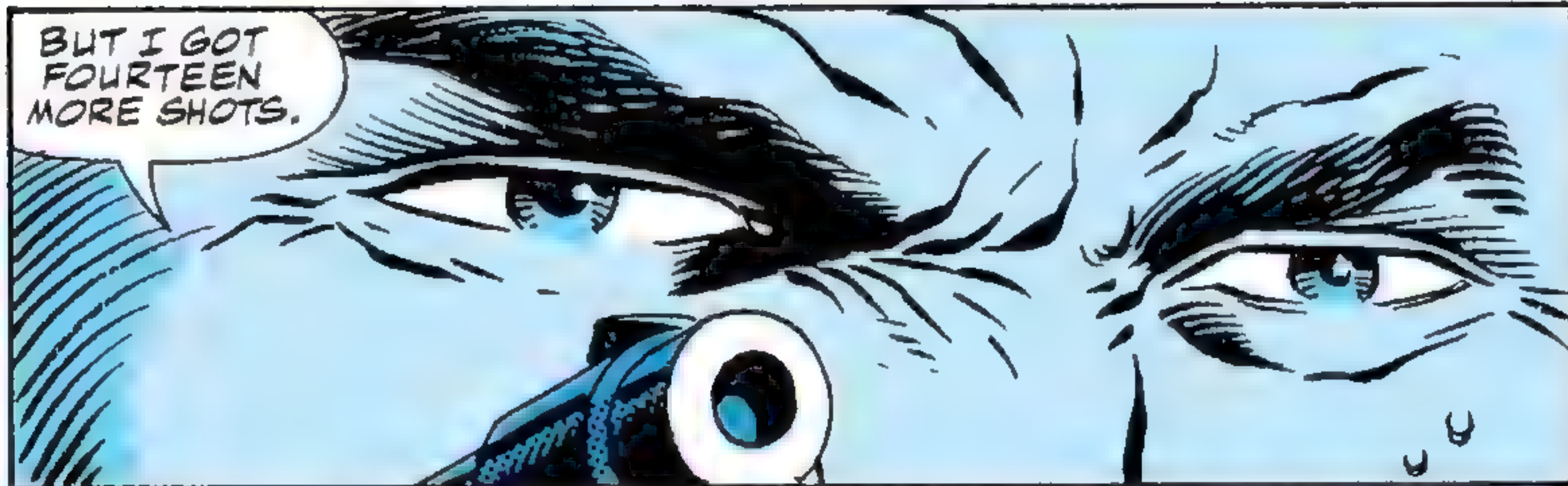
OR BE DESTROYED.

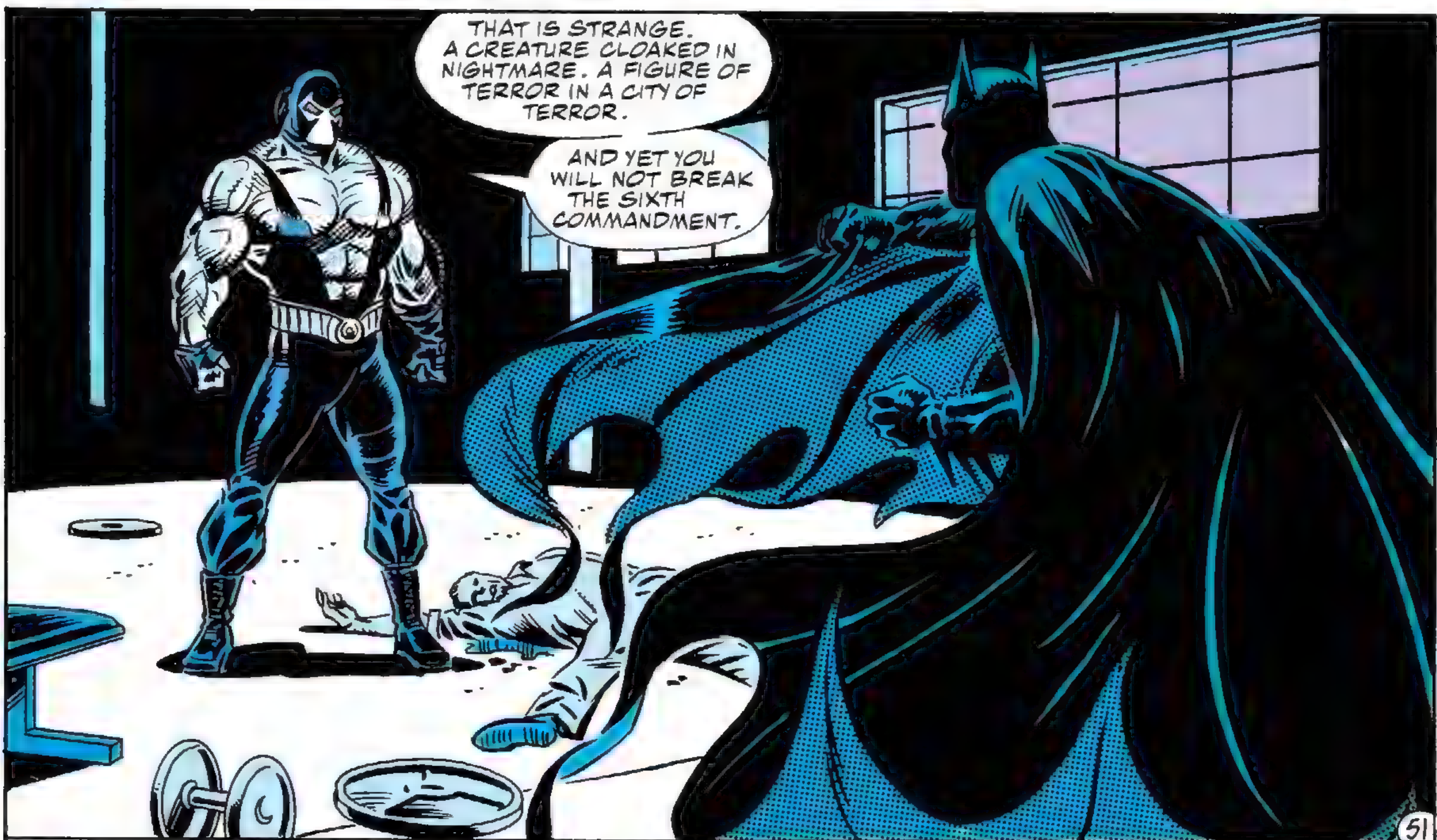




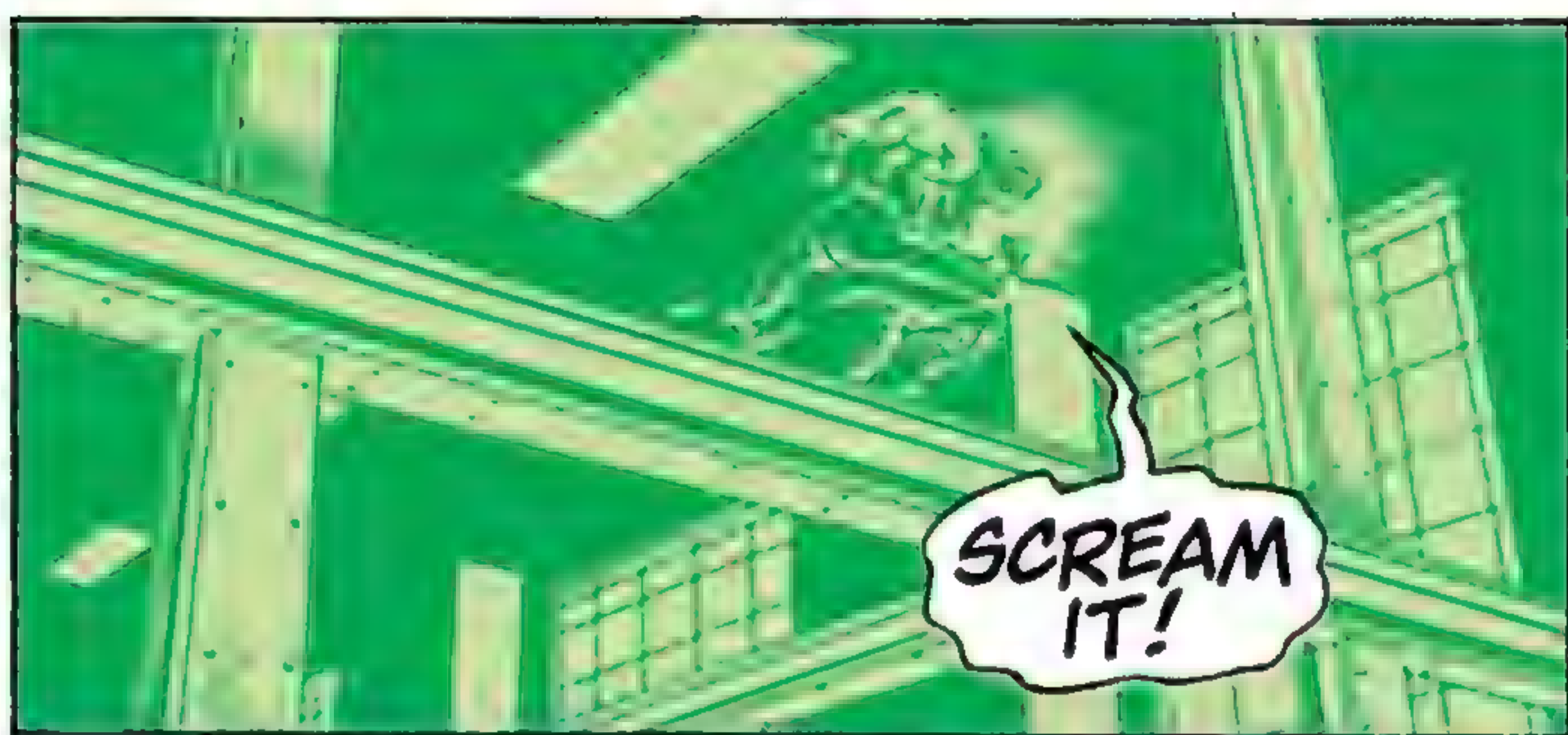


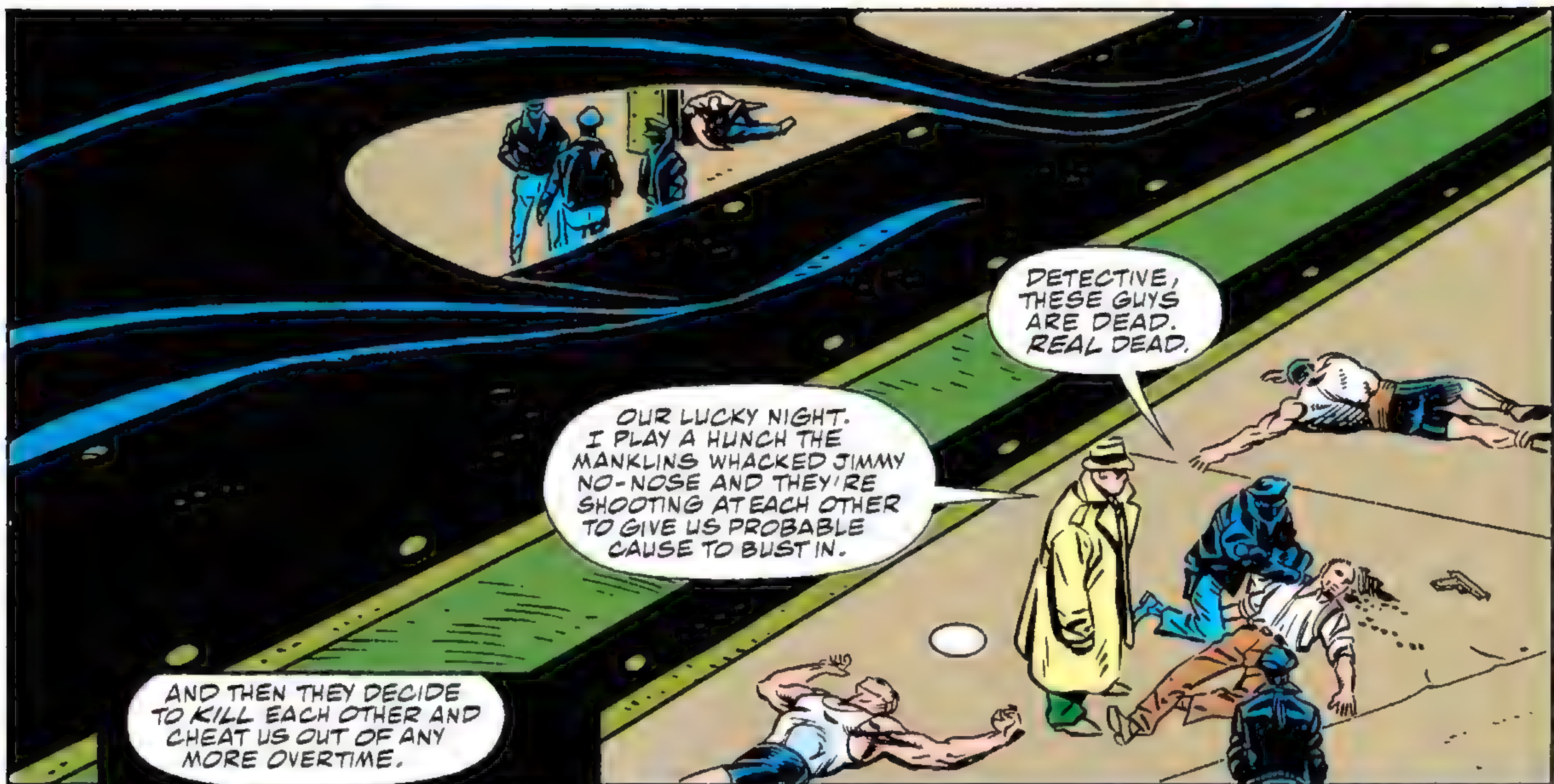












DETECTIVE,
THESE GUYS
ARE DEAD.
REAL DEAD.

OUR LUCKY NIGHT.
I PLAY A HUNCH THE
MANKLINS WHACKED JIMMY
NO-NOSE AND THEY'RE
SHOOTING AT EACH OTHER
TO GIVE US PROBABLE
CAUSE TO BUST IN.

AND THEN THEY DECIDE
TO KILL EACH OTHER AND
CHEAT US OUT OF ANY
MORE OVERTIME.



THEY'RE
NOT ALL
DEAD.

UNNNHH...



WHO DID
THIS TO
YOU?

IT WAS...
THAT BATMAN
CREEP...



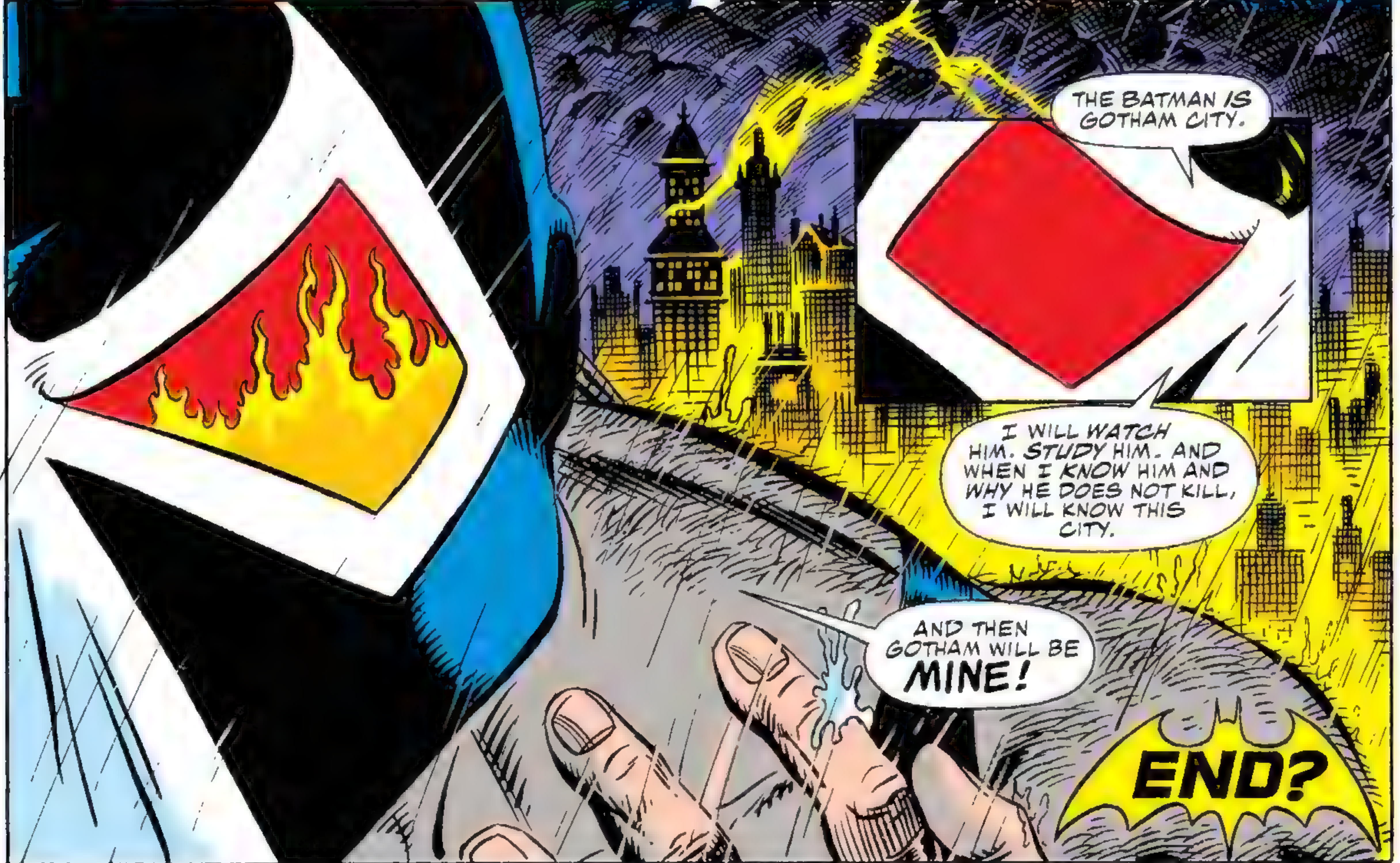
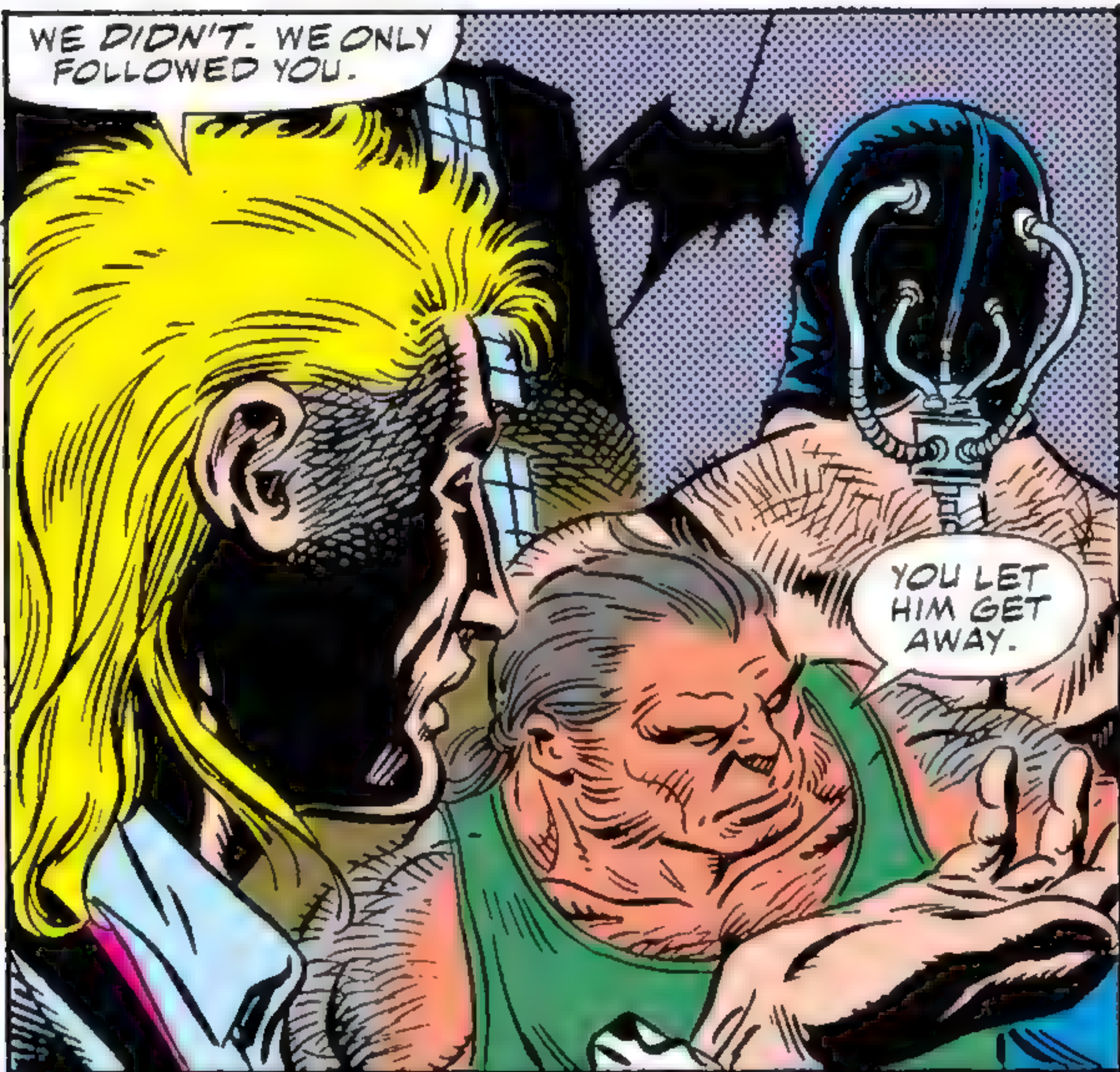
HE SAYS IT WAS
BATMAN. SO THAT GUY'S
FINALLY GONE PSYCHO.
MORE PSYCHO. HE'S
KILLING PEOPLE
NOW.

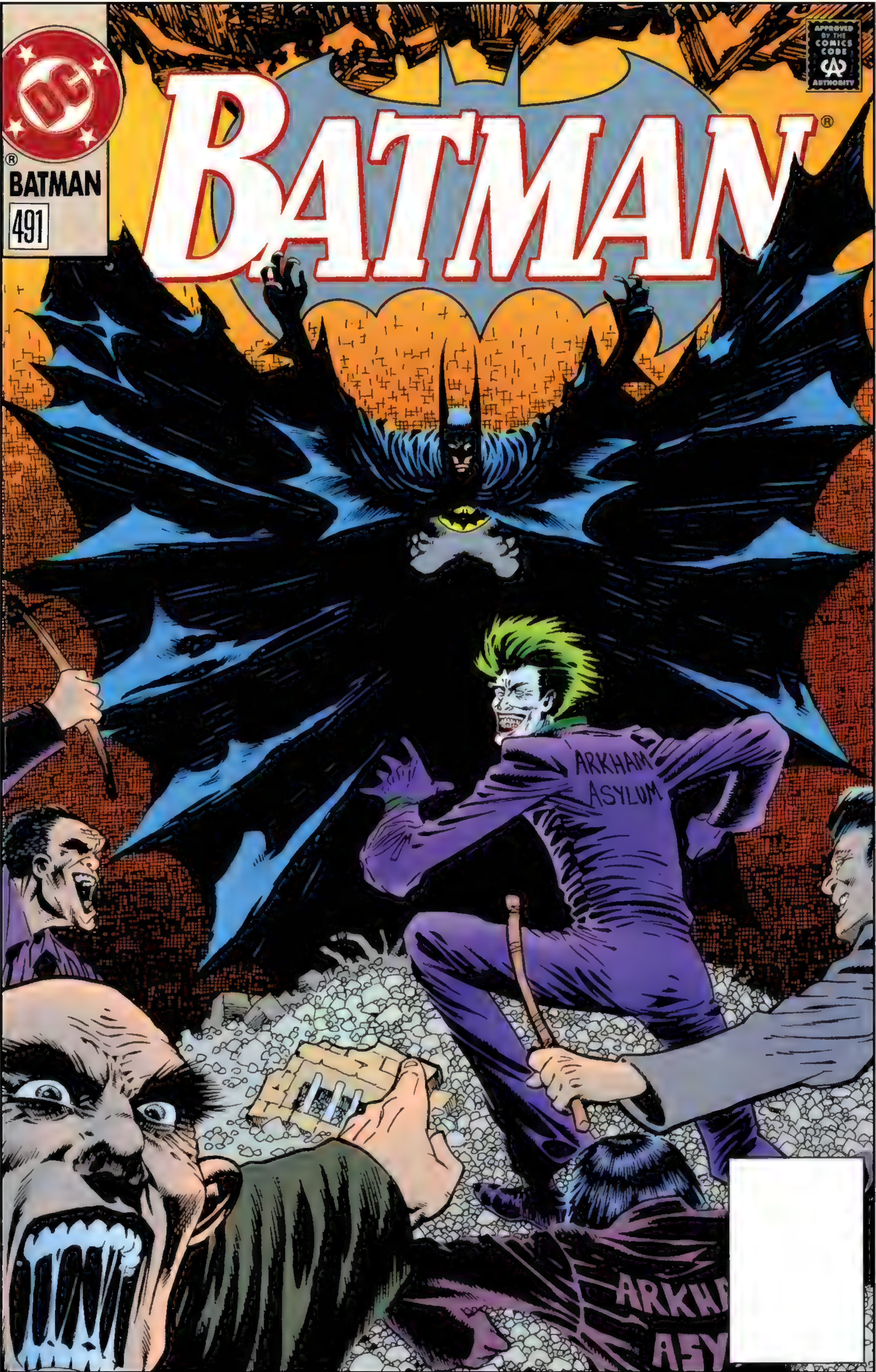
THAT MUTT'S
LYING THROUGH
HIS CROOKED
TEETH.

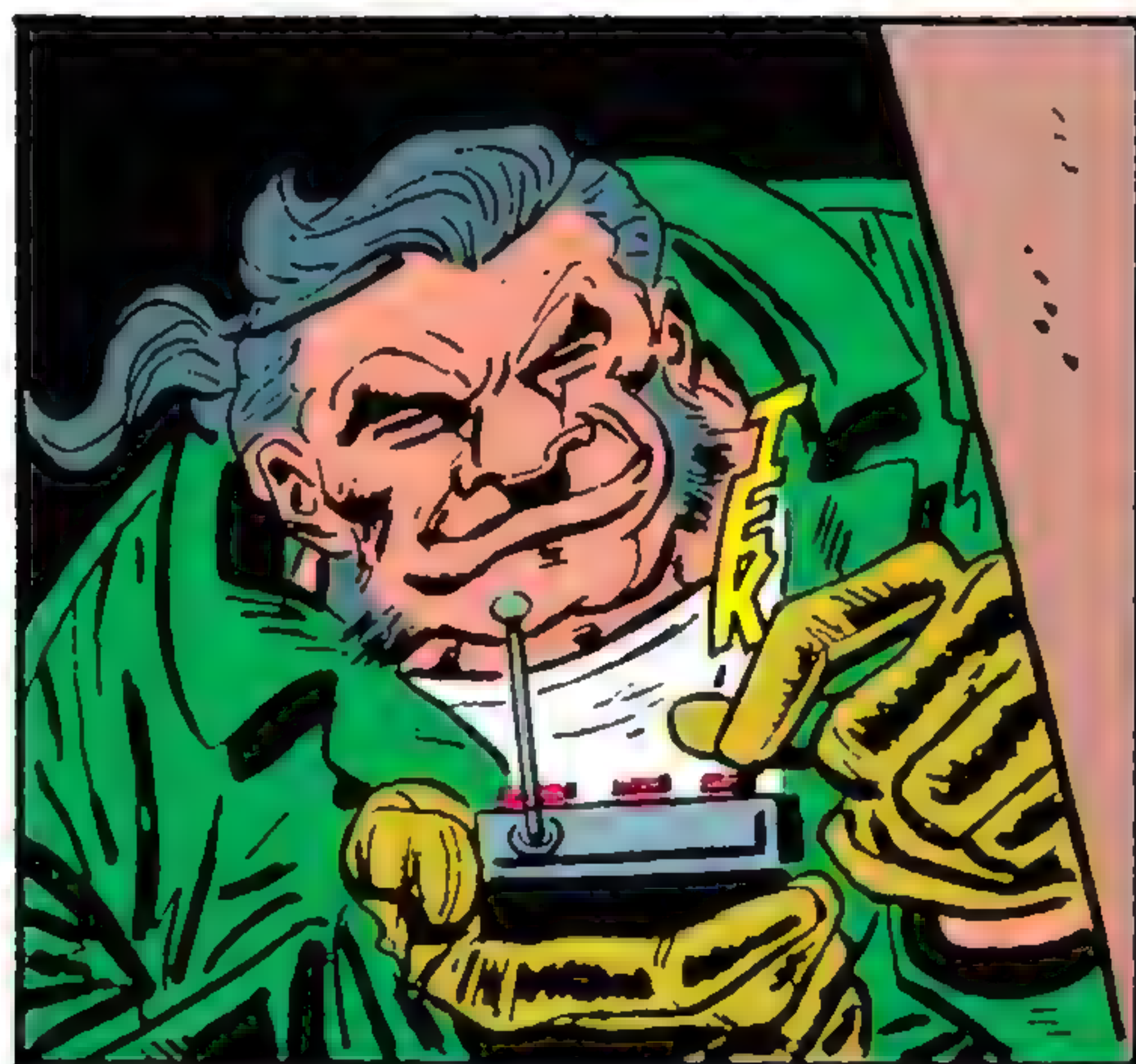


YOU'RE
DEFENDING
BATMAN?

TAKE MY WORD
FOR IT, MONTOYA.
THIS AIN'T HIS
STYLE.





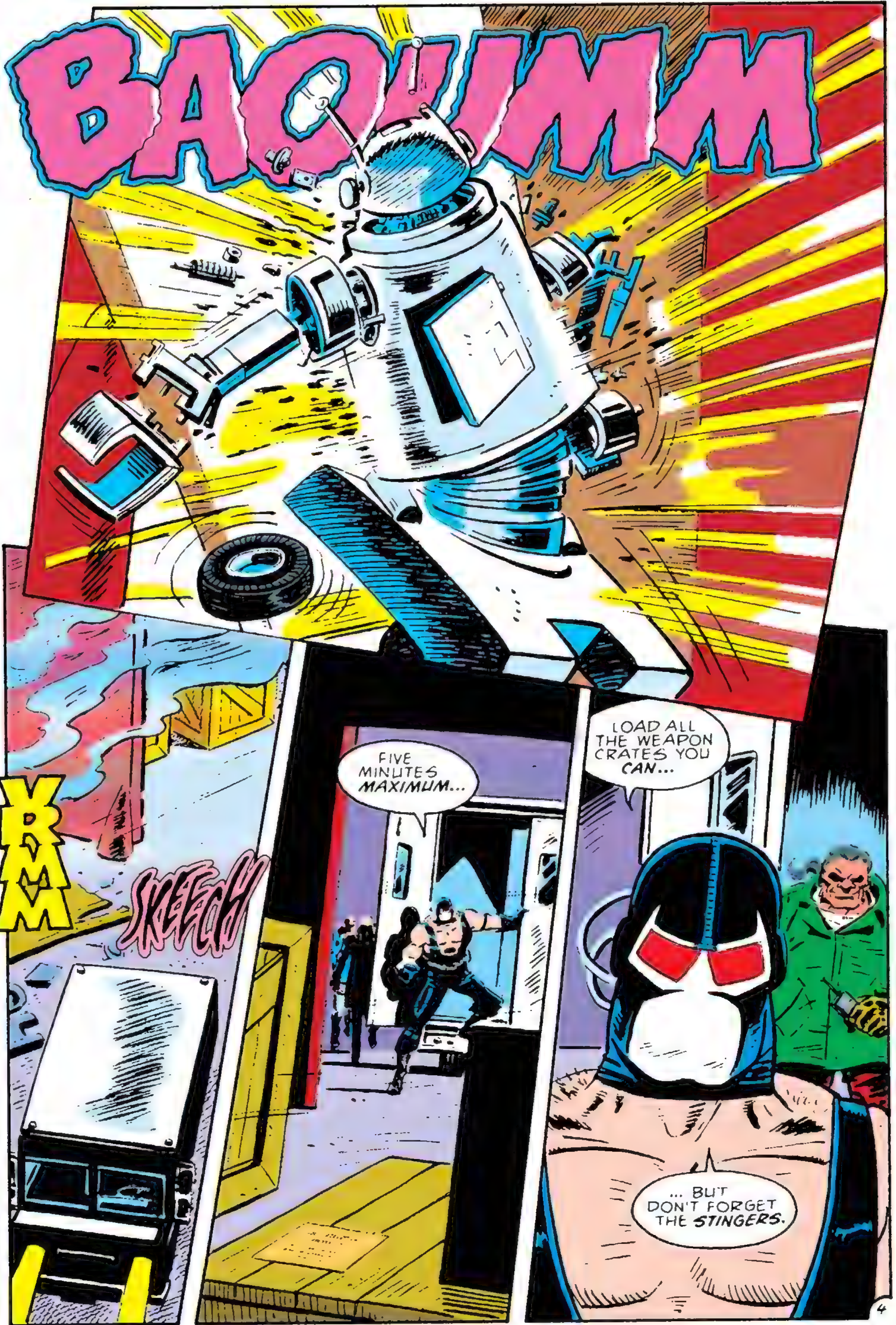


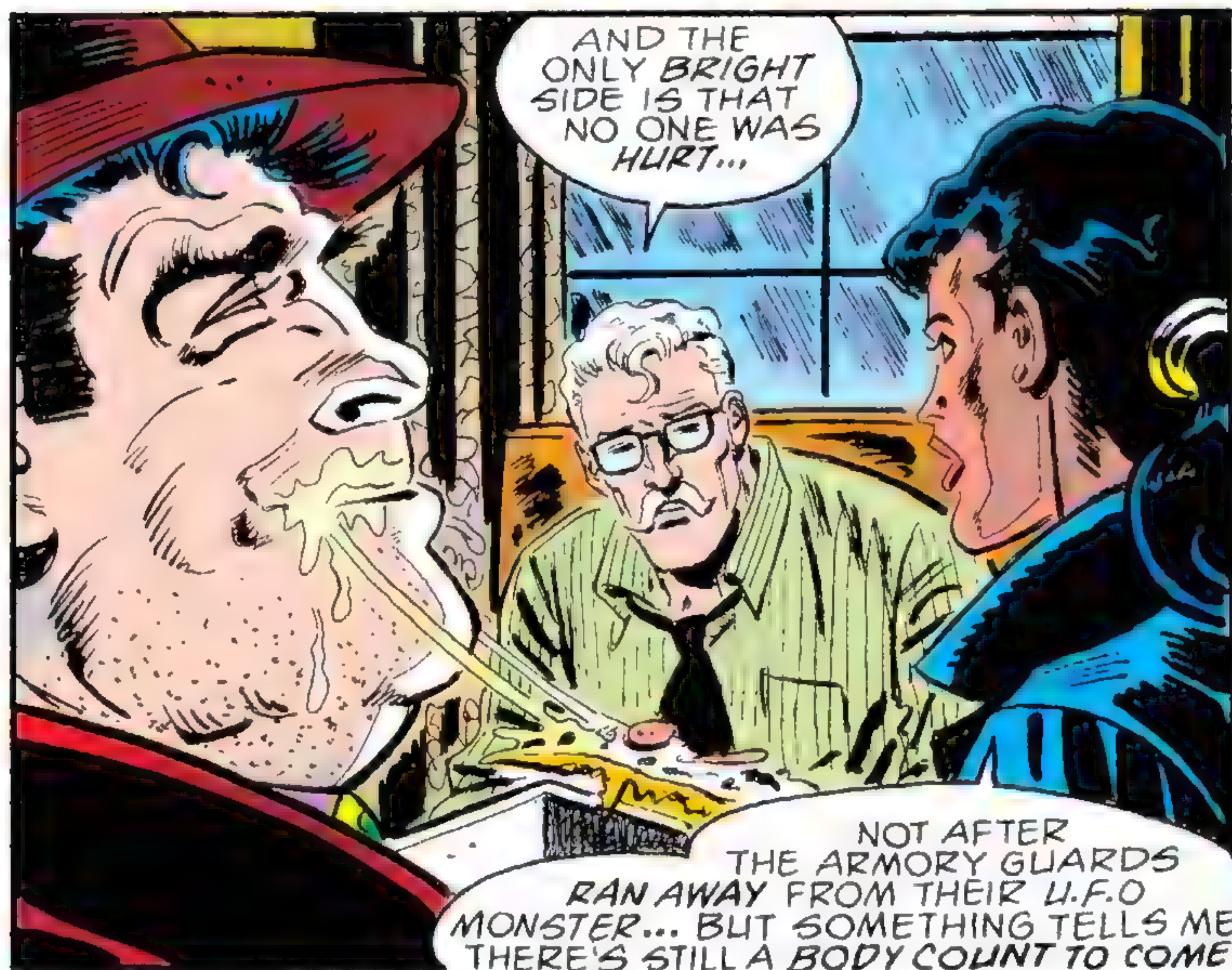
THE FREEDOM OF MAD ADVENTURES!

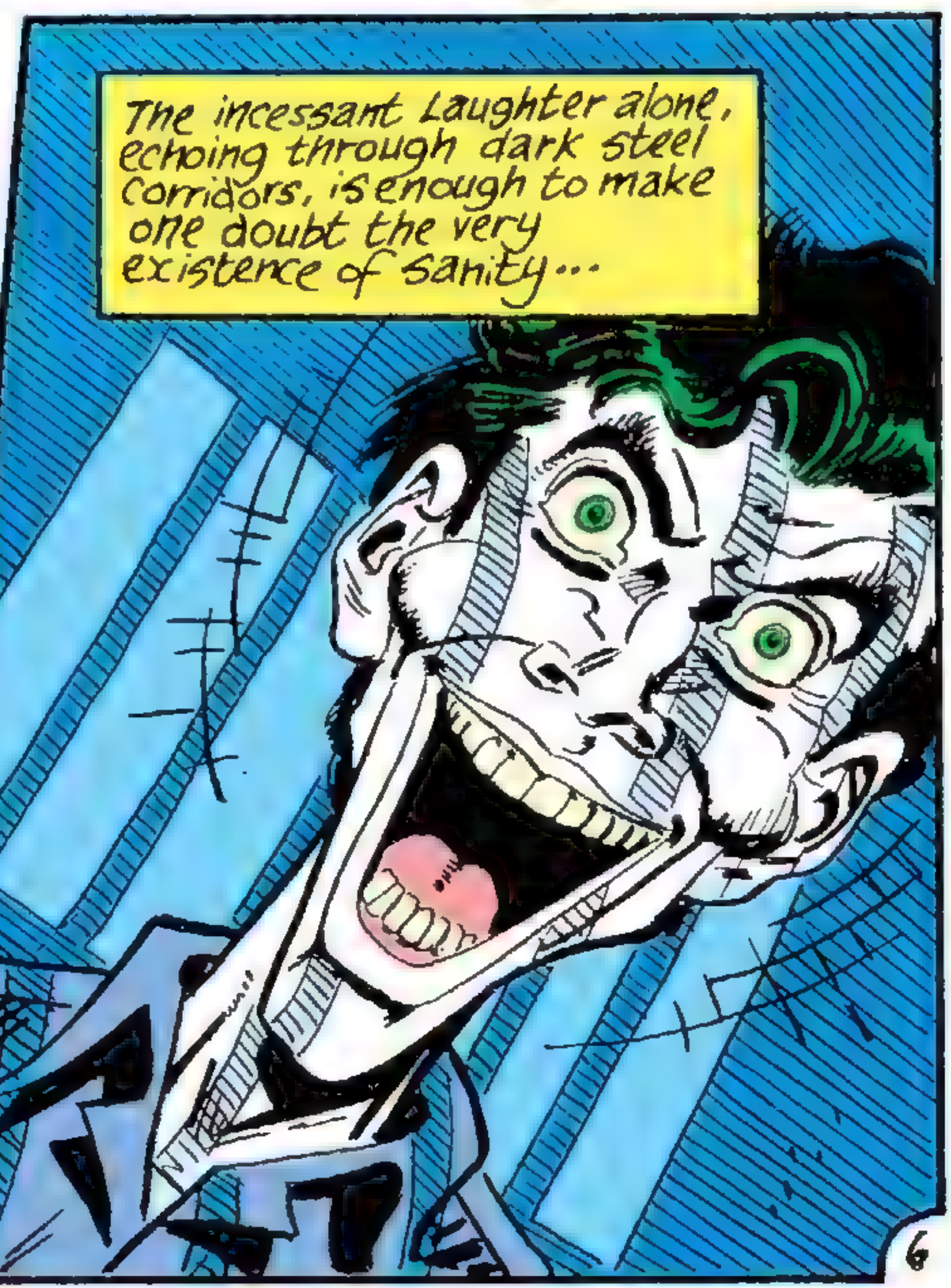
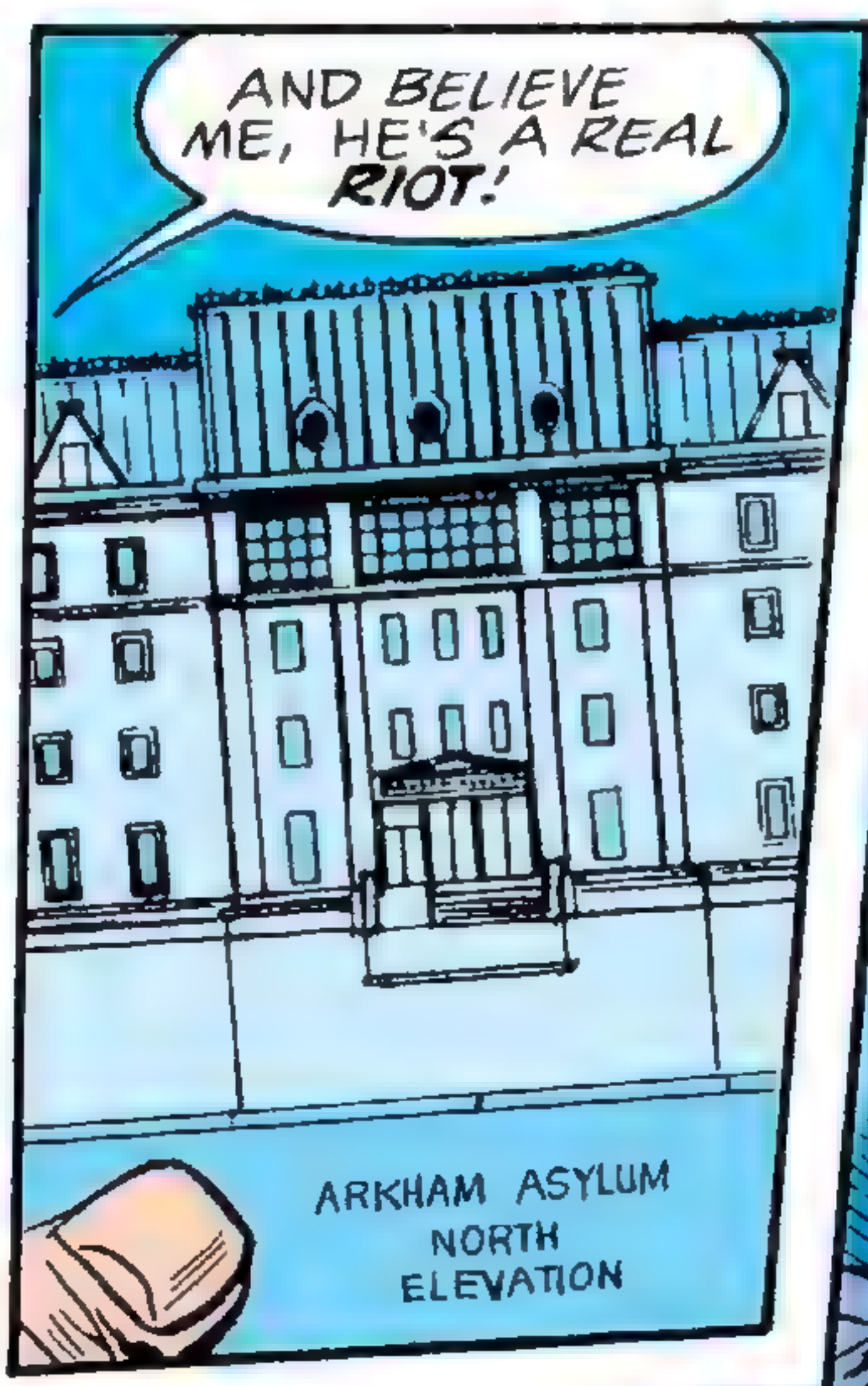
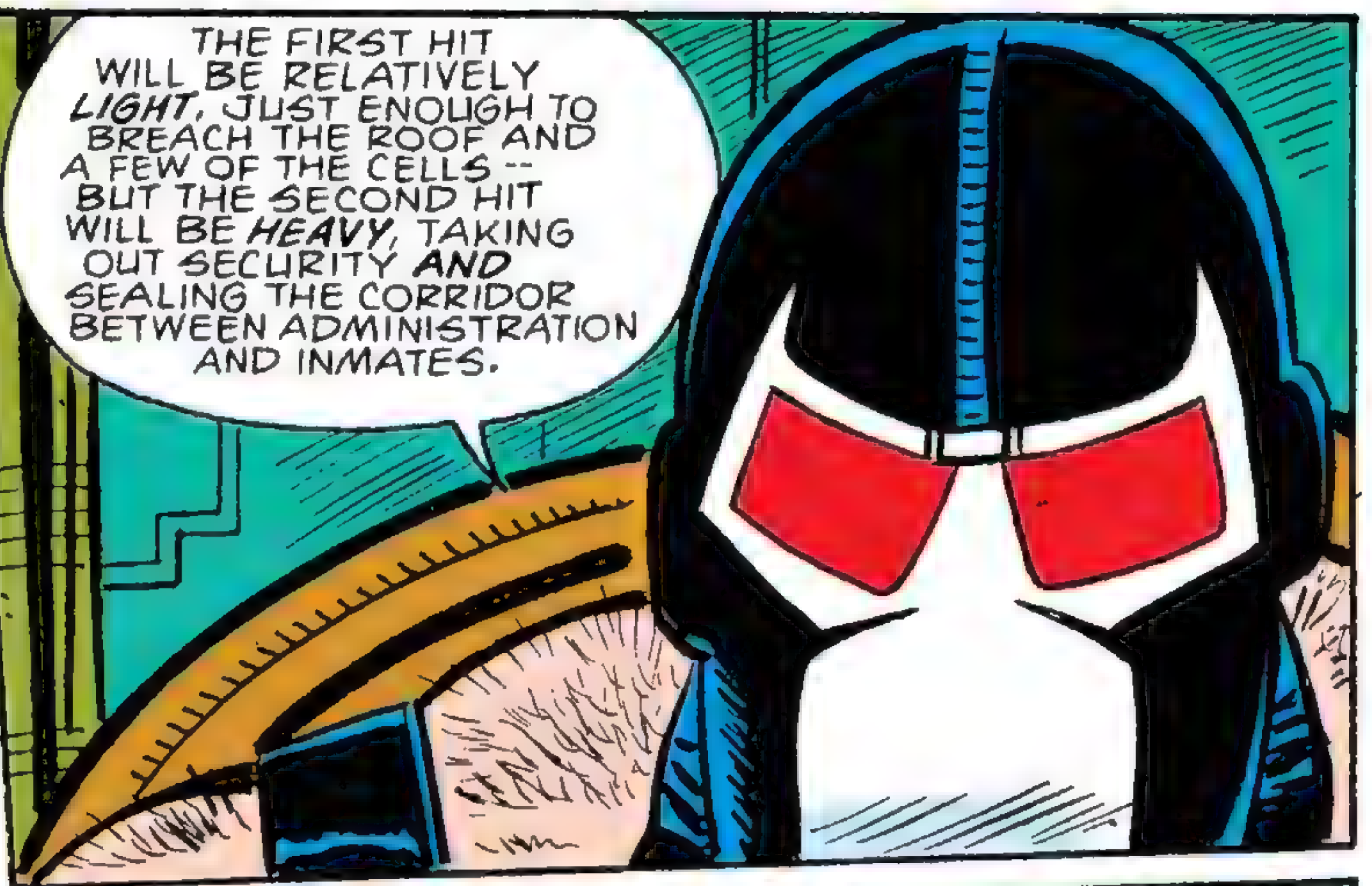
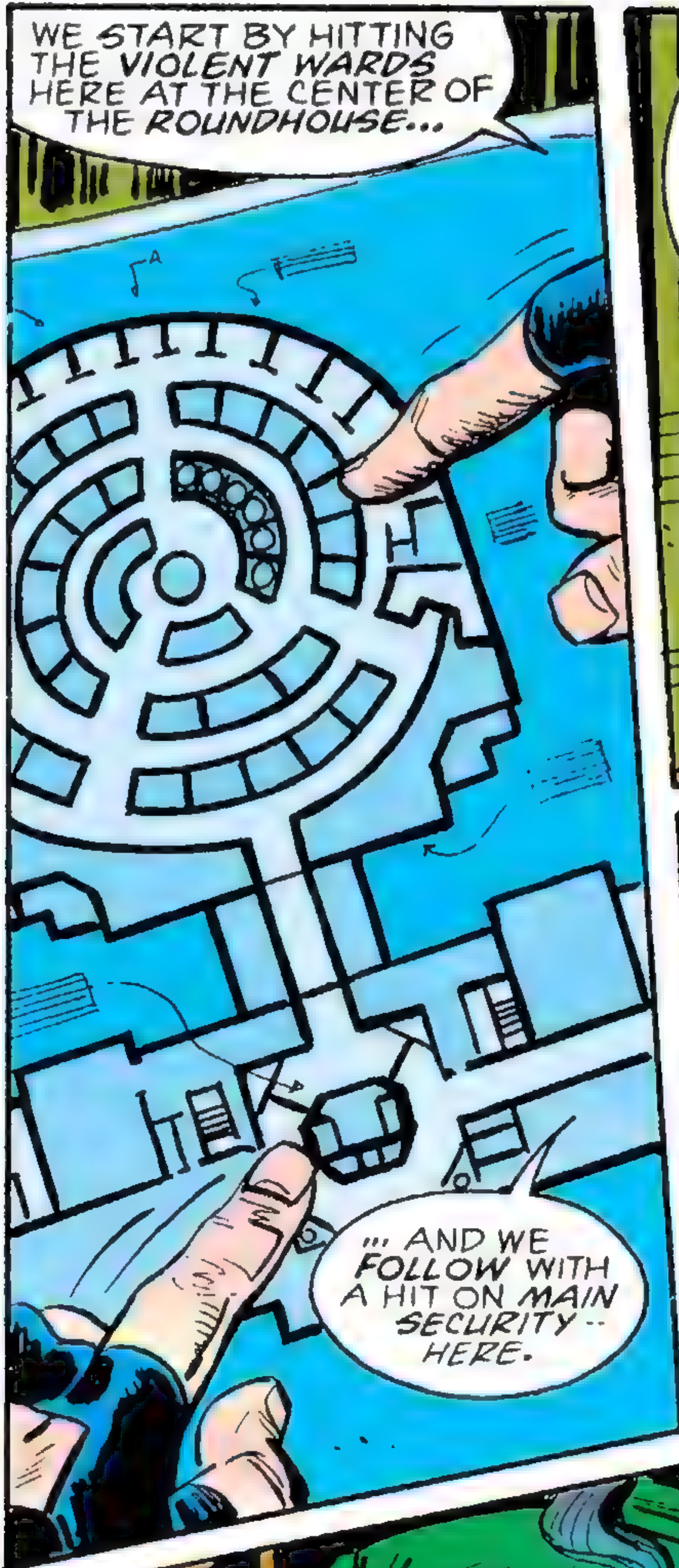


BATMAN
CREATED BY
BOB
KANE

DOUG MOENCH WRITER JIM APARO ARTIST ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST RICHARD STARKINGS LETTERER SCOTT PETERSON ASSISTANT EDITOR JORDAN B. GORFINKEL ASSISTANT EDITOR DENNY O'NEIL EDITOR







Add to that all the shrieks and whimpers, the snarls and whispers, all the cunning drool-garbled incantations of paranoia and revenge, and one sees that this is NOT, in fact, an ASYLUM.

It is, simply and unarguably, a MADHOUSE.

ARKHAM ASYLUM
FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

NOT, in fact, an ASYLUM.
It is, simply and unarguably, a MADHOUSE.

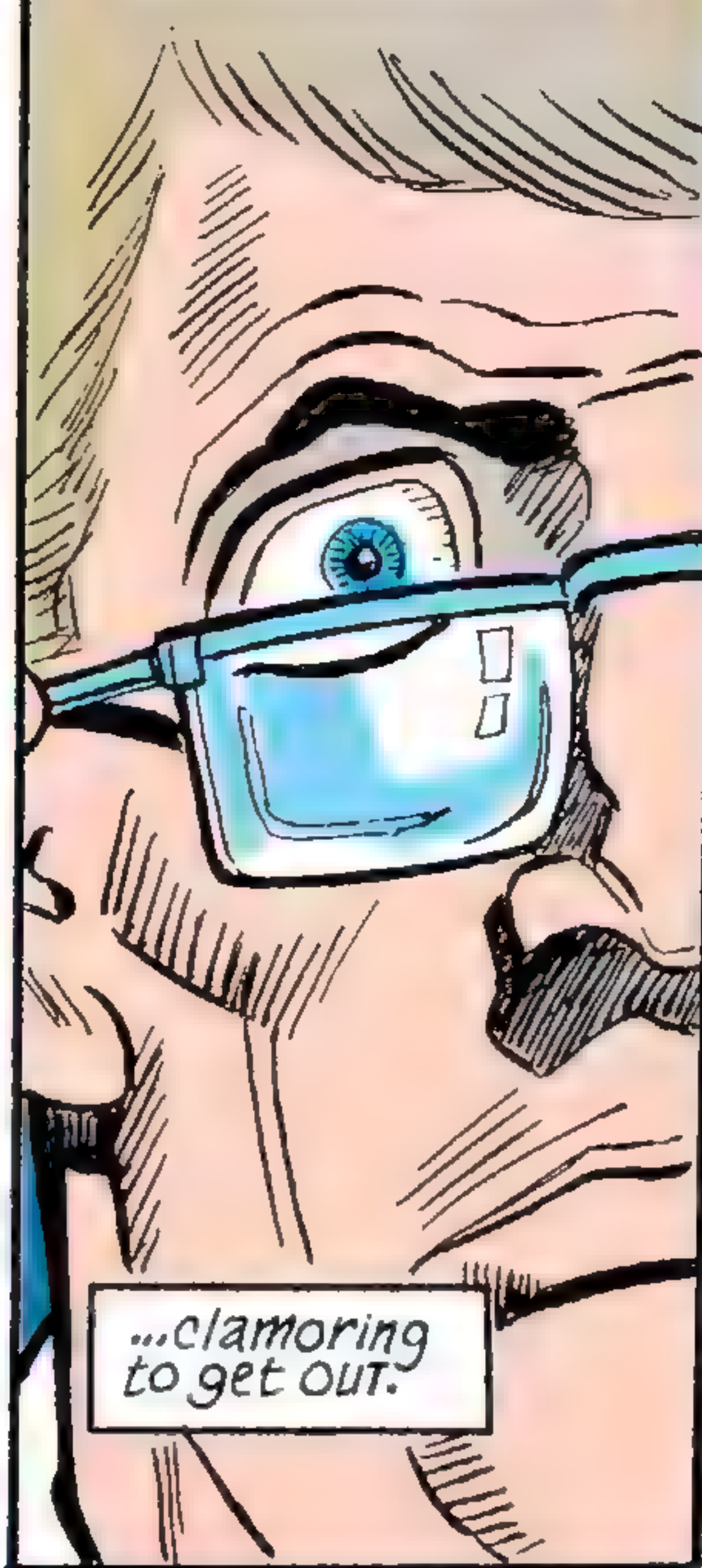
And if one is the keeper and controller of such a place, does that make one SANE... or merely the KING of the MAD?
Indeed, one won-

Indeed, one wonders if madness might not be INFECTIOUS in a certain sense, a contagion by virtue of its omnipresent influence, so much more vivid and strident than the mundane, smothering cloak of so-called normalcy.



If so, then surely I have been infected by now, for the laughter and shrieks, the canny gasps from the gloom, are the voices with which I live, here in Arkham, here in the madhouse of my making.

They have become my world, echoing down steel corridors to enter my MIND -- where they echo, now, even LOUDER...



...clamoring to get out.



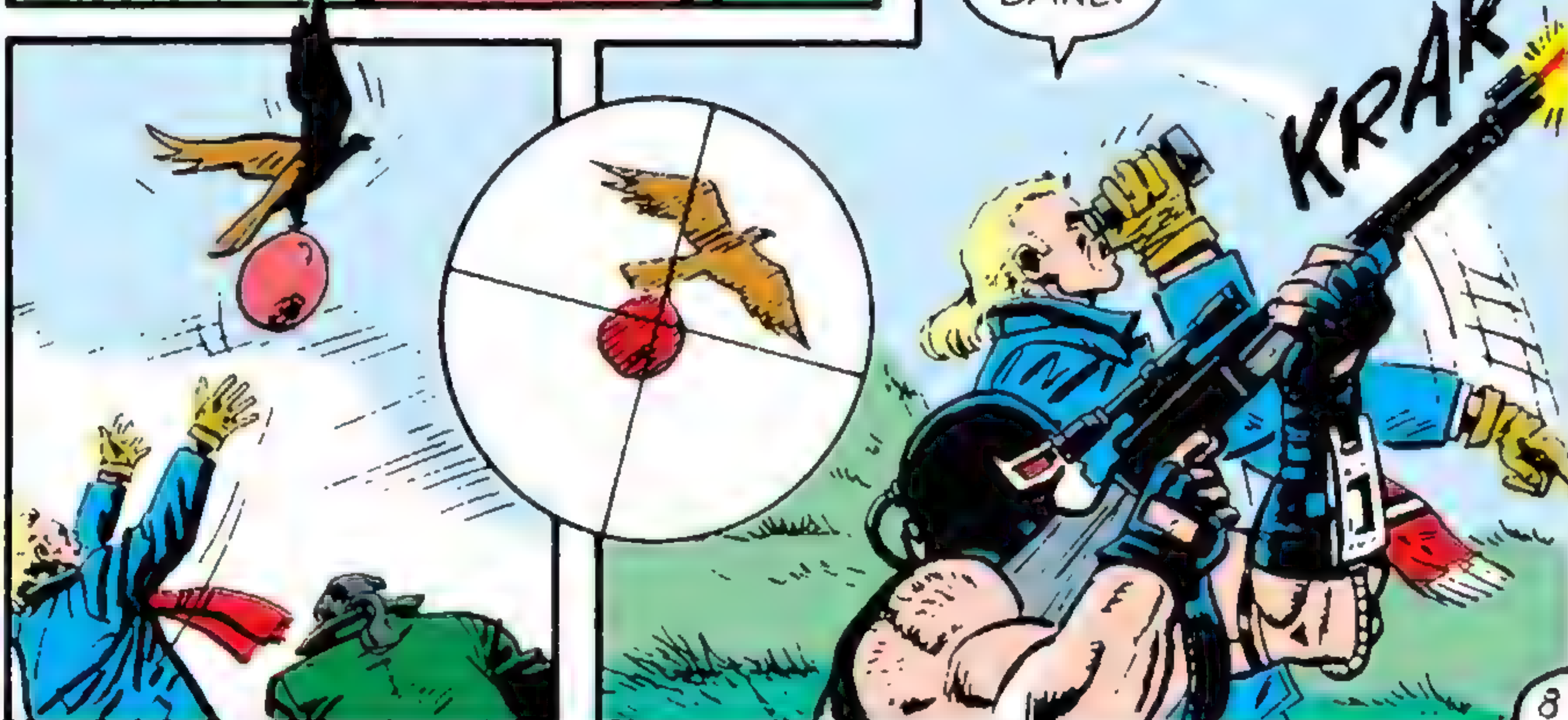
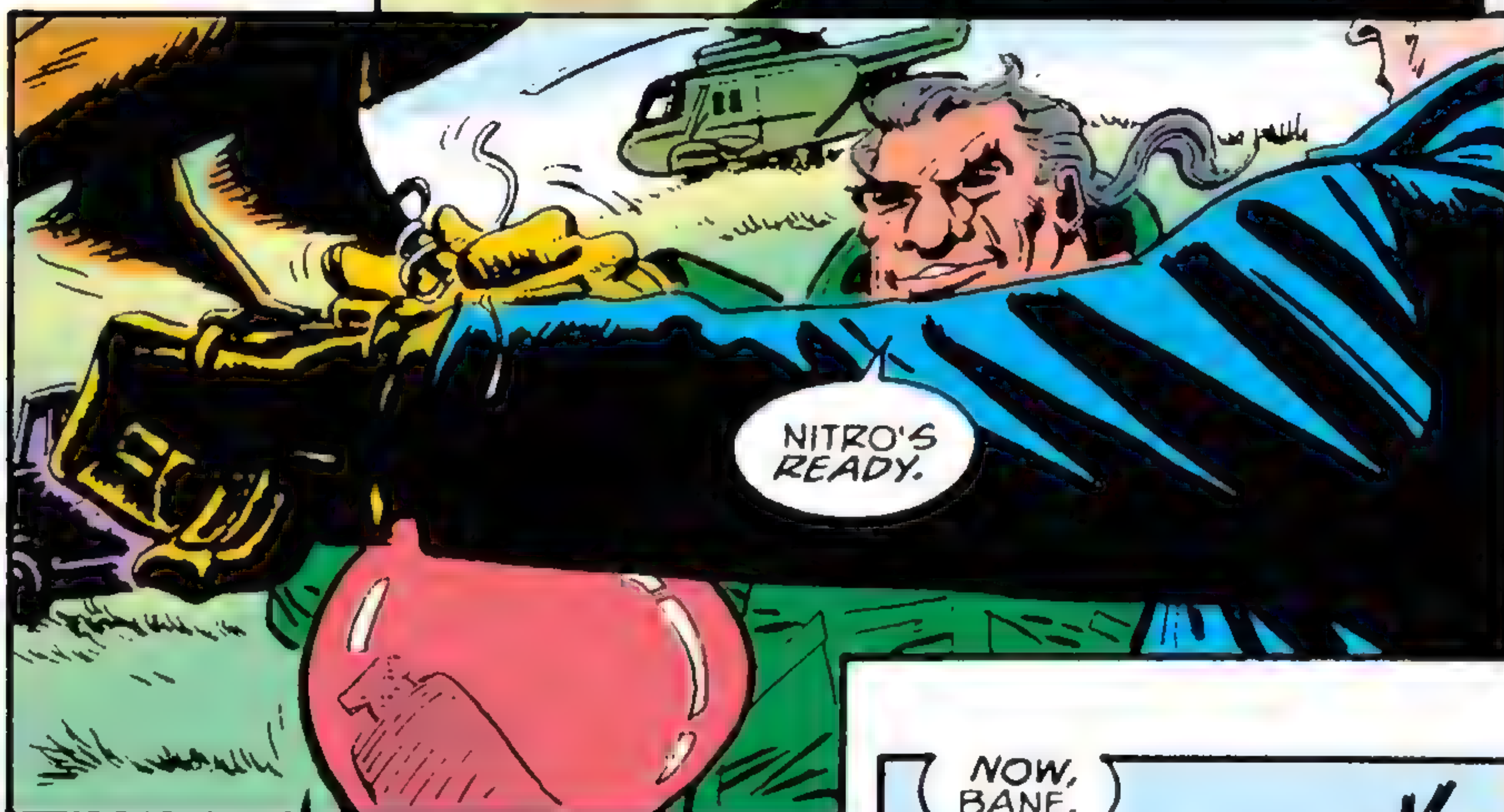
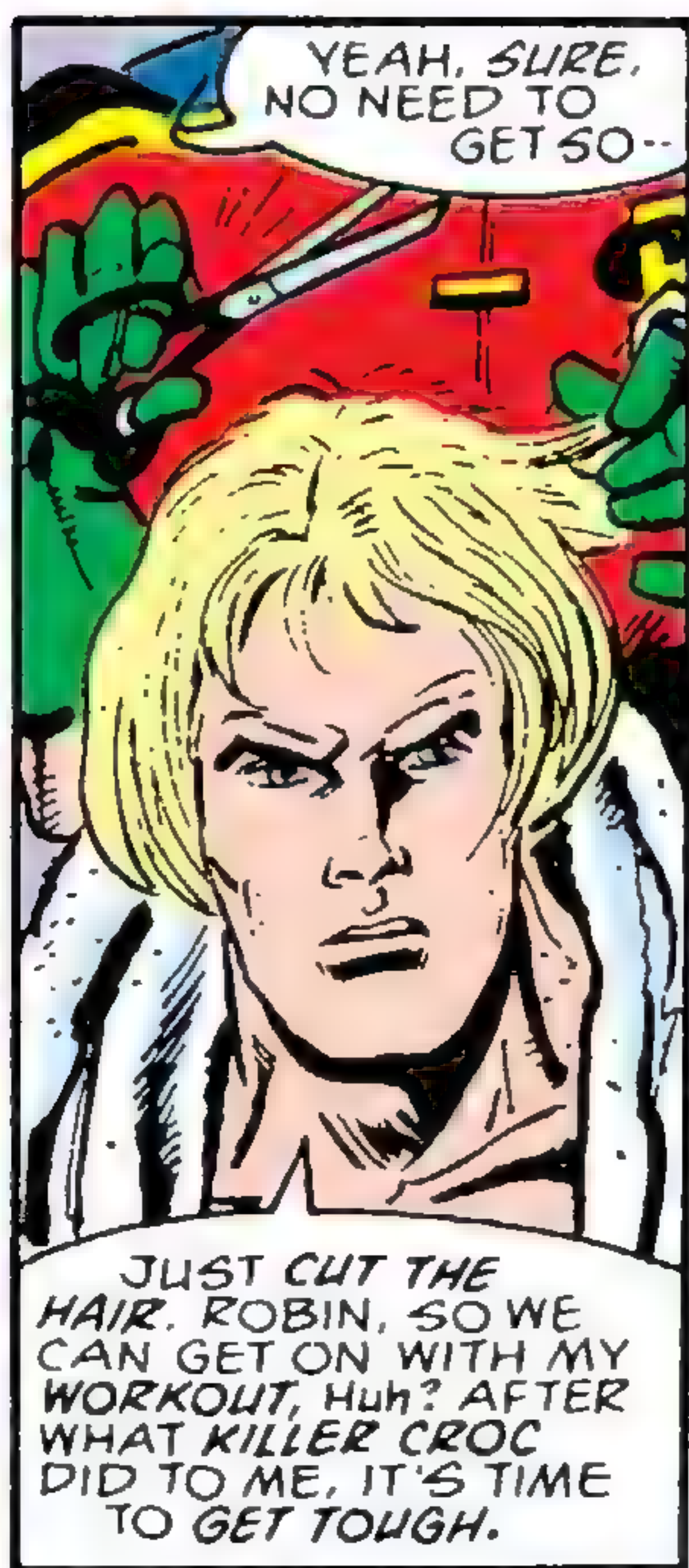
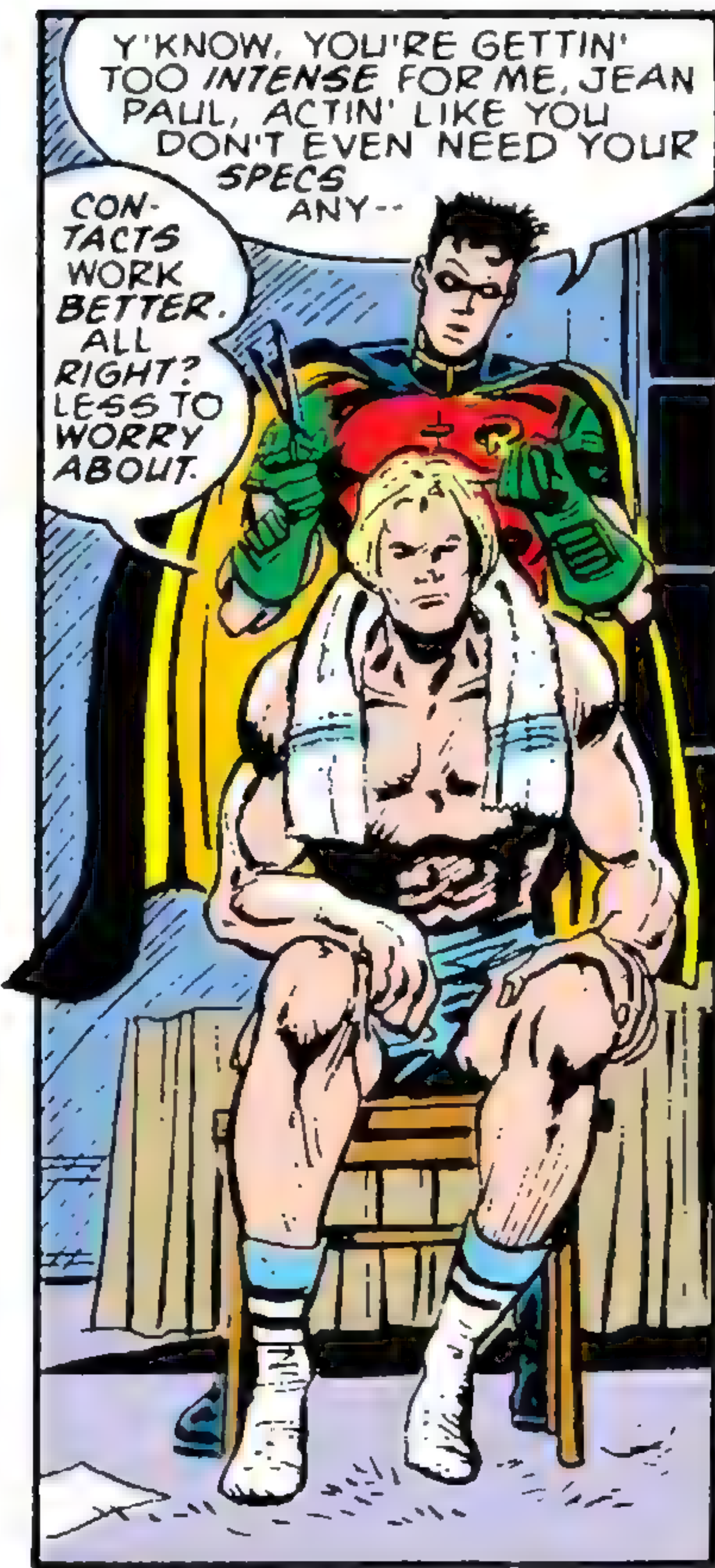
REAL SHORT?

I WANT IT OFF -- OUT OF THE WAY.

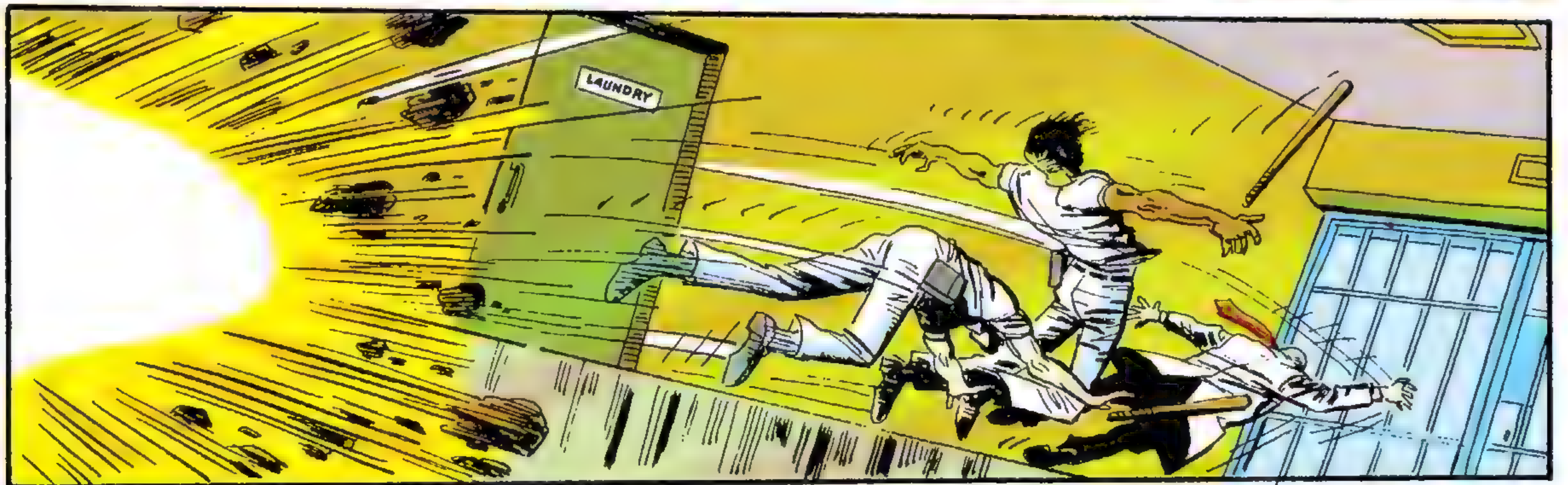
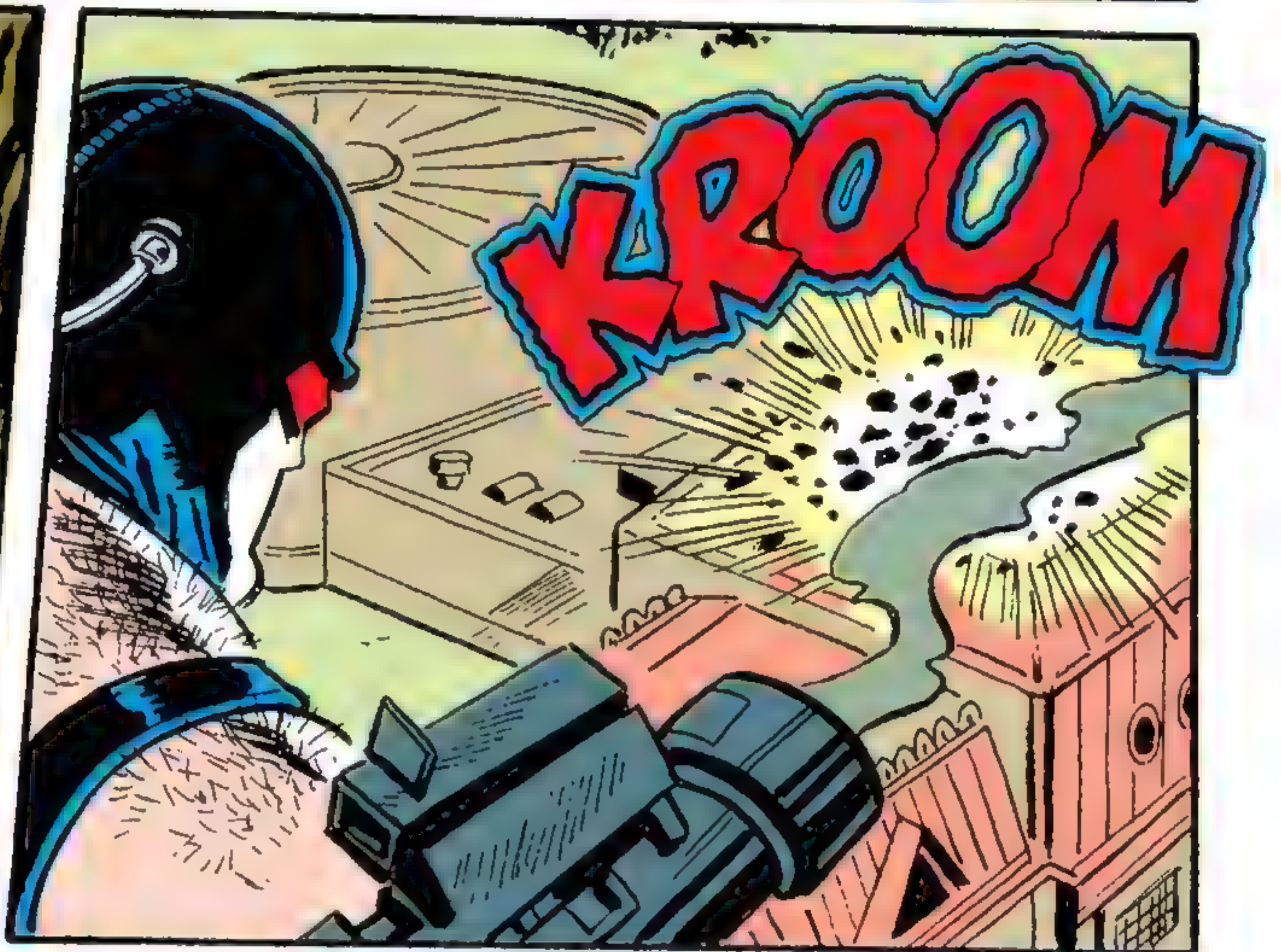
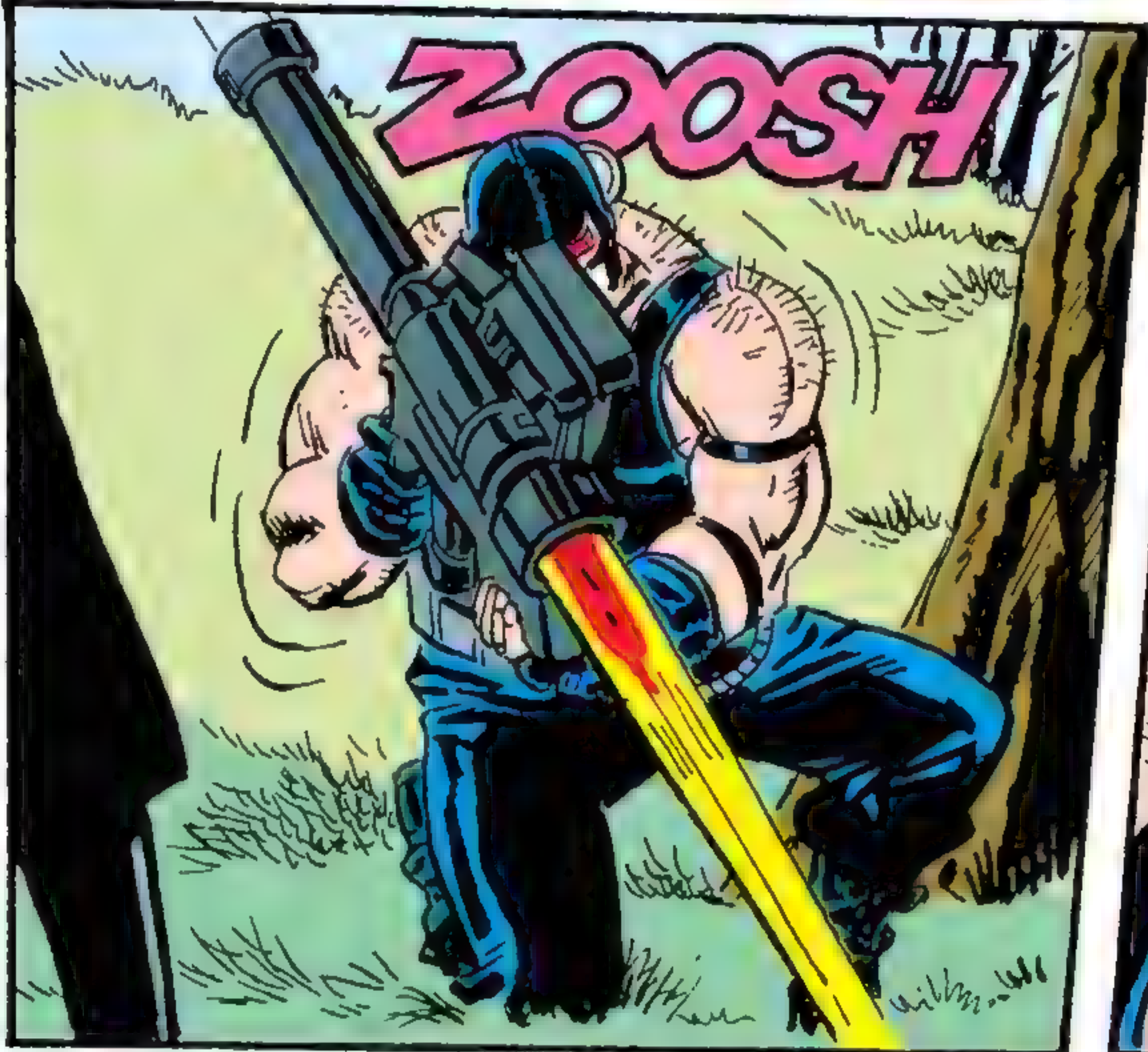


YOU GOT IT.

NO, I DON'T, NOT YET. BUT I WILL GET IT.



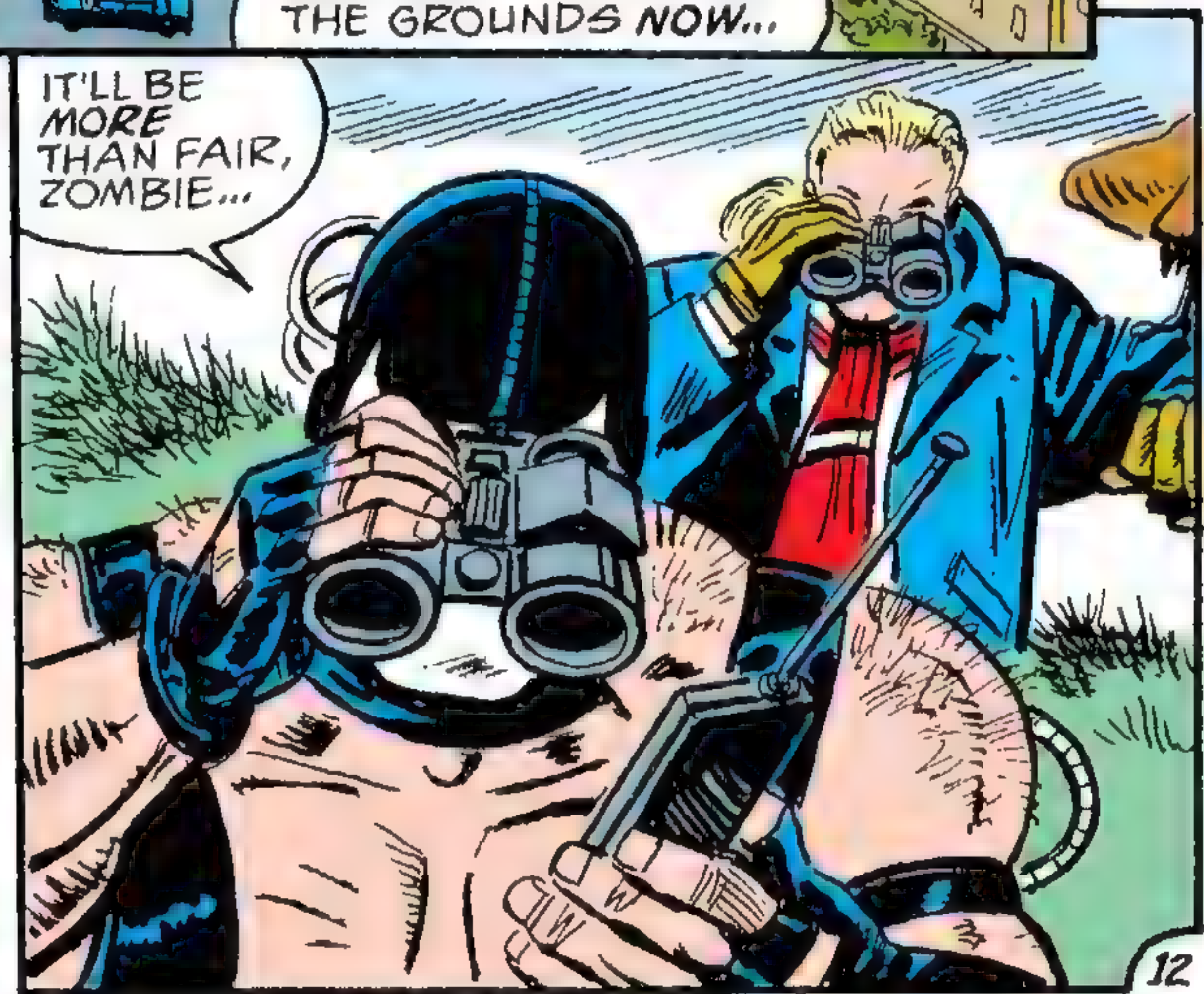
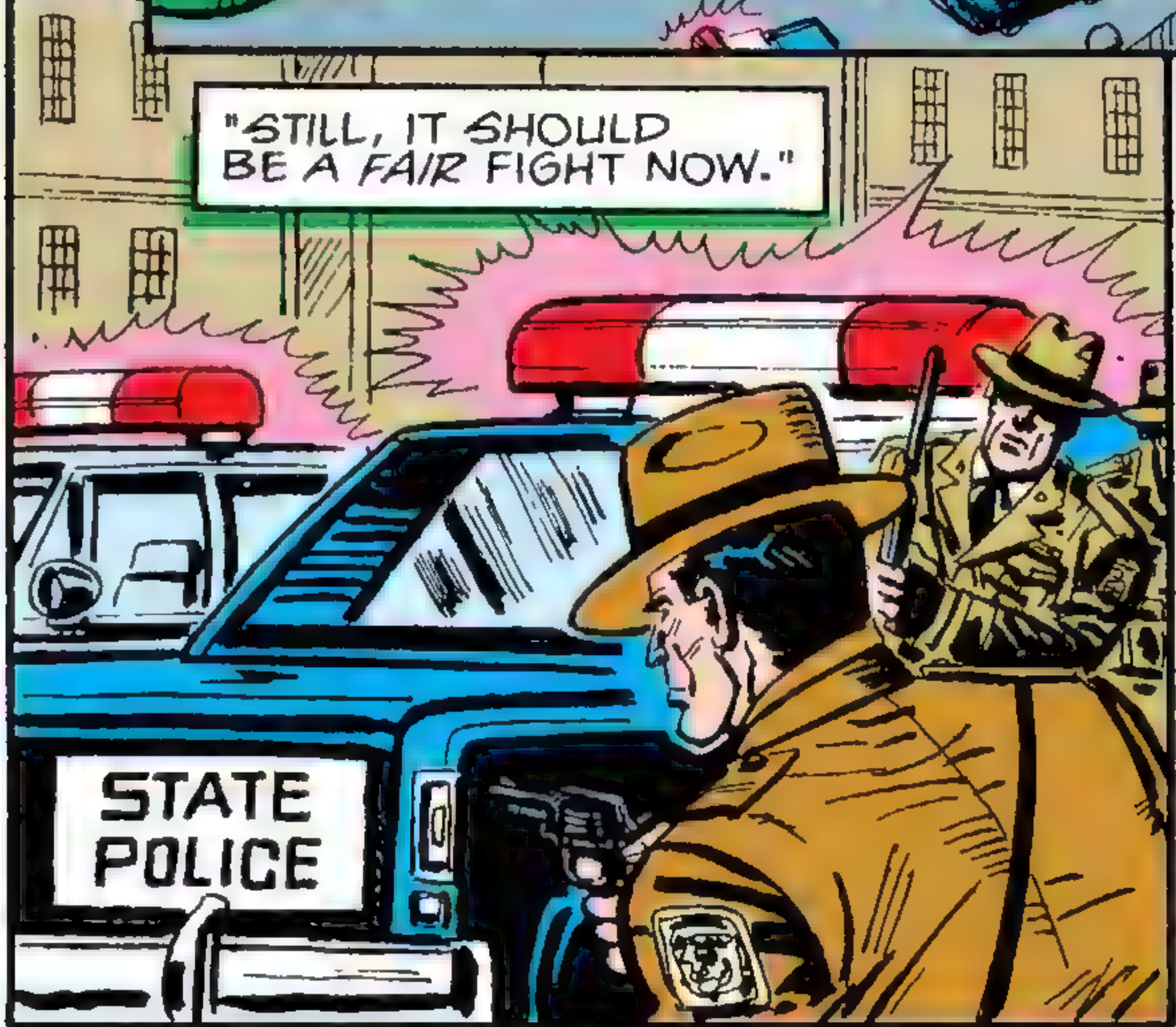
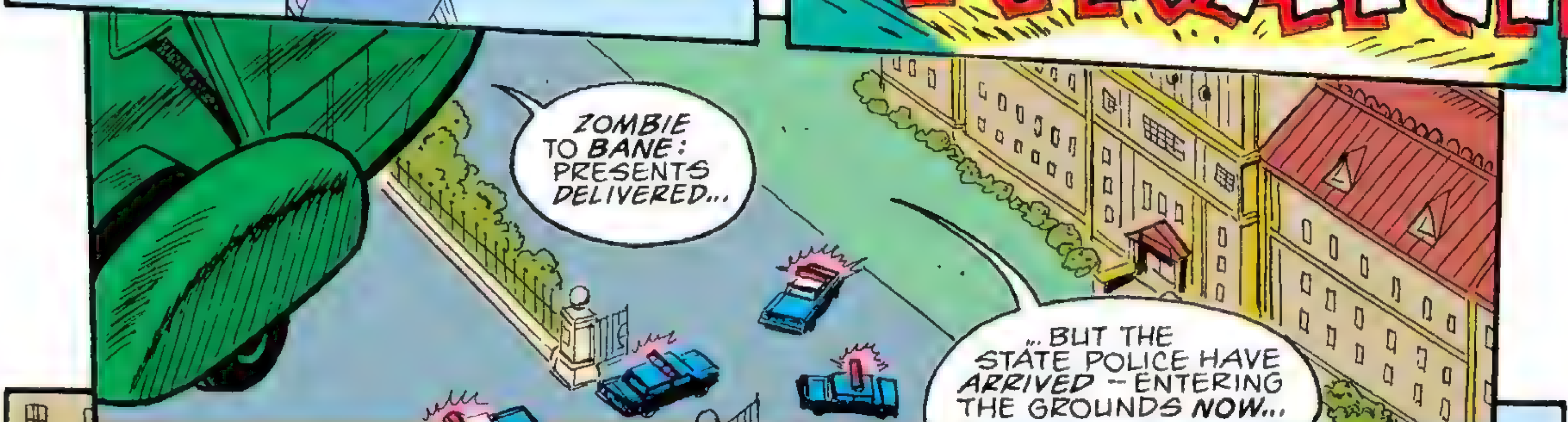
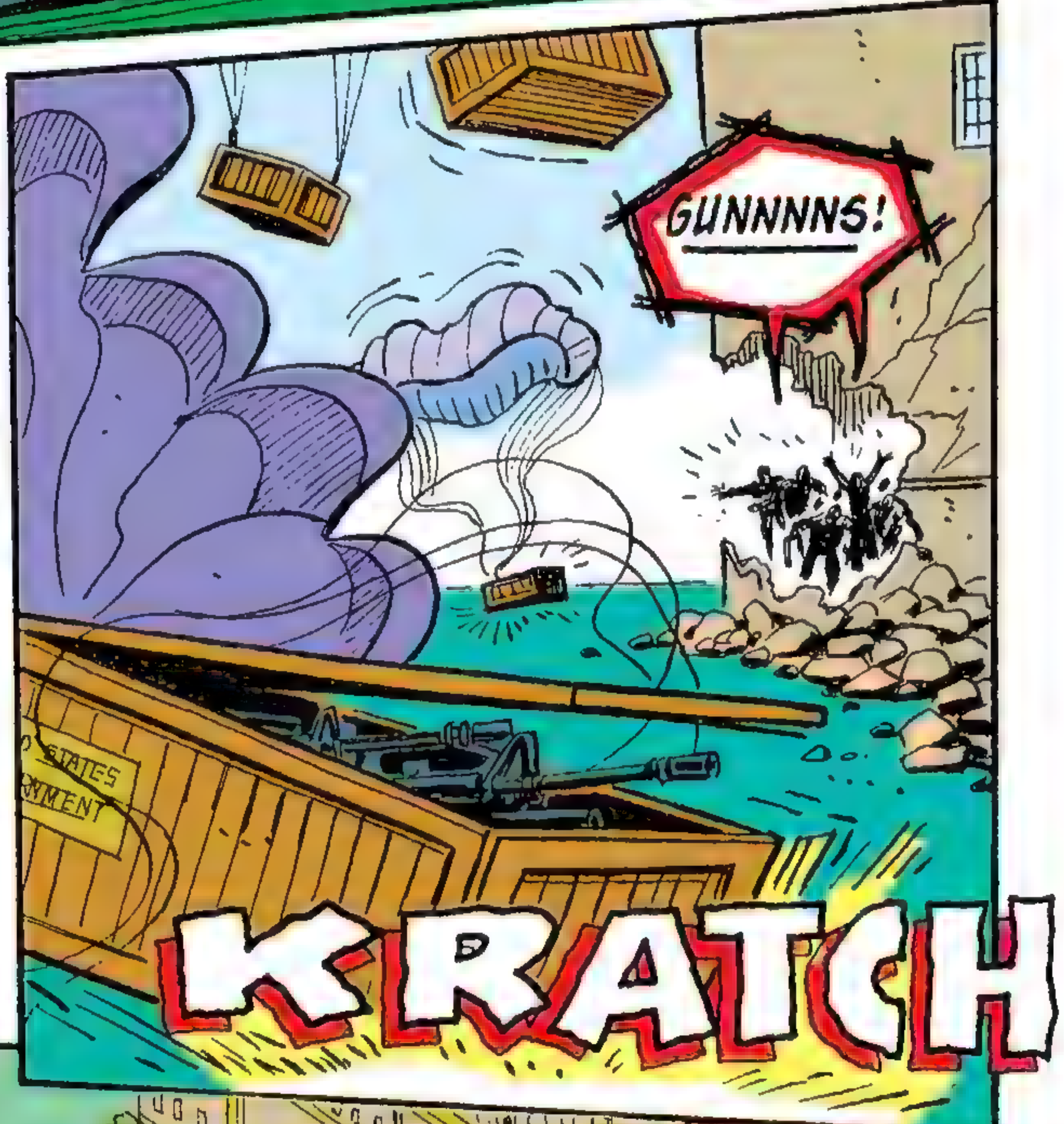


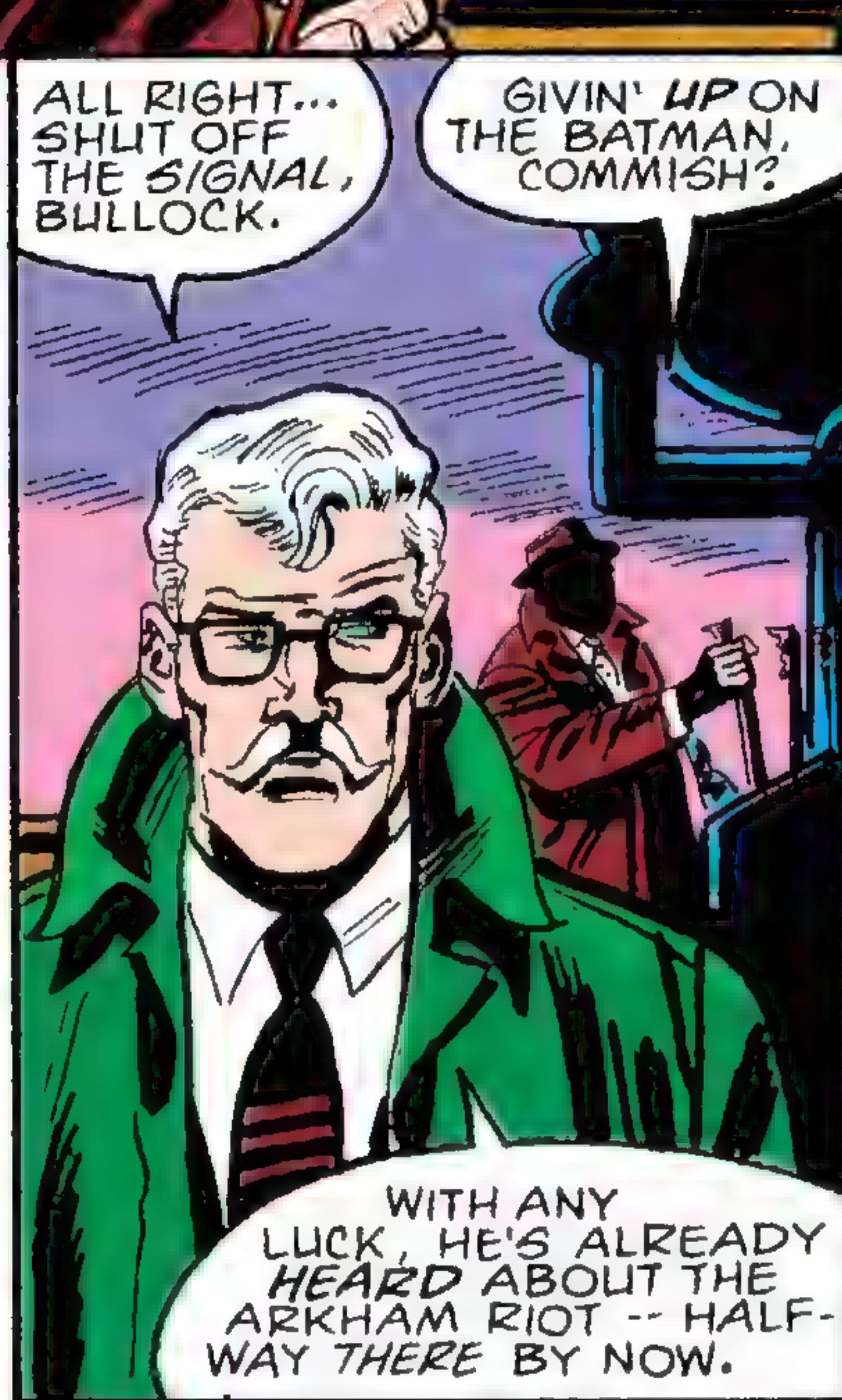


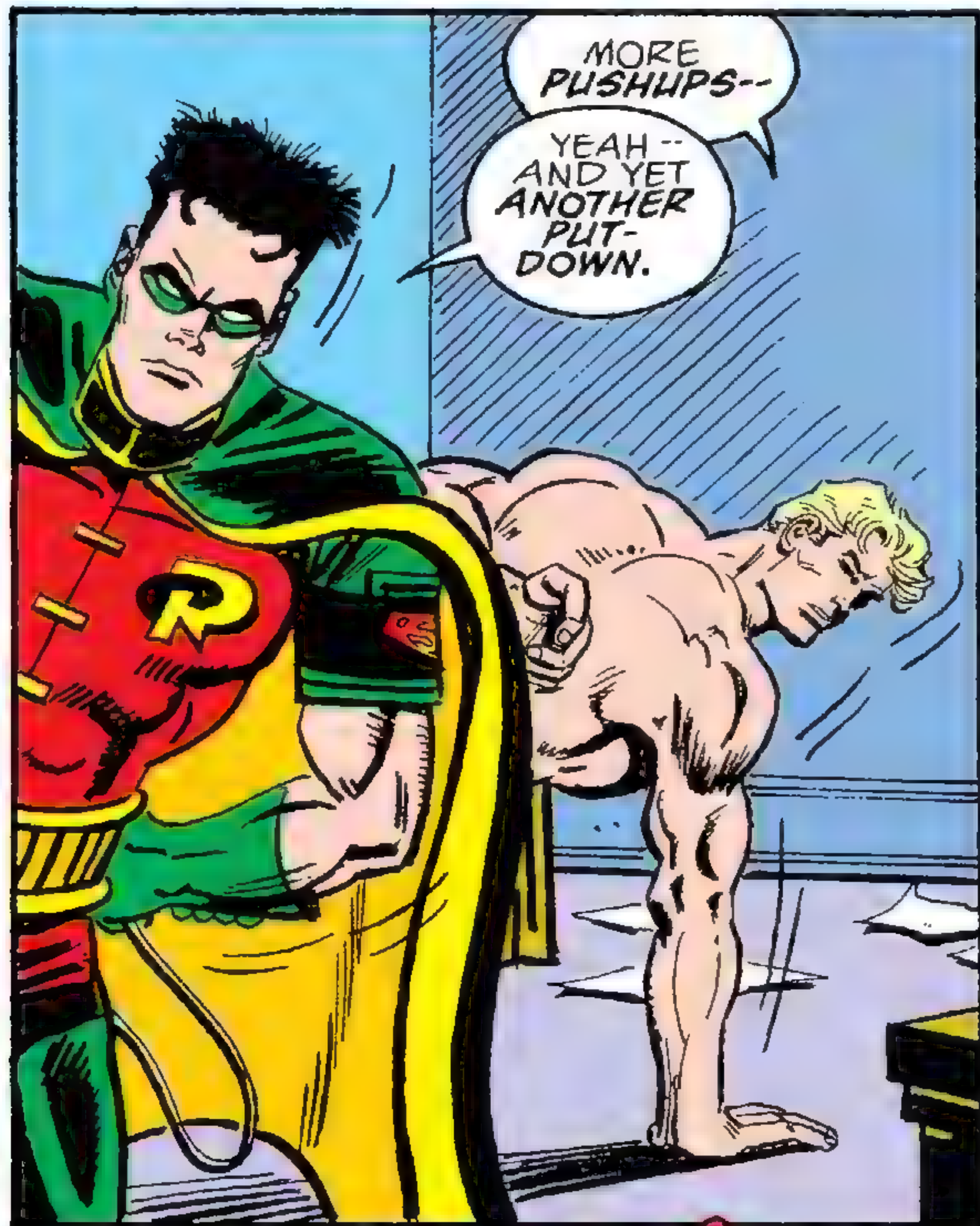
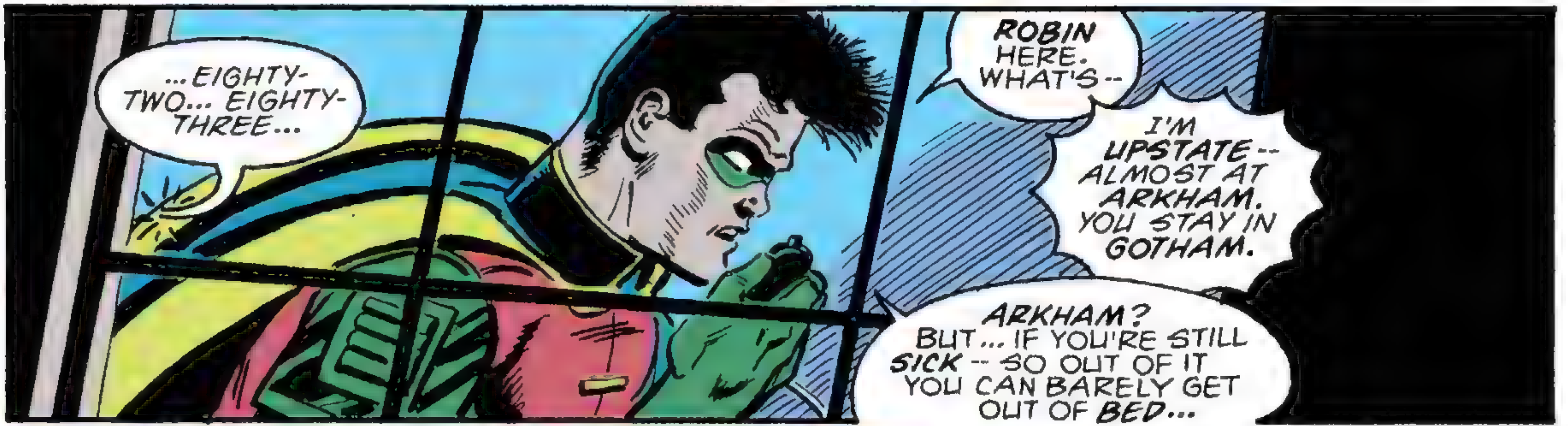


KAKKROOM



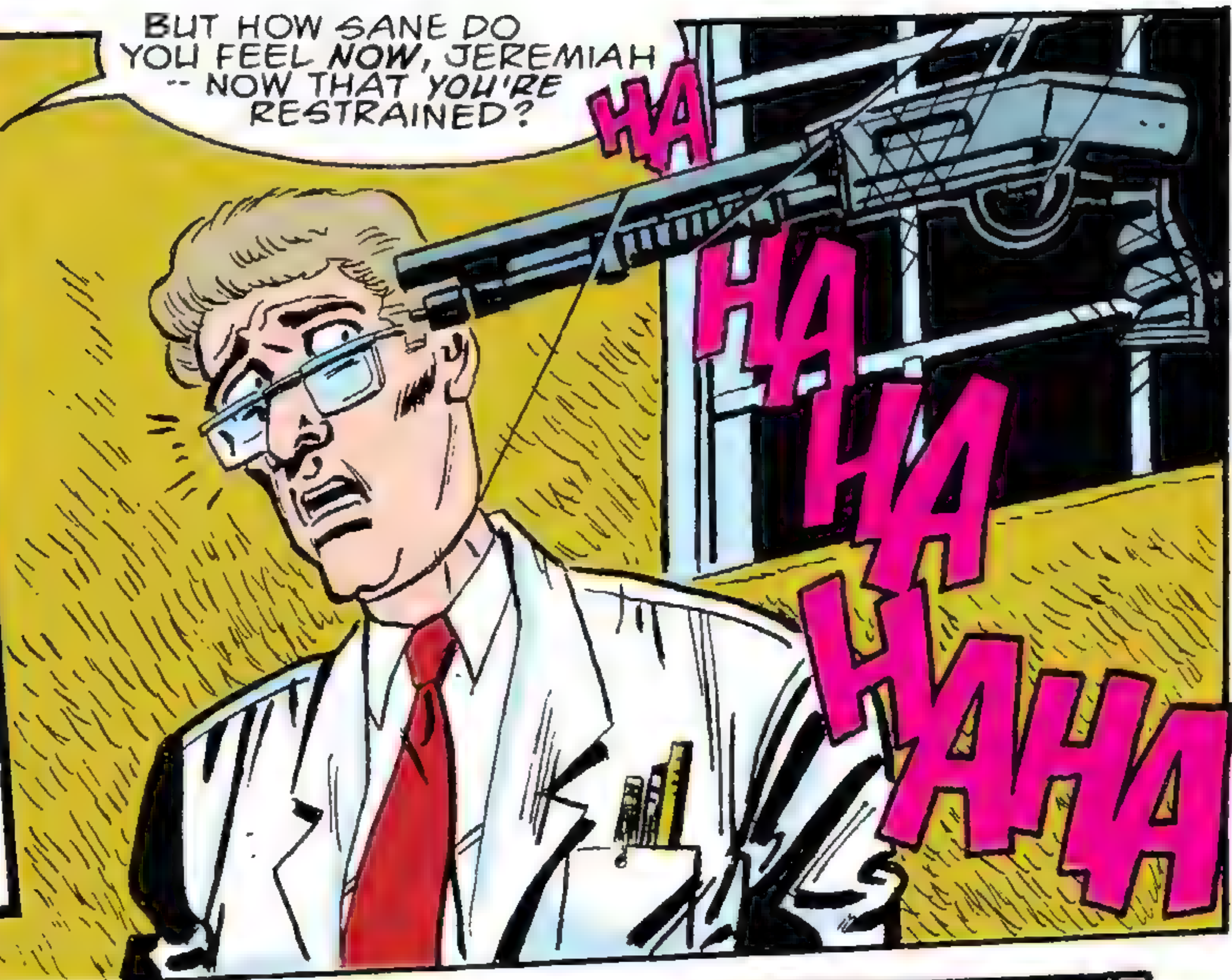




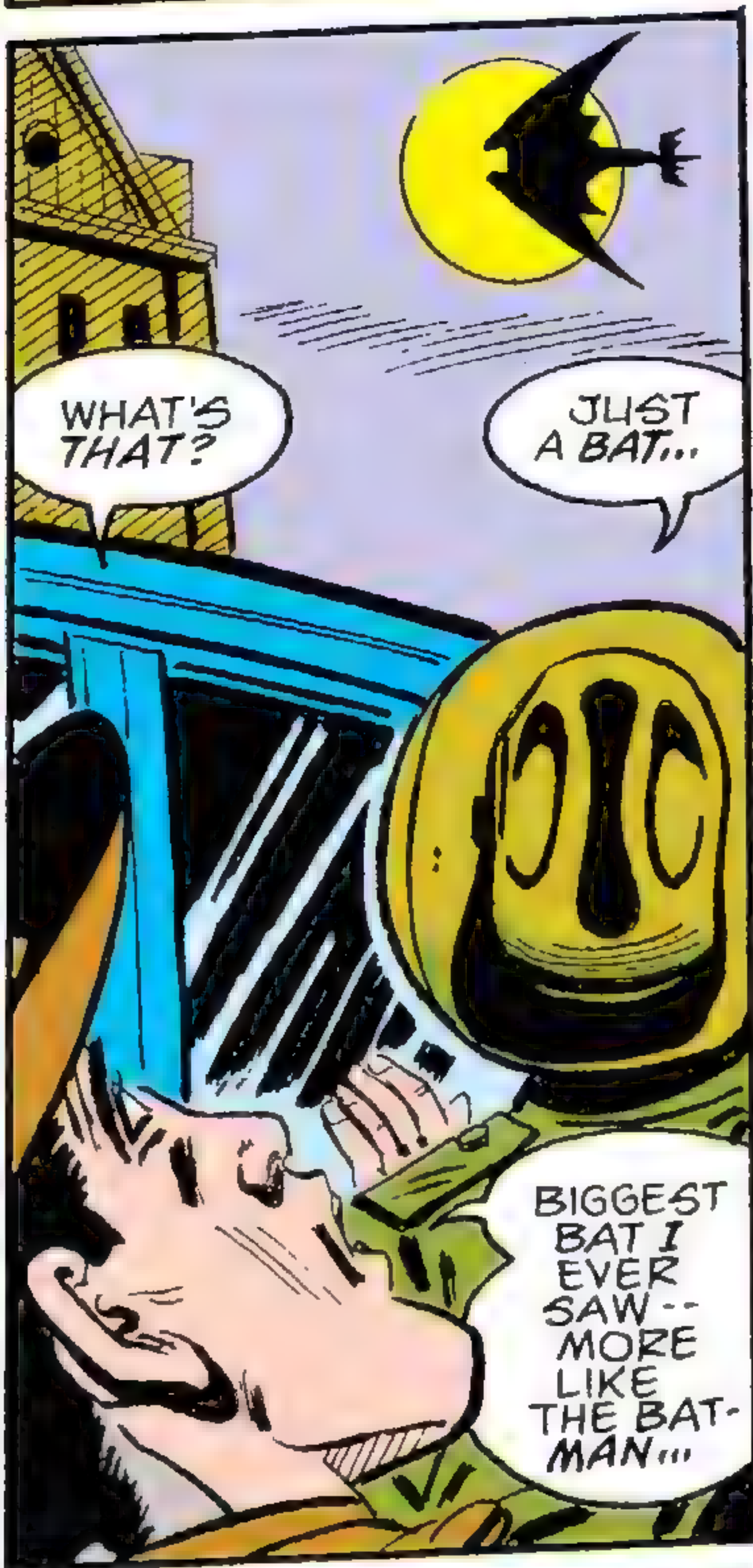




IN PLACE OF OUR MAD-
NESS, JEREMIAH, YOU
GAVE US RESTRAINT AND
CALLED IT A PRODUCT OF
YOUR SANITY.



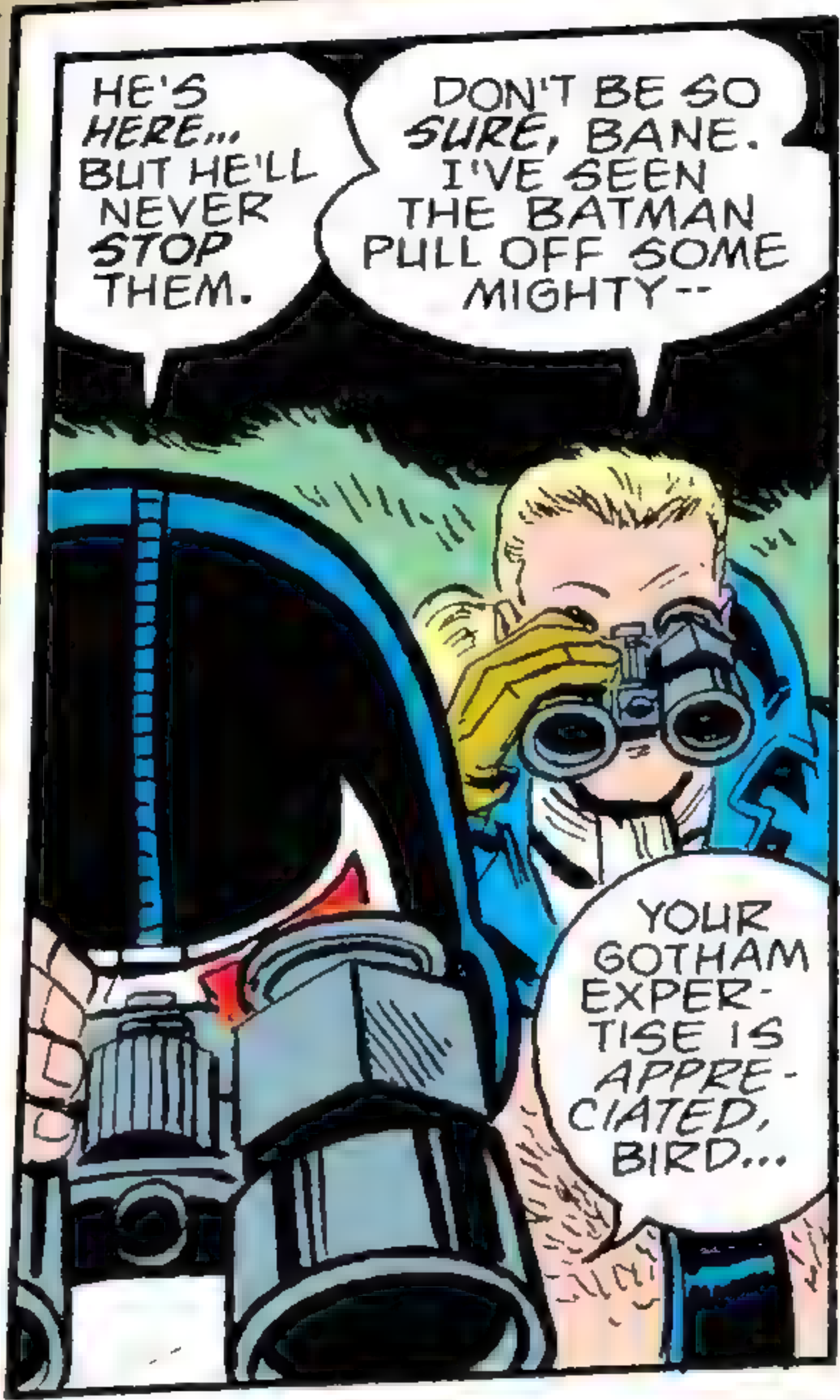
BUT HOW SANE DO
YOU FEEL NOW, JEREMIAH
-- NOW THAT YOU'RE
RESTRAINED?



BIGGEST
BAT I
EVER
SAW --
MORE
LIKE
THE BAT-
MAN...



"YOU CRAZY?
HE CAN'T FLY--!"





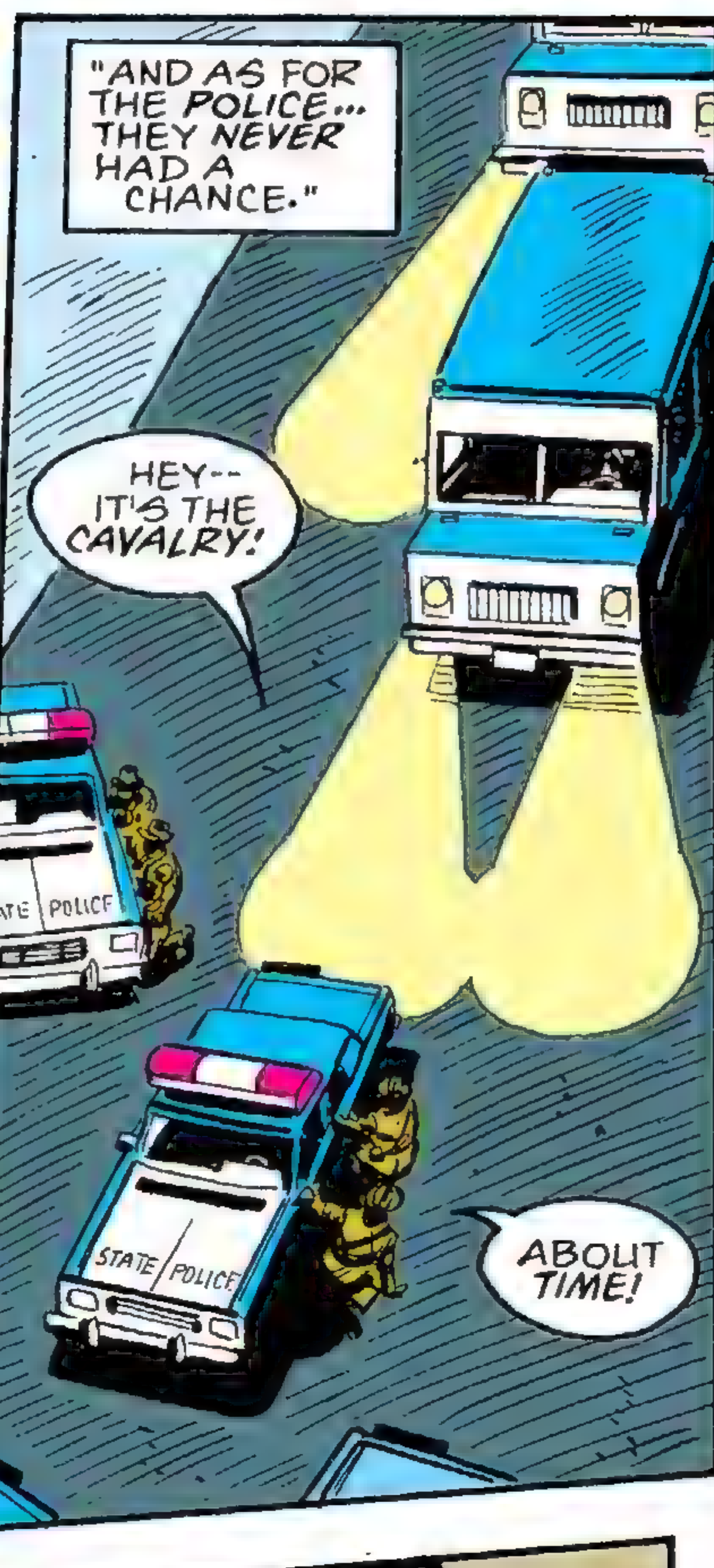
"EVEN IF HE COULD STOP THEM, HE WON'T."



"HE WILL CHOOSE THE SAVING OF LIVES OVER THE APPREHENSION OF KILLERS..."

DEAD.

"HE ALWAYS DOES."



"AND AS FOR THE POLICE... THEY NEVER HAD A CHANCE."

HEY-- IT'S THE CAVALRY!

ABOUT TIME!



WHAT'S THE CURRENT HOSTAGE SITUATION?

MOST OF THE ORDERLIES HAVE MANAGED TO HOLE UP IN THE ROUNDHOUSE GARRISON-- BUT, BEFORE THE 'PHONE LINES WERE CUT, THEY REPORTED A NUMBER OF GUARDS DOWN...

... AND JEREMIAH ARKHAM TAKEN BY THE JOKER.

THE JOKER--?



"... THEN GOD HELP HIM."

ALL YOUR NEW SECURITY, JEREMIAH, BREACHED LIKE A WET PAPER BAG... ALL YOUR HARD WORK, UNDONE IN A TWINKLING OF FRENZY.

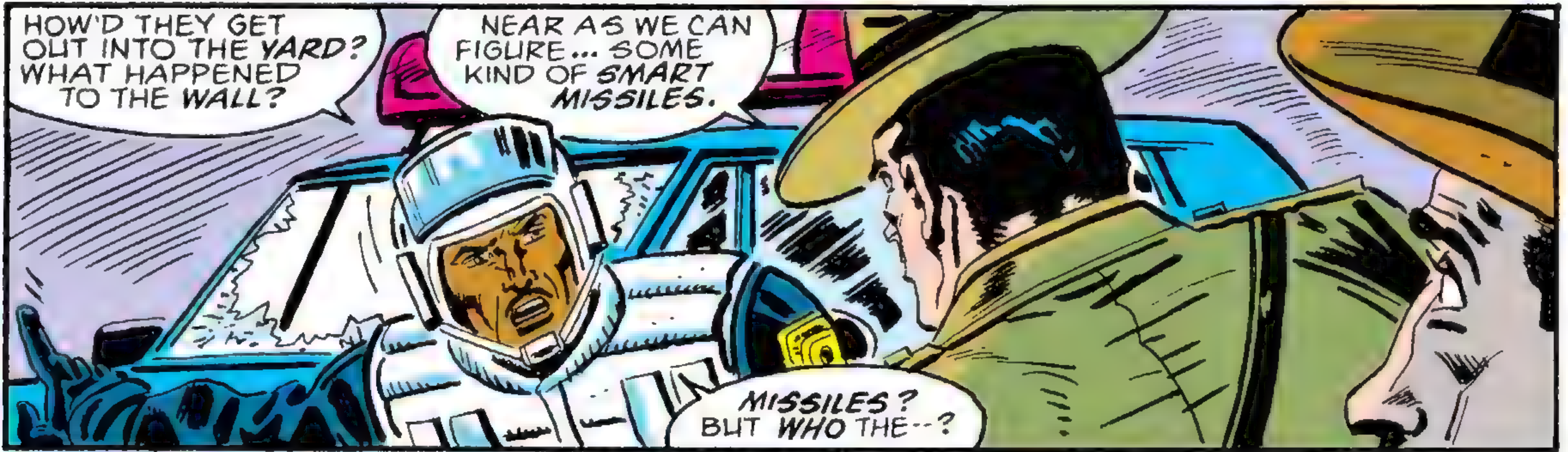
I LIKE THE WORD "TWINKLING," DON'T YOU? WERE YOU HARD TO POTTY TRAIN, JEREMIAH?

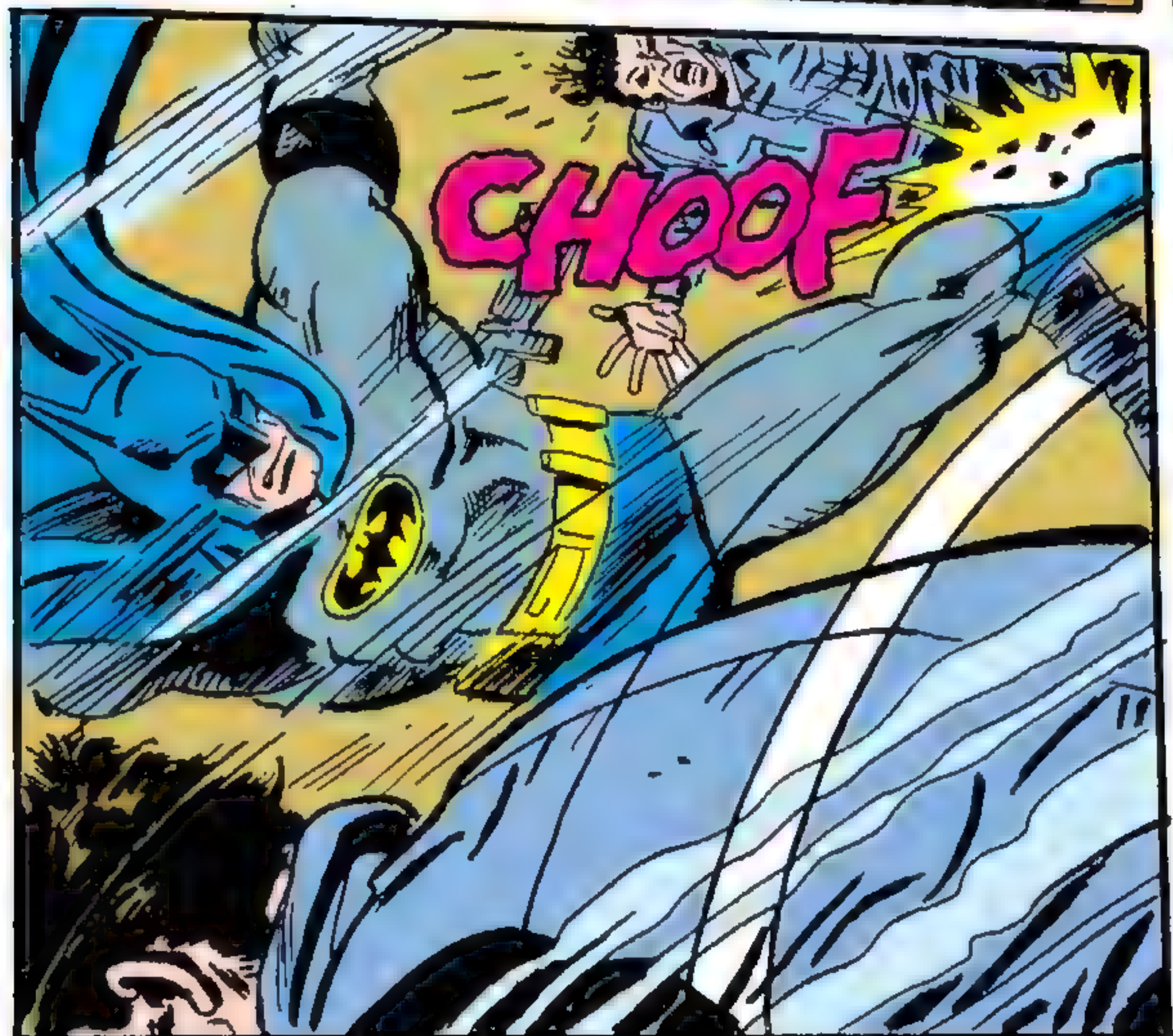
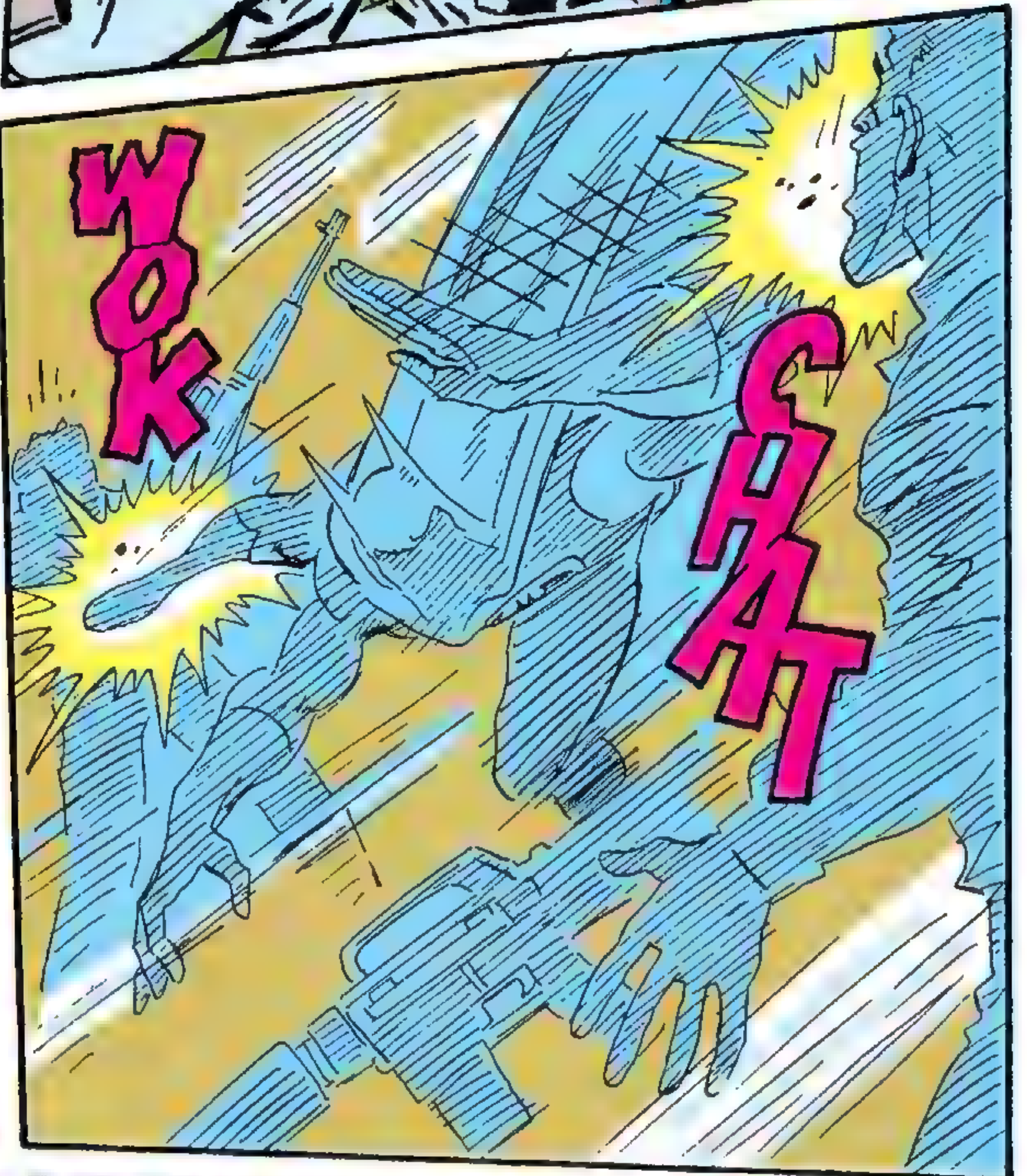
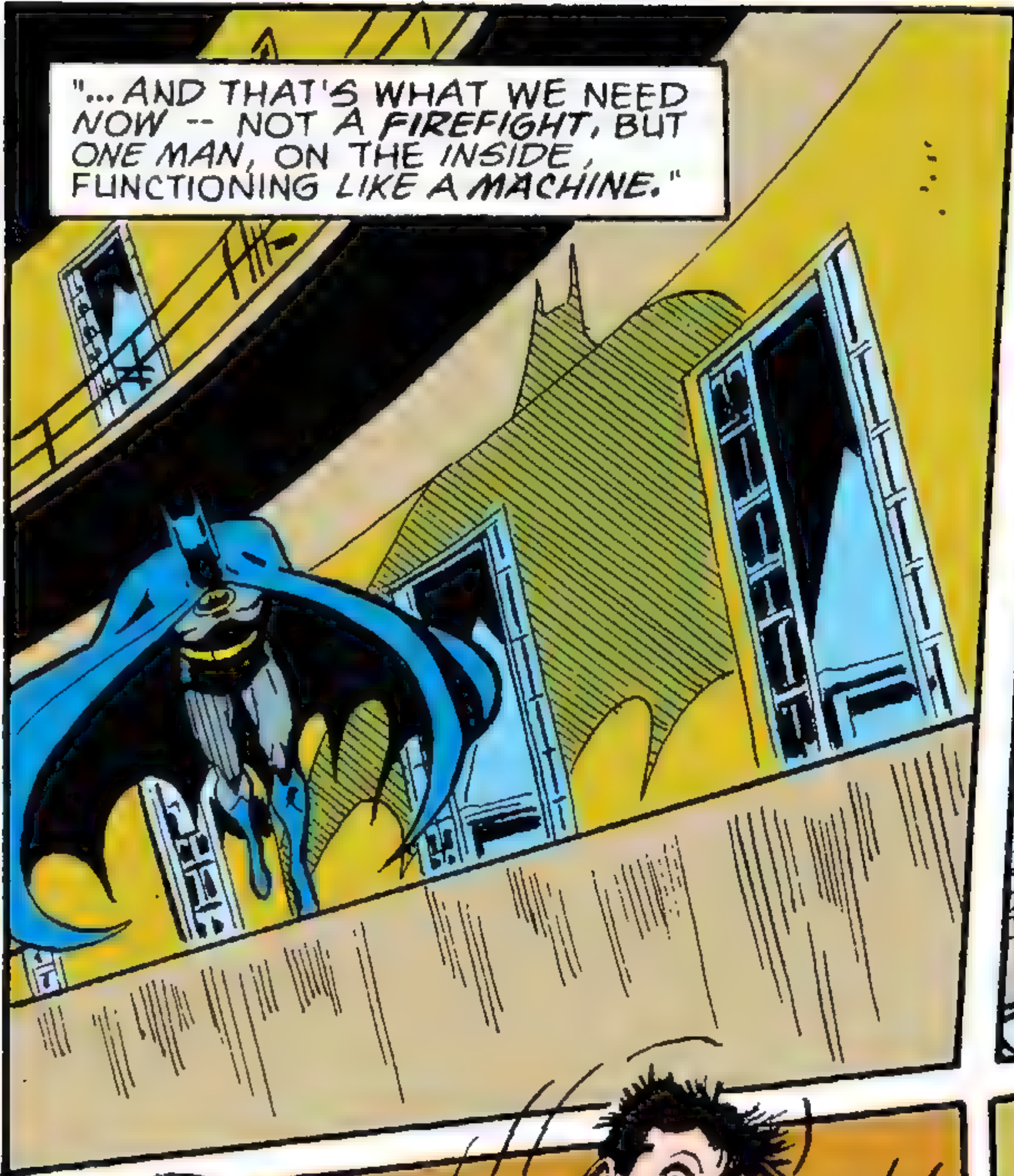
DOESN'T MATTER-- BECAUSE EVERYTHING YOU'VE TRAINED FOR, EVERYTHING YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED, IS SHATTERED...

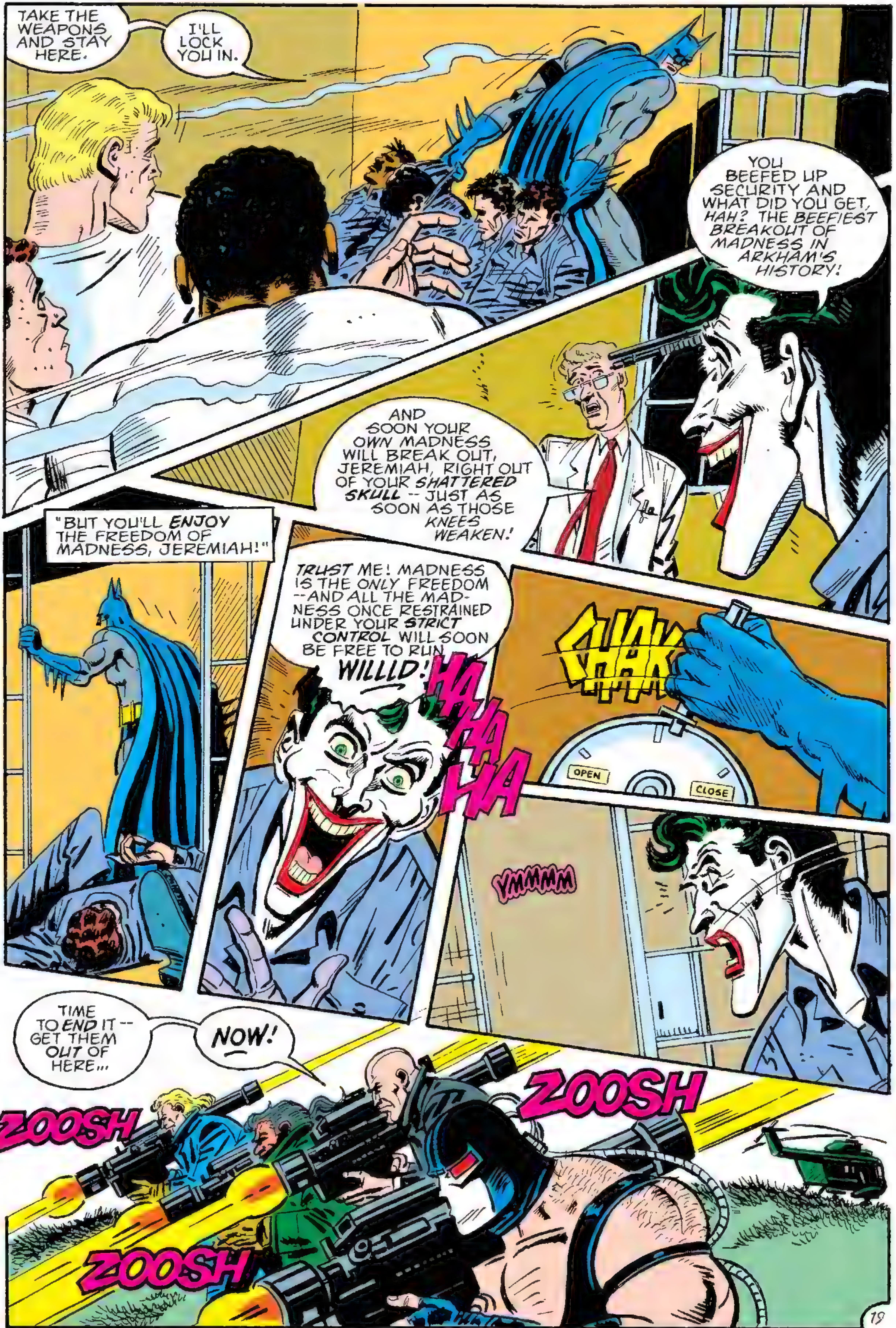


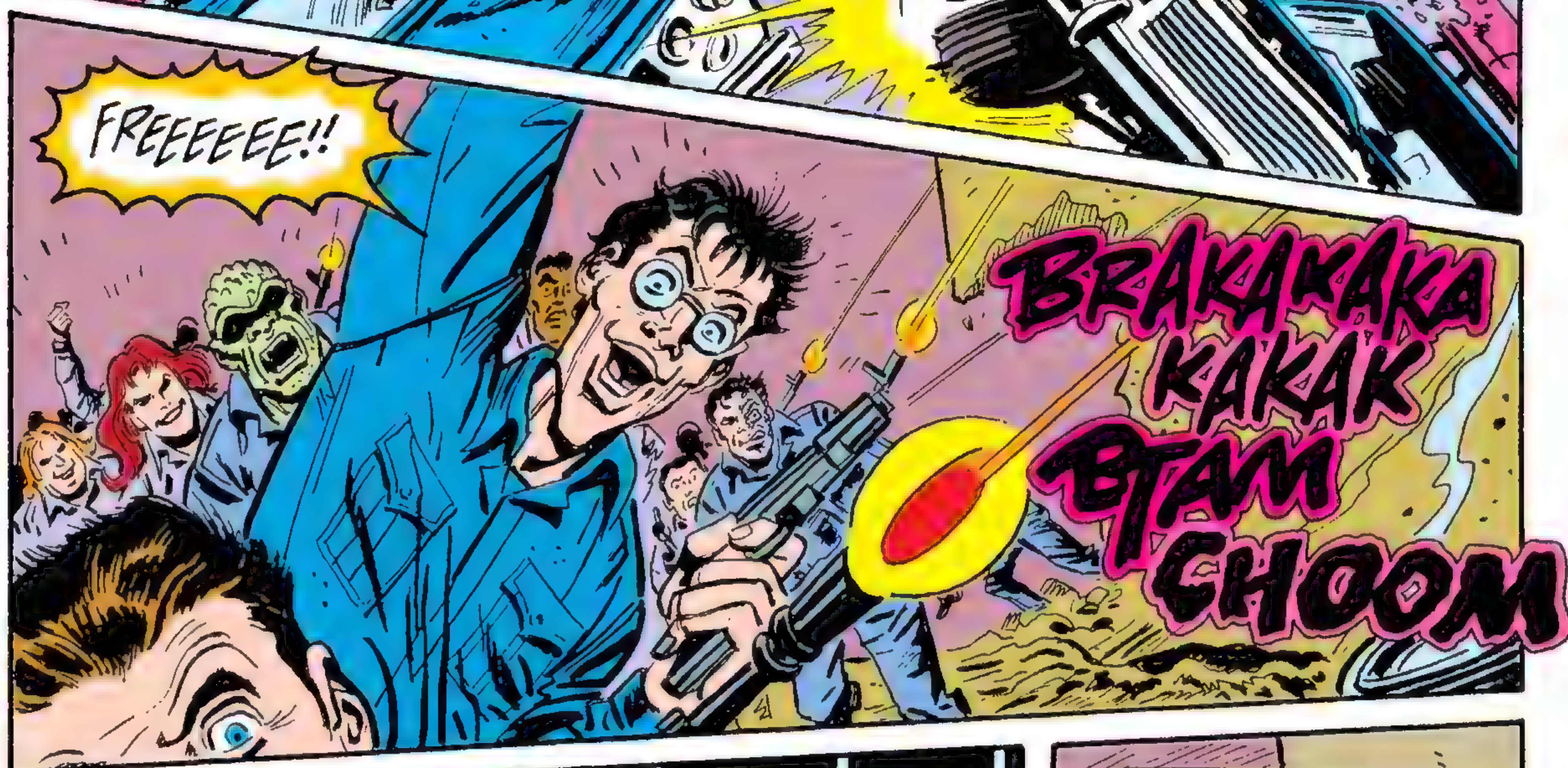
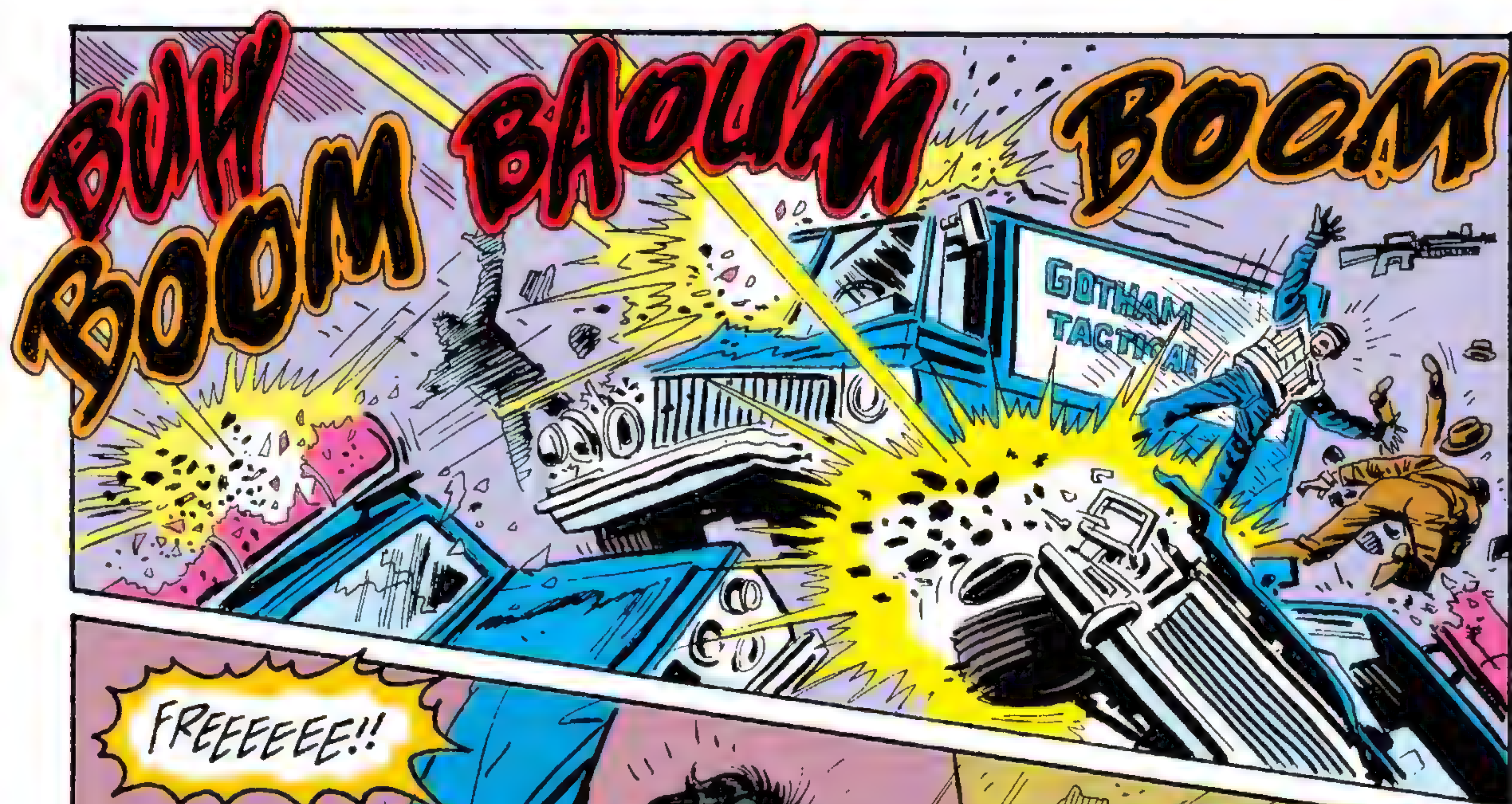
... JUST LIKE YOUR MIND RIGHT NOW, JEREMIAH-- SHATTERED.

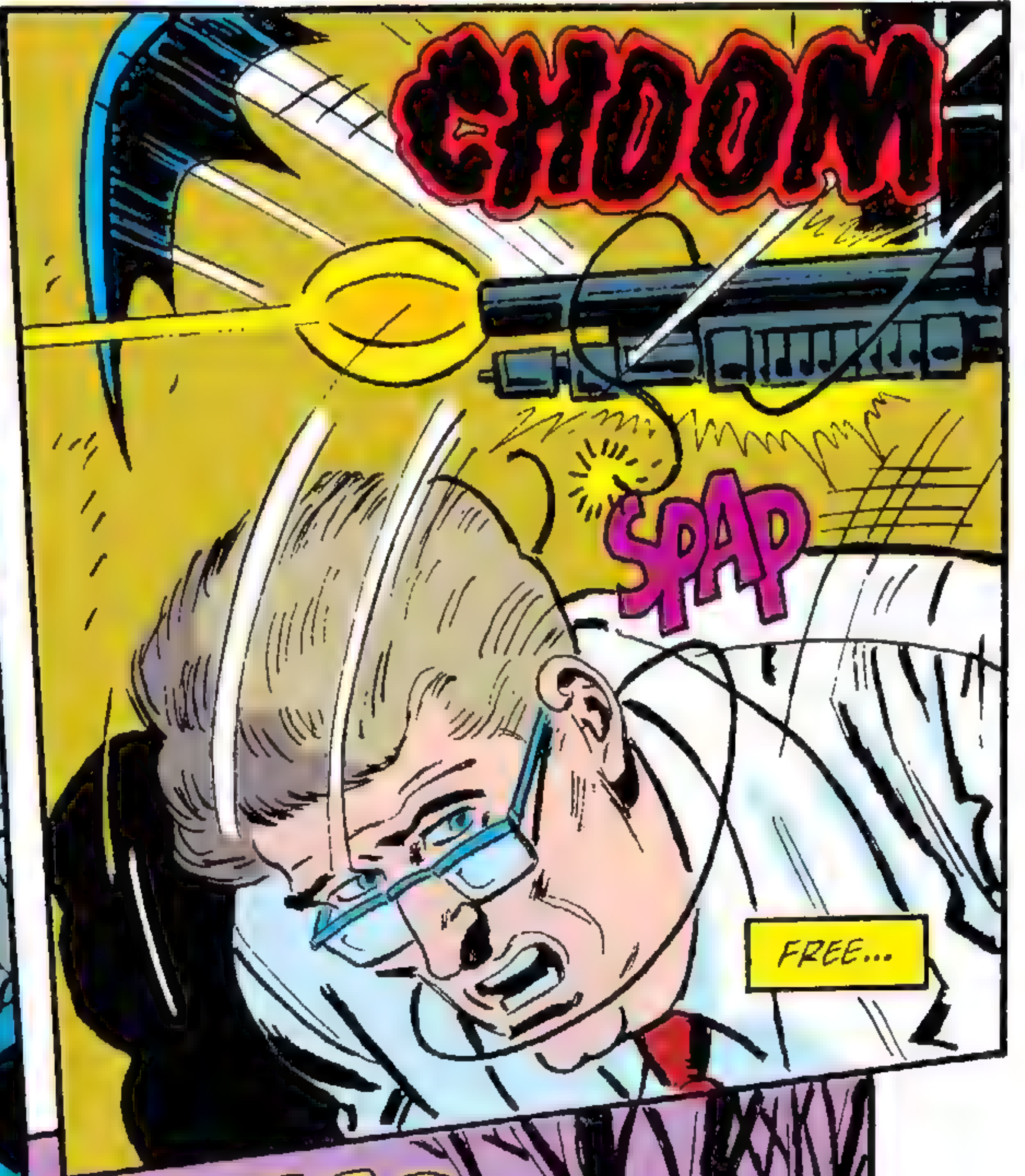
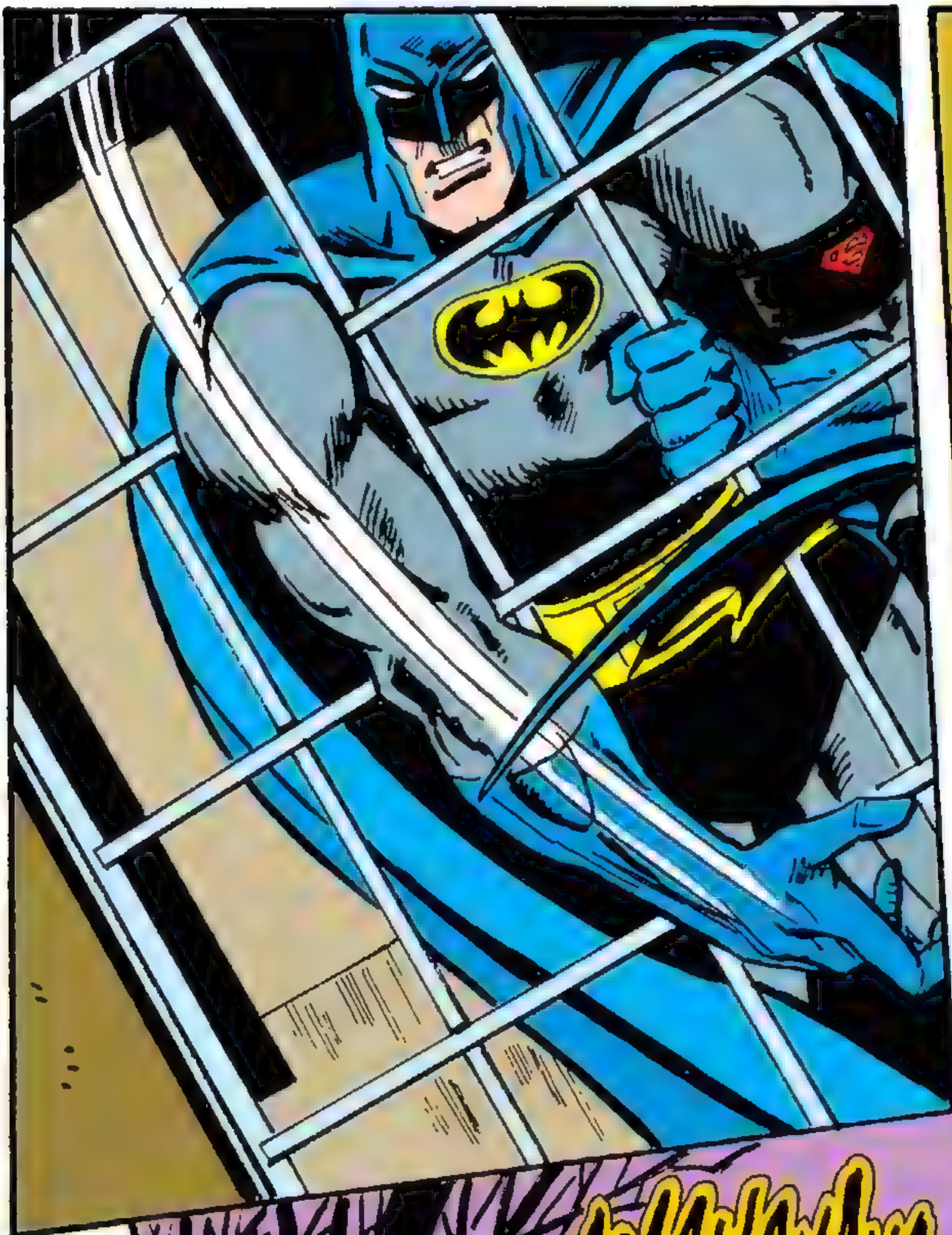
HAHAHA









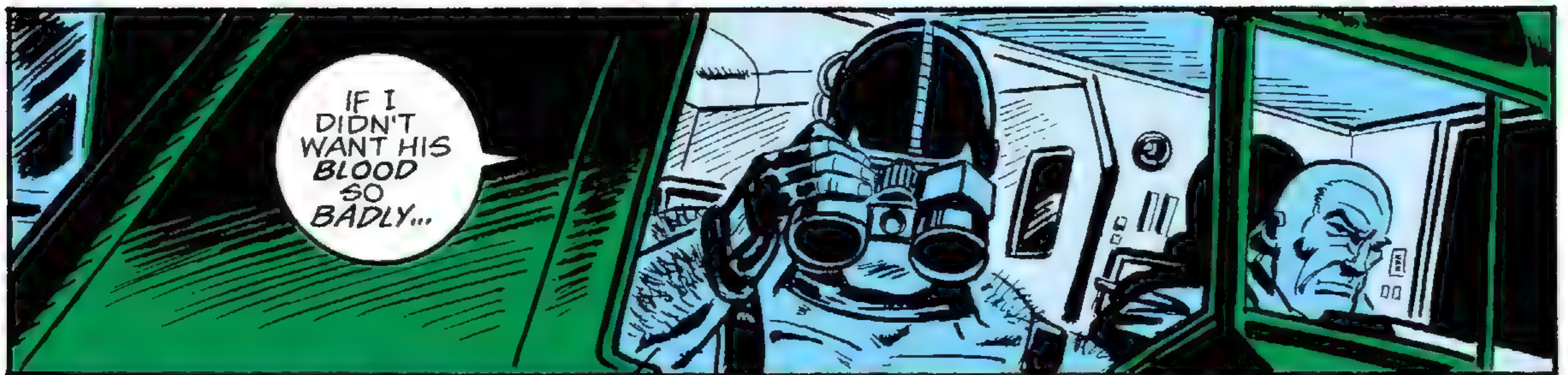
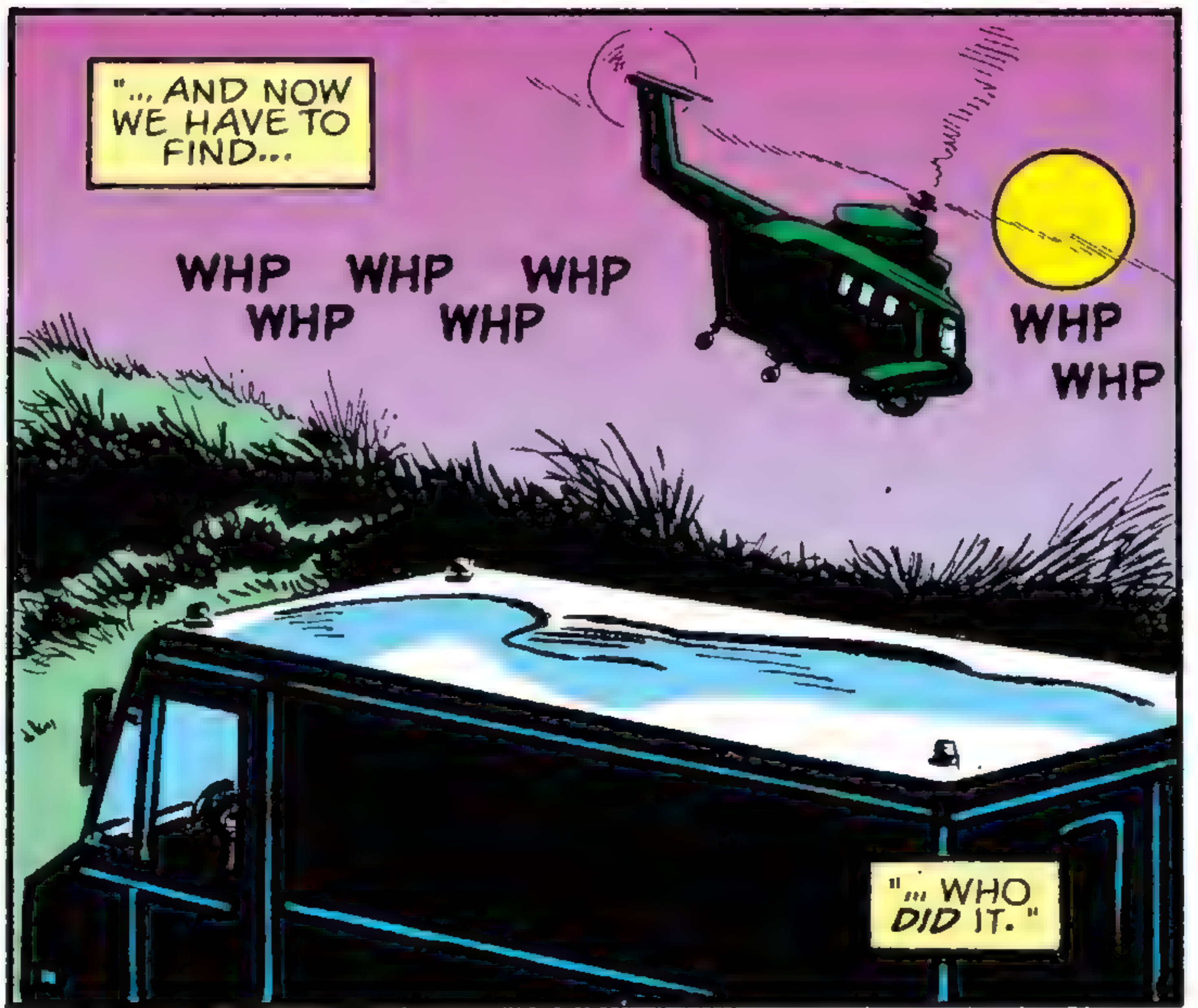


...THEY'RE
FREE...

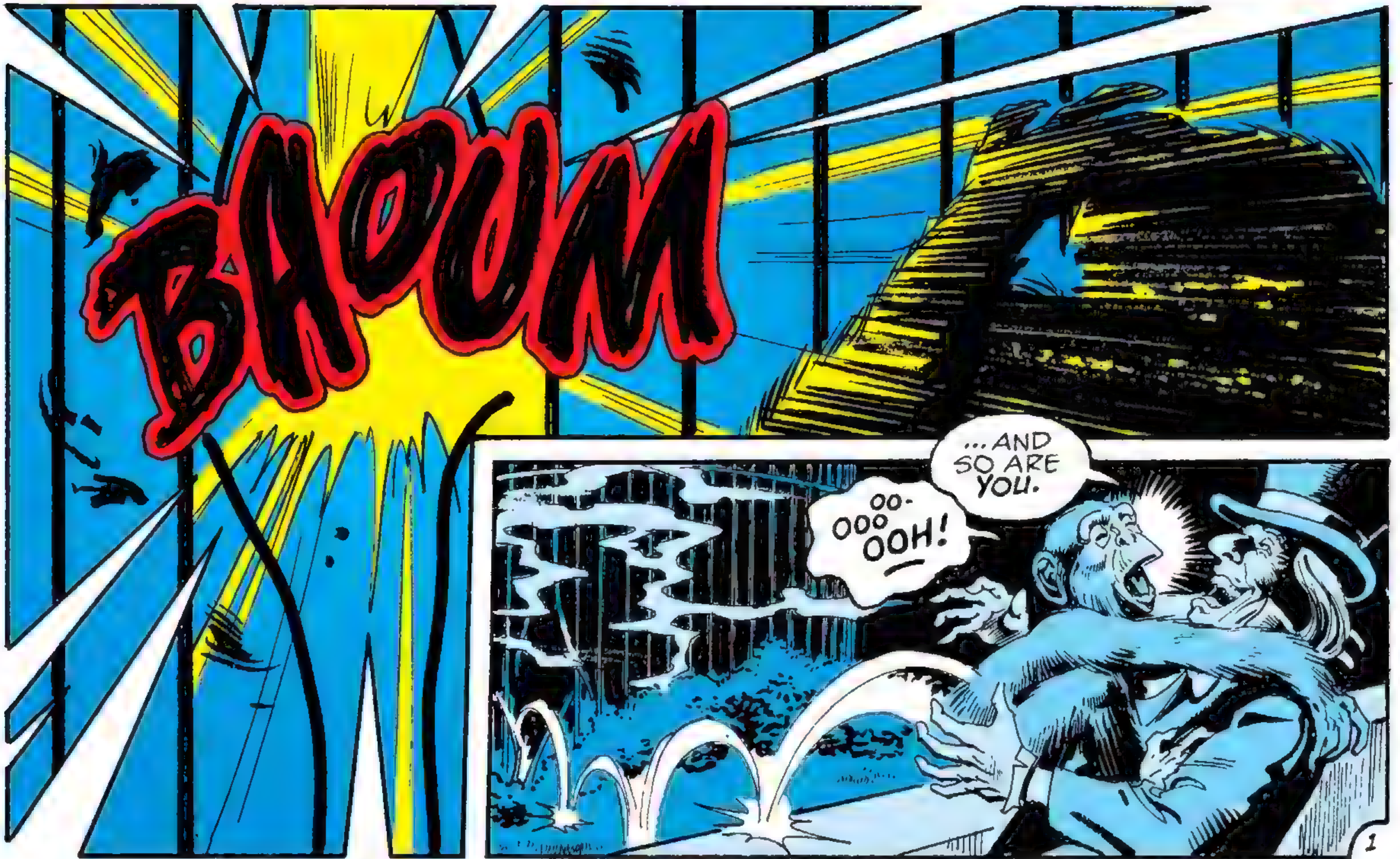
WEEAHHHHHHH AIEEEEE
ARAWOOOO
YAAHHHHH

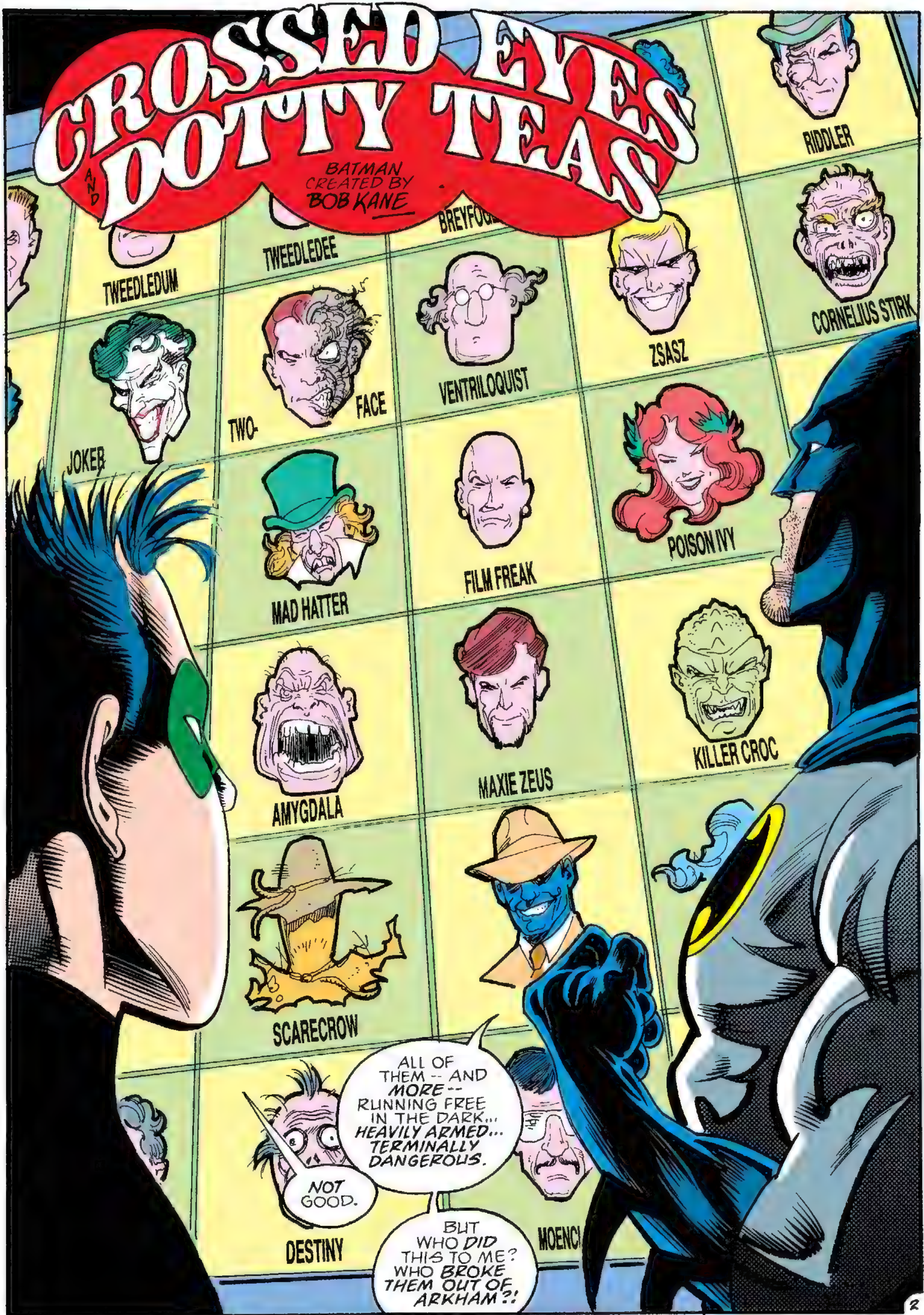
...ALL OF
THEM...









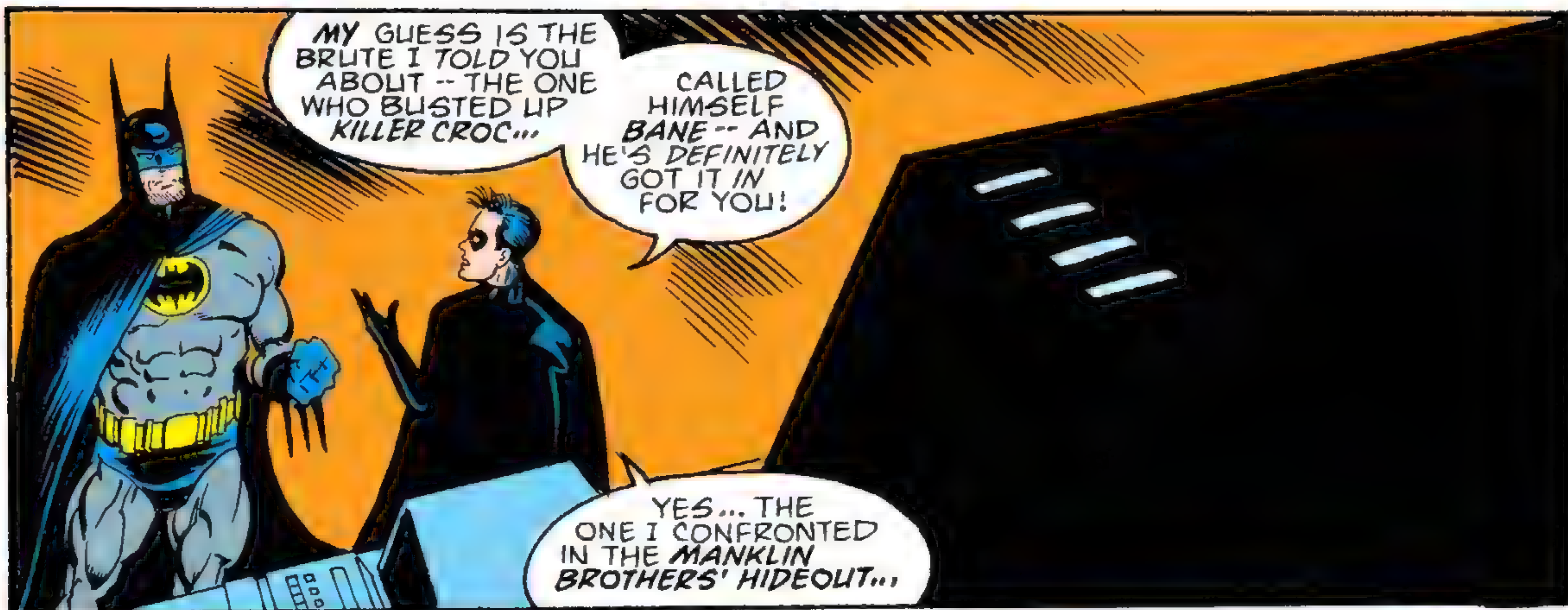


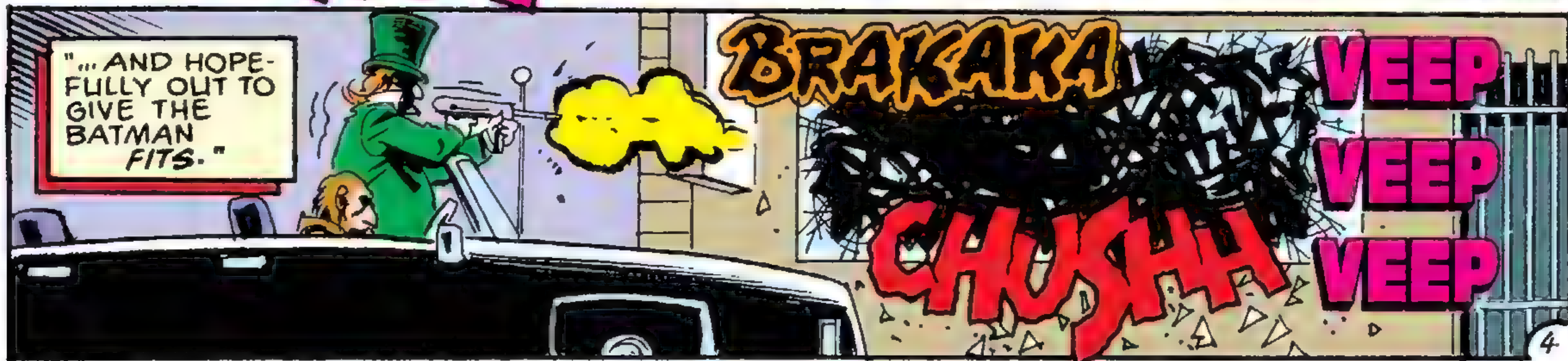
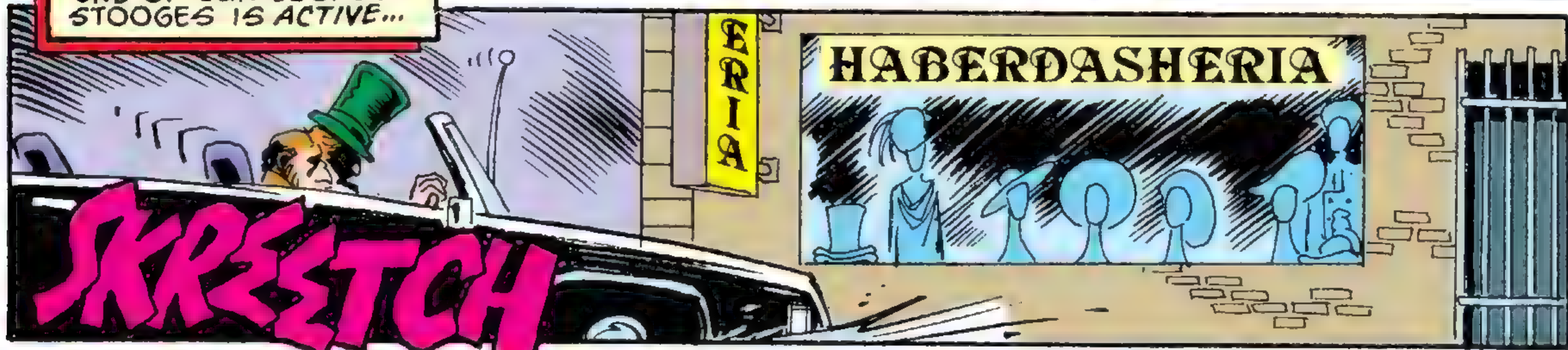
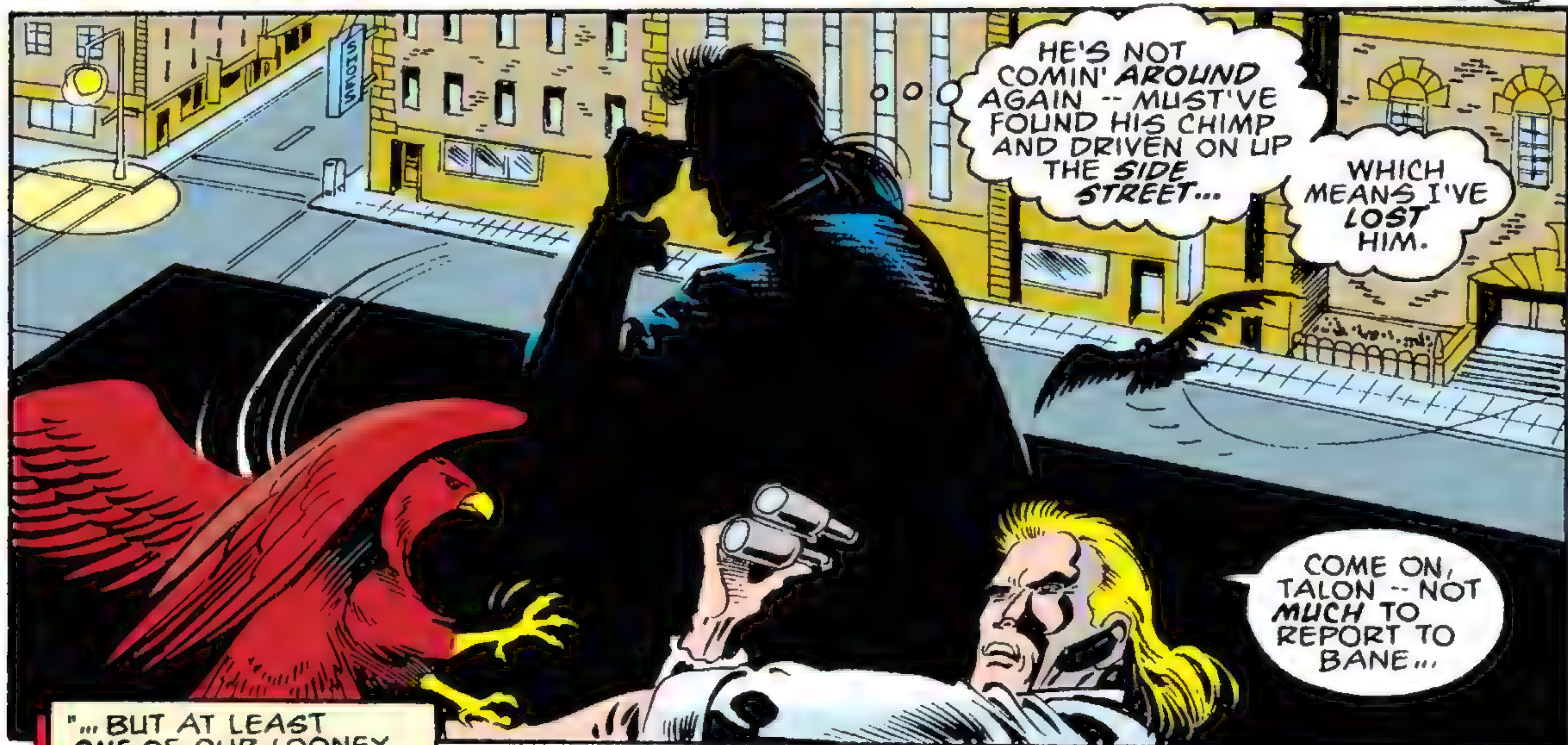
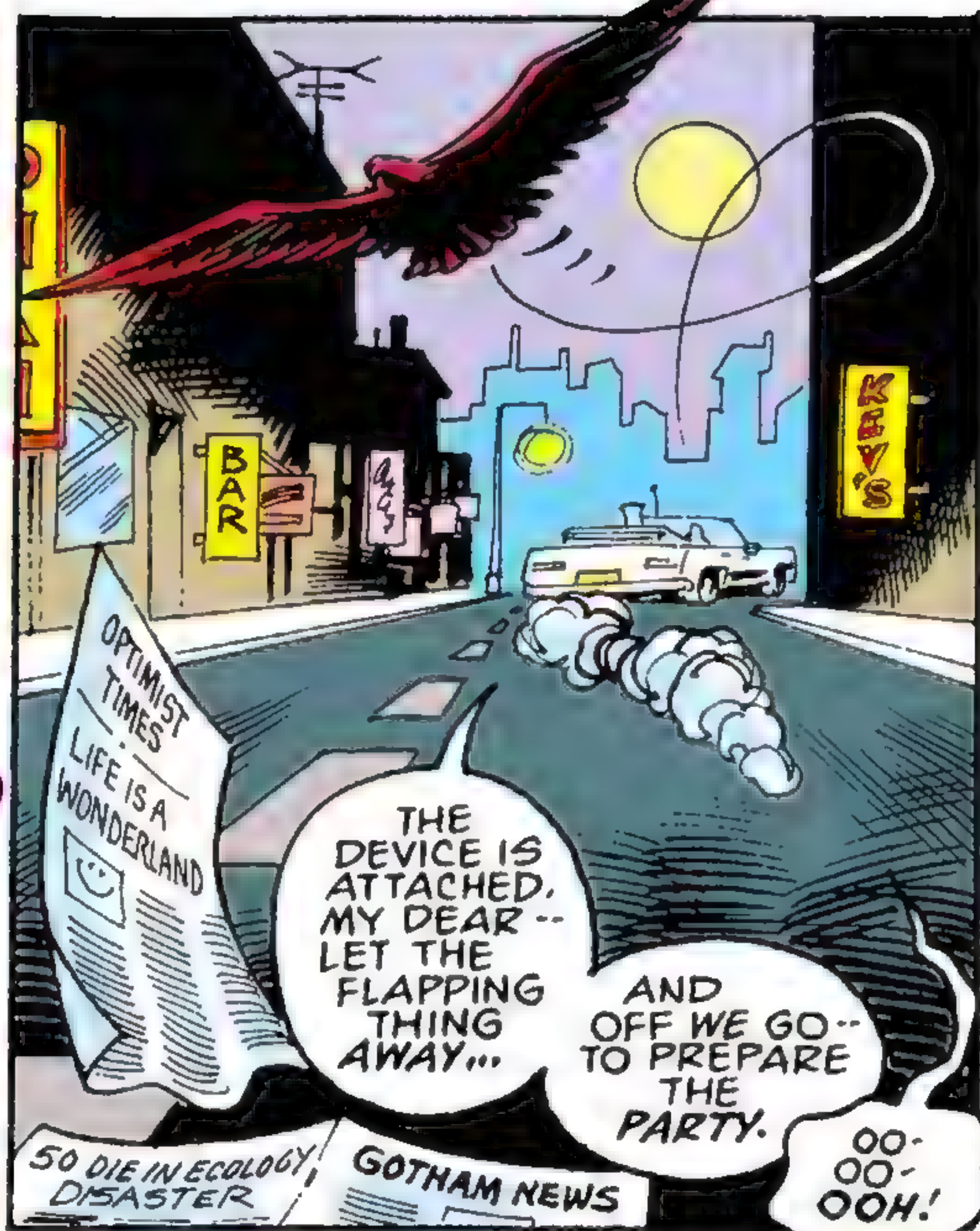
DOUG MOENCH
 WRITER

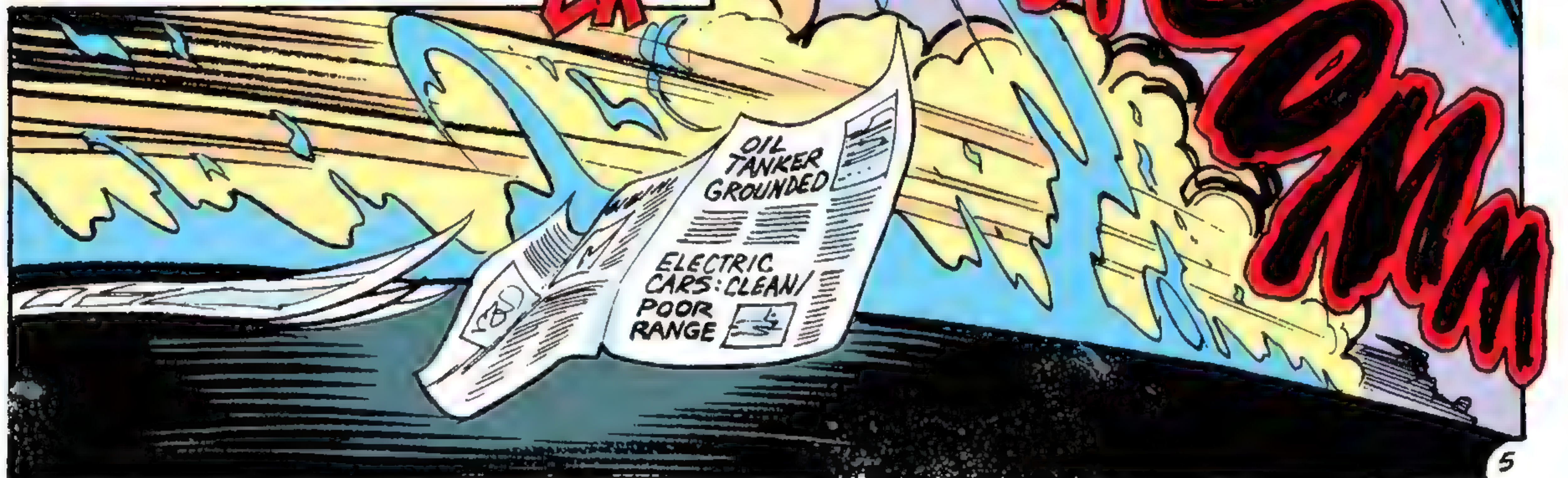
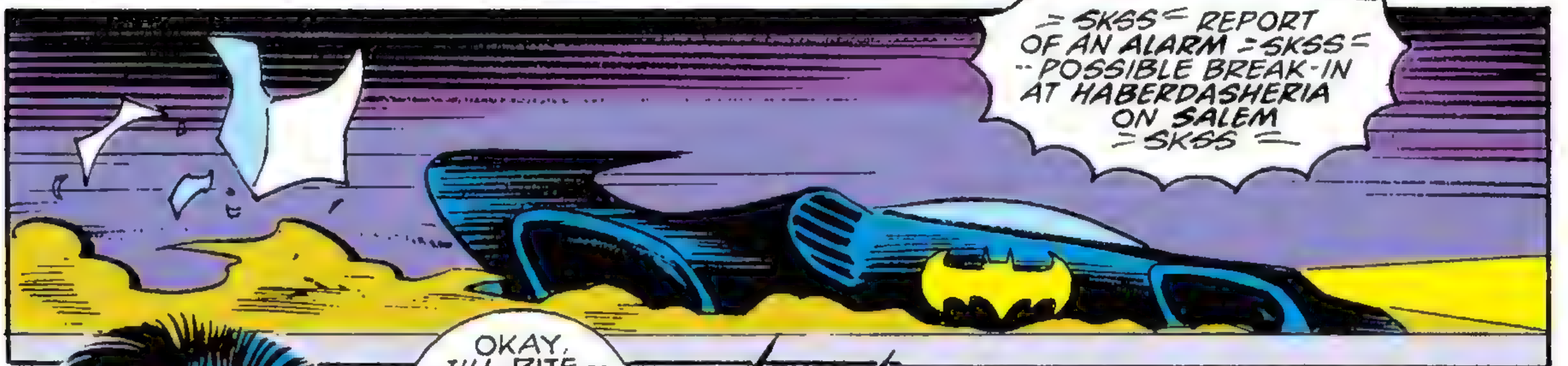
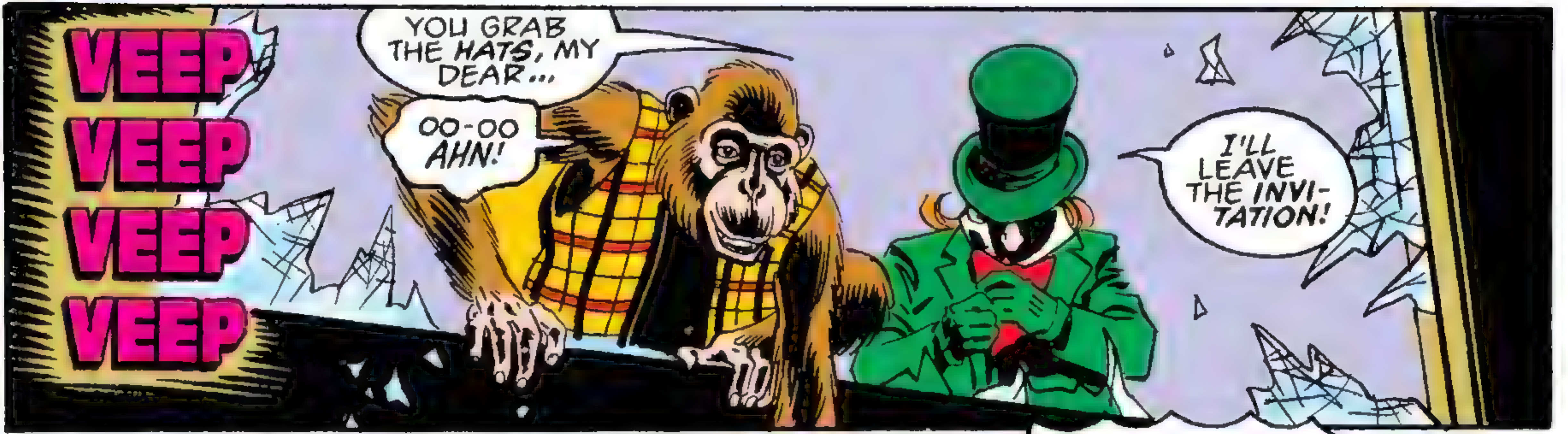
NORM BREYFOGLE
 ARTIST

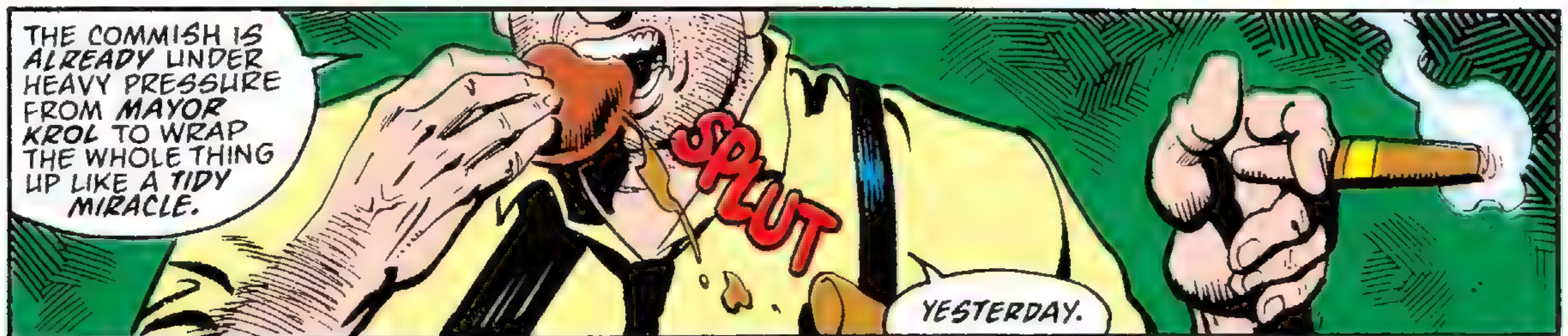
ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST
 RICHARD STARKINGS LETTERER

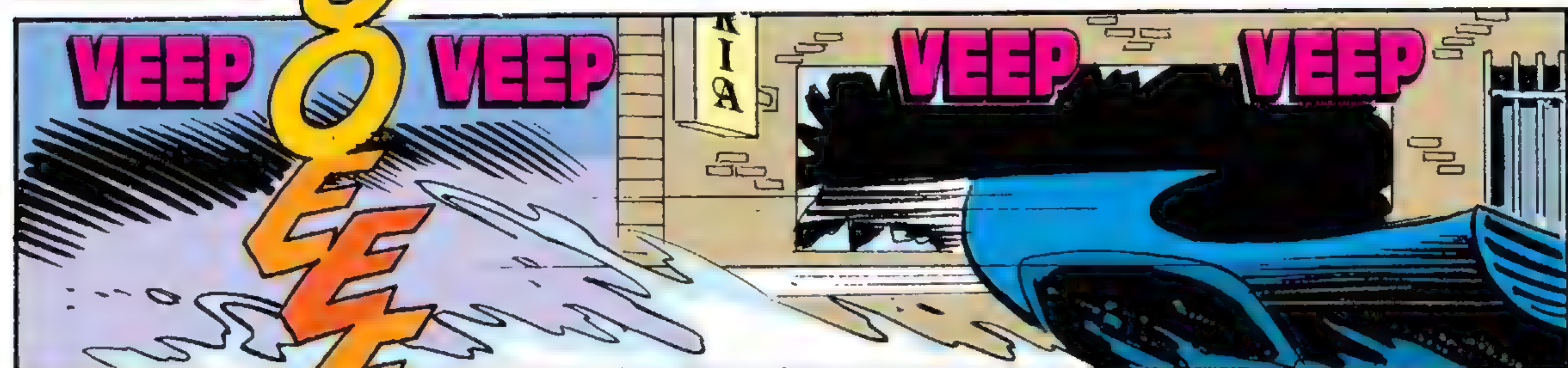
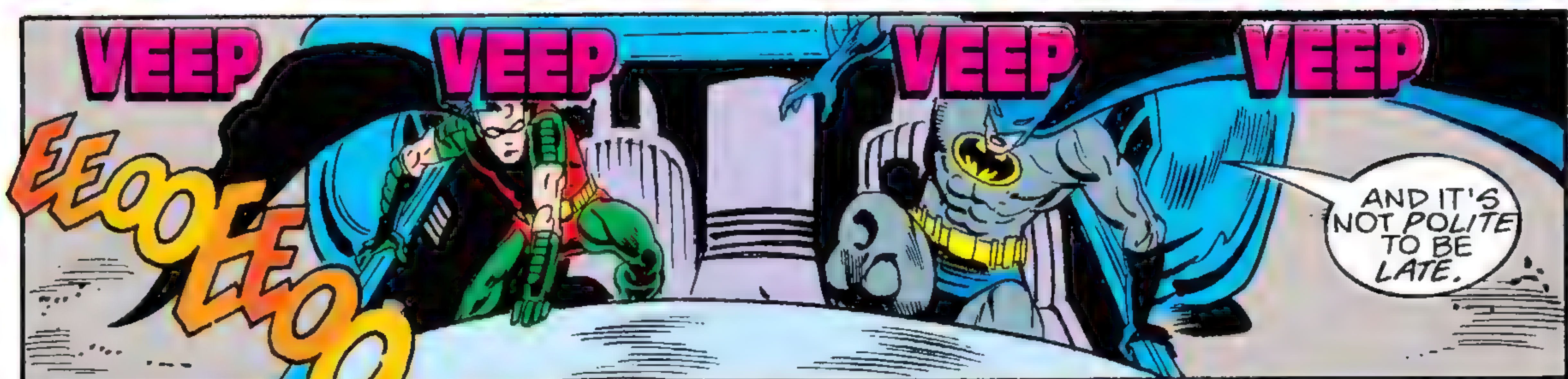
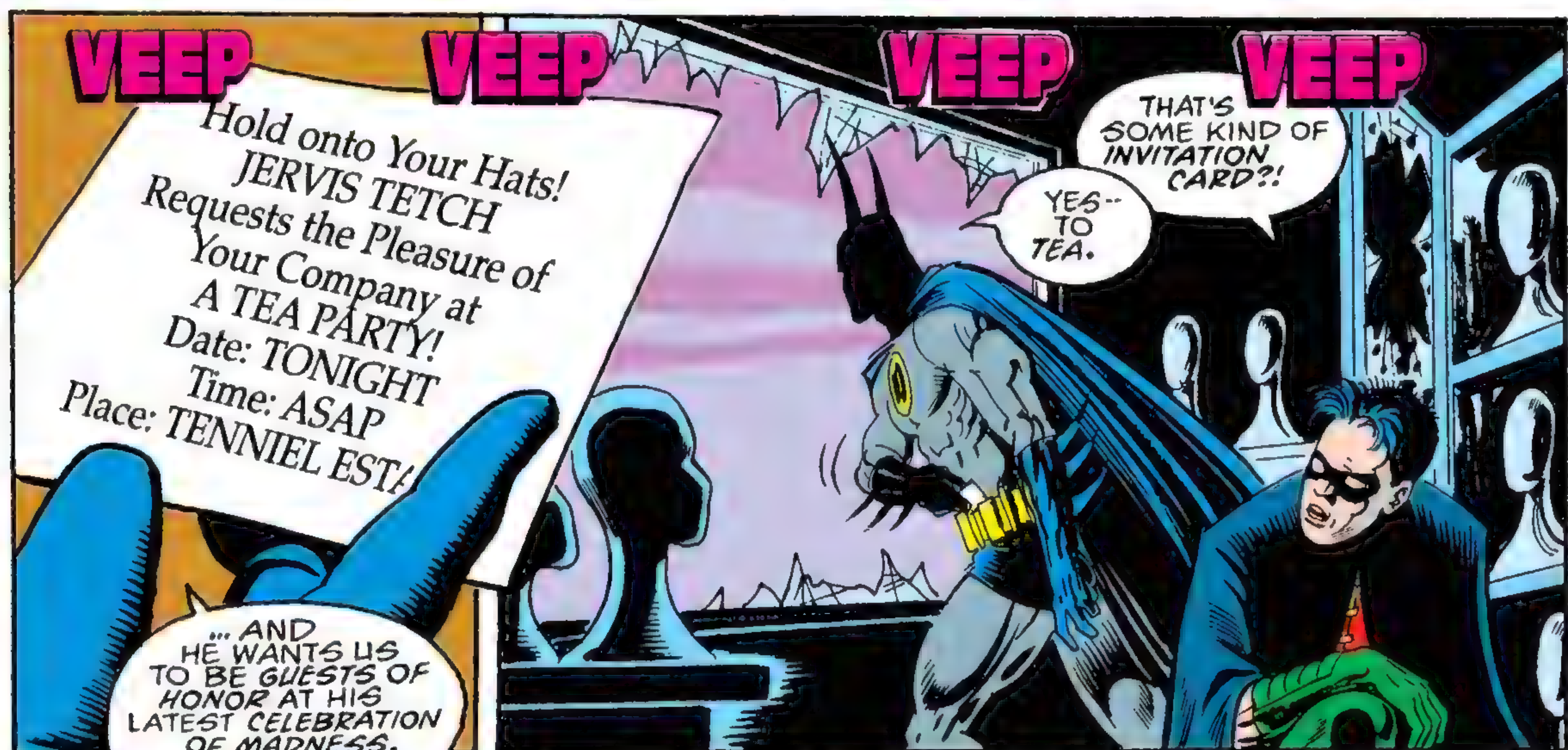
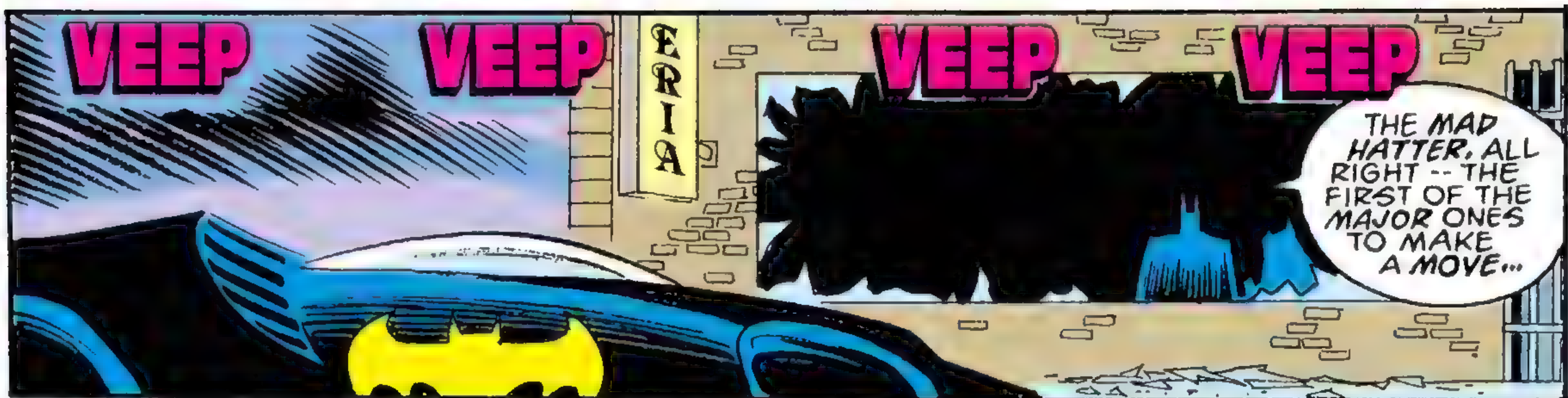
SCOTT PETERSON DENNY O'NEIL
 JORDAN B. GORFINKEL EDITOR
 ASST EDITORS





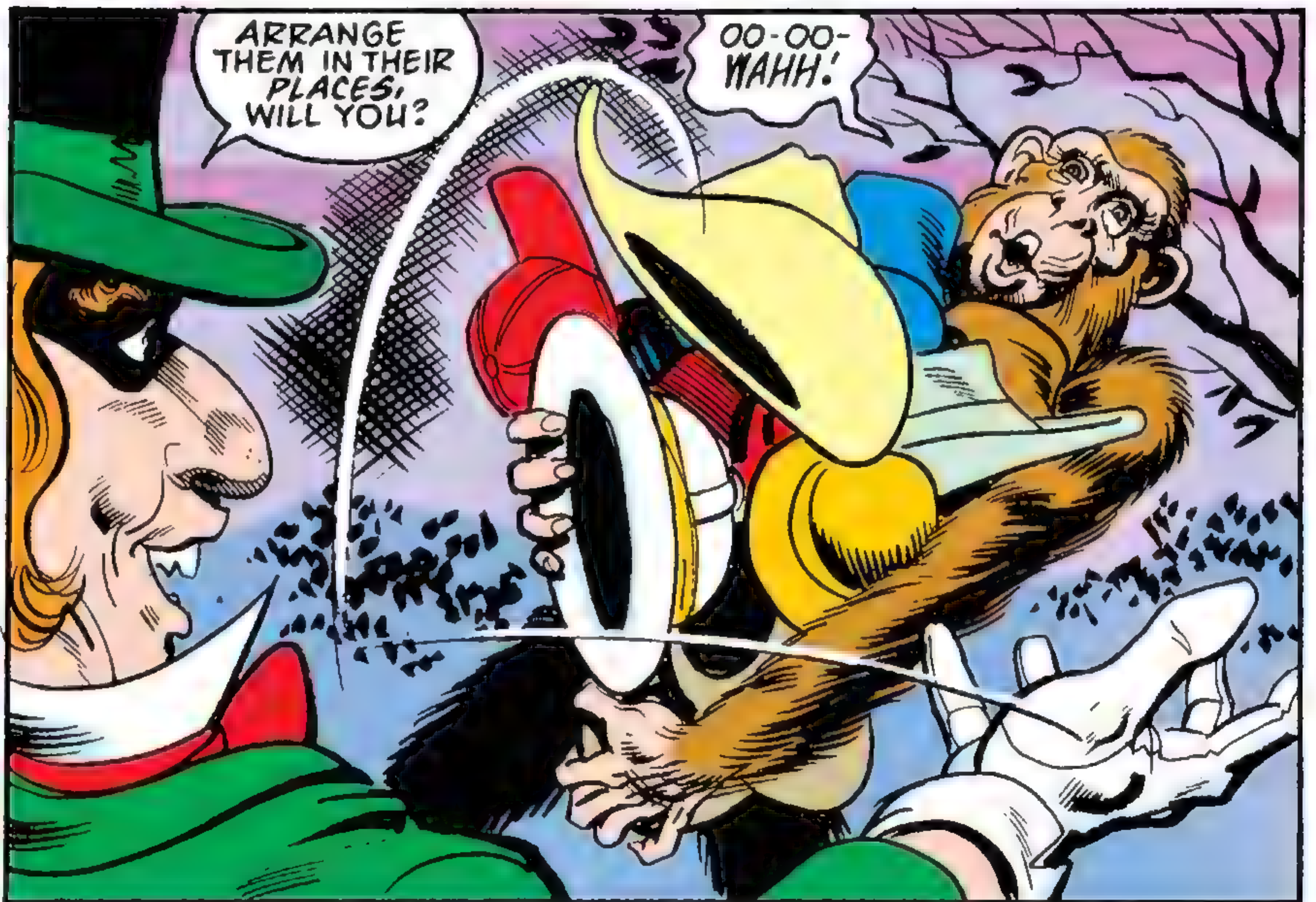








HERE
WE GO, MY
DEAR -- THE
LAST HAT
IS
DONE...

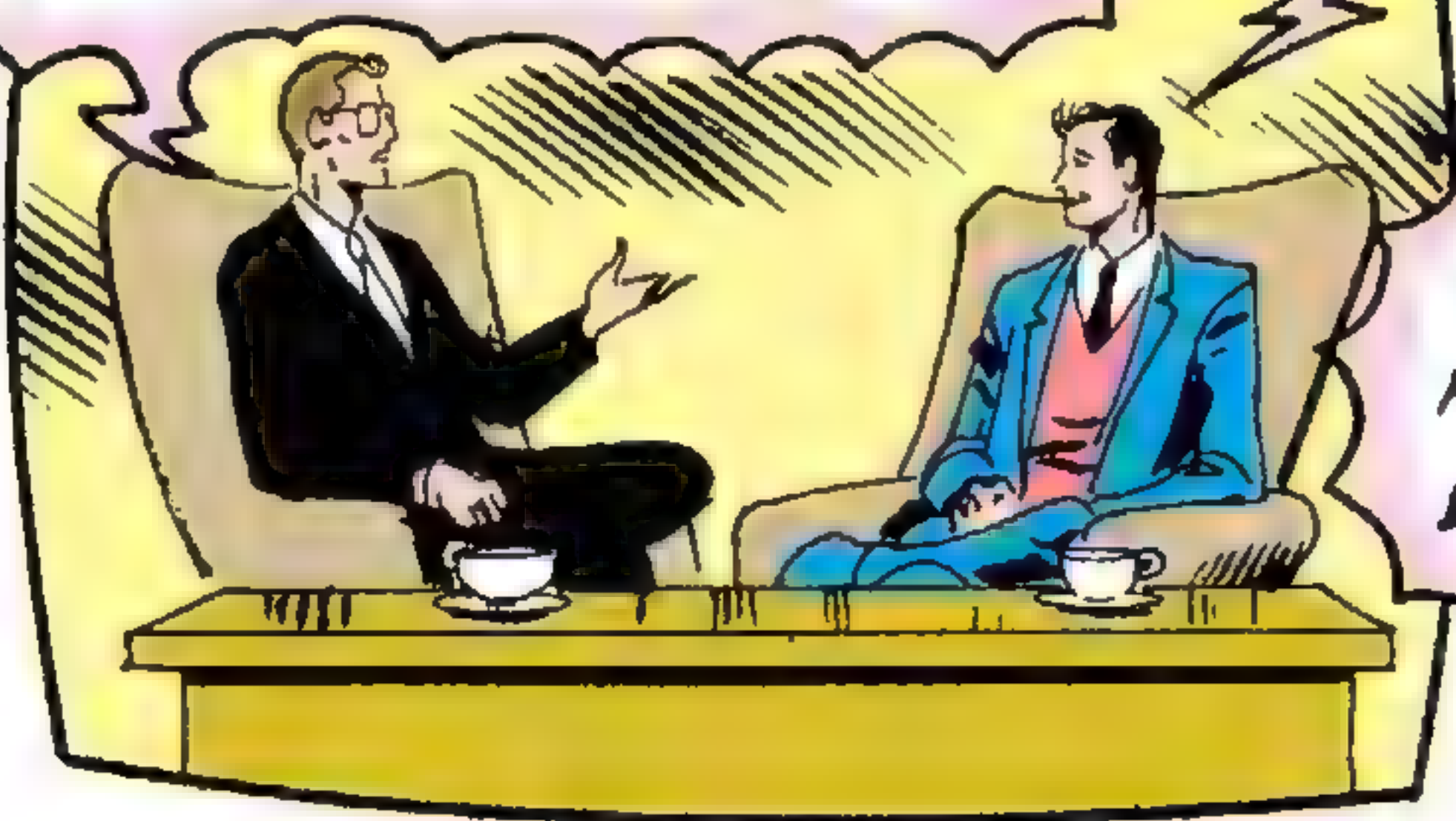


ARRANGE
THEM IN THEIR
PLACES,
WILL YOU?

OO-OO-
WAHH!

--NINE SEPARATE
CASES OF VIOLENT
CRIME ALREADY, DR.
FLANDERS, ALL APPARENTLY
LINKED TO THE MASS BREAK-
OUT AT ARKHAM ASYLUM.
IS THIS WHAT WE CAN EXPECT?

THE
ONLY THING WE
CAN EXPECT,
PETER, IS THE
UNEXPECTED...



RIGHT
NOW, YOU SEE,
THESE MENTALLY
DIVERGENT
PATIENTS ARE
EXTREMELY
DISORIENTED AND
ALIENATED...

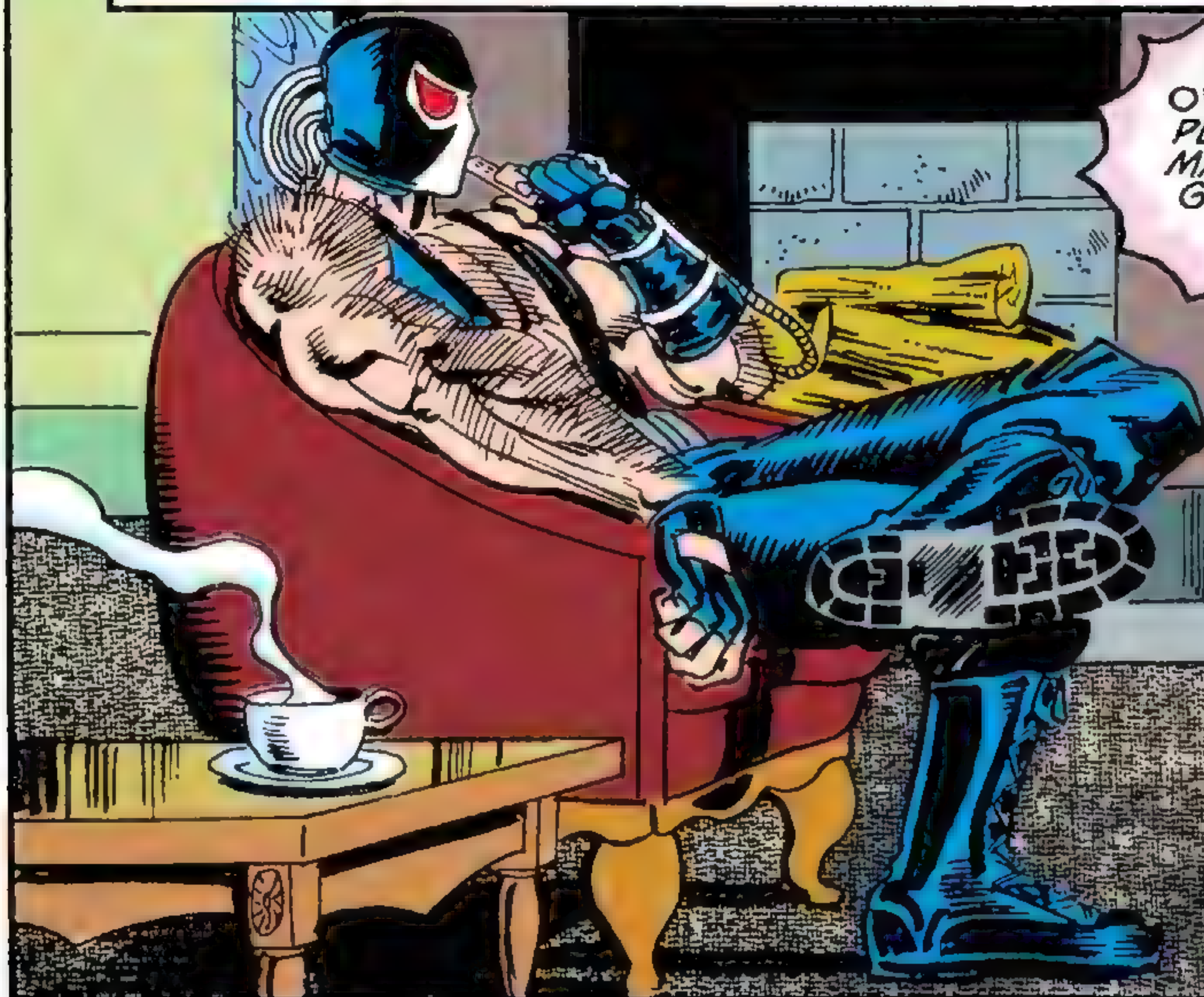


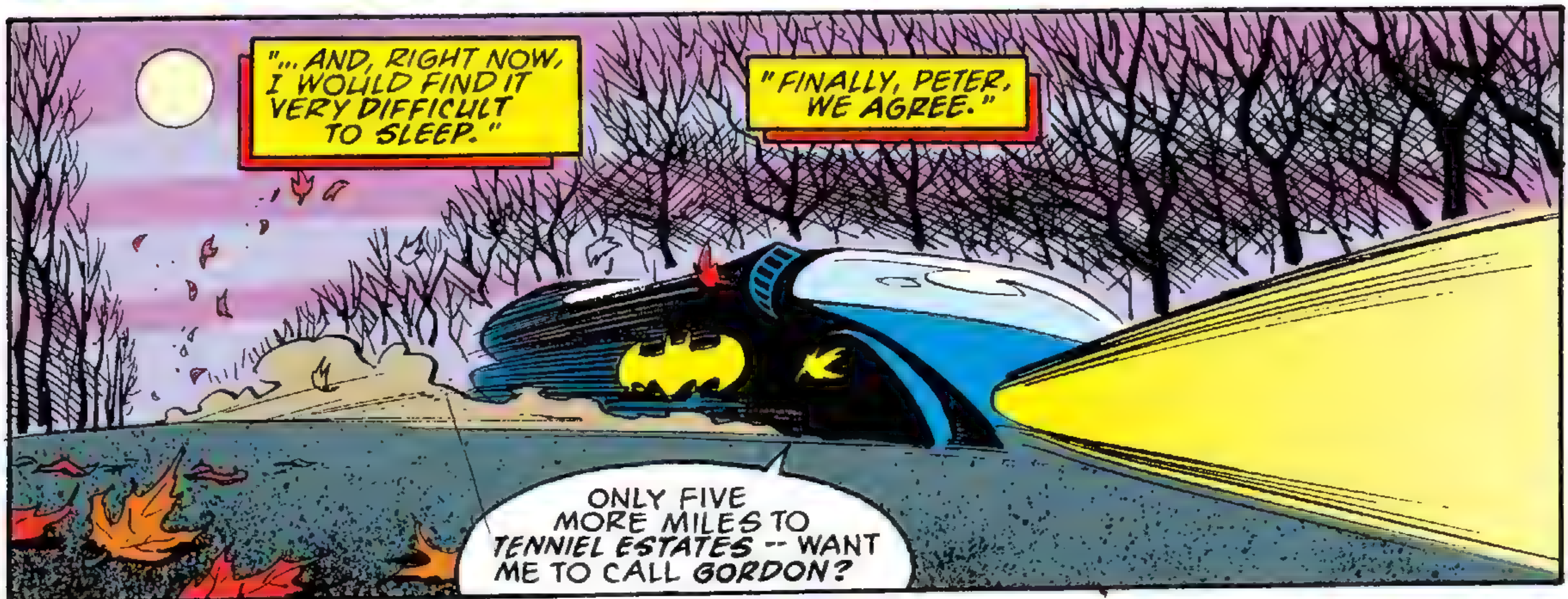
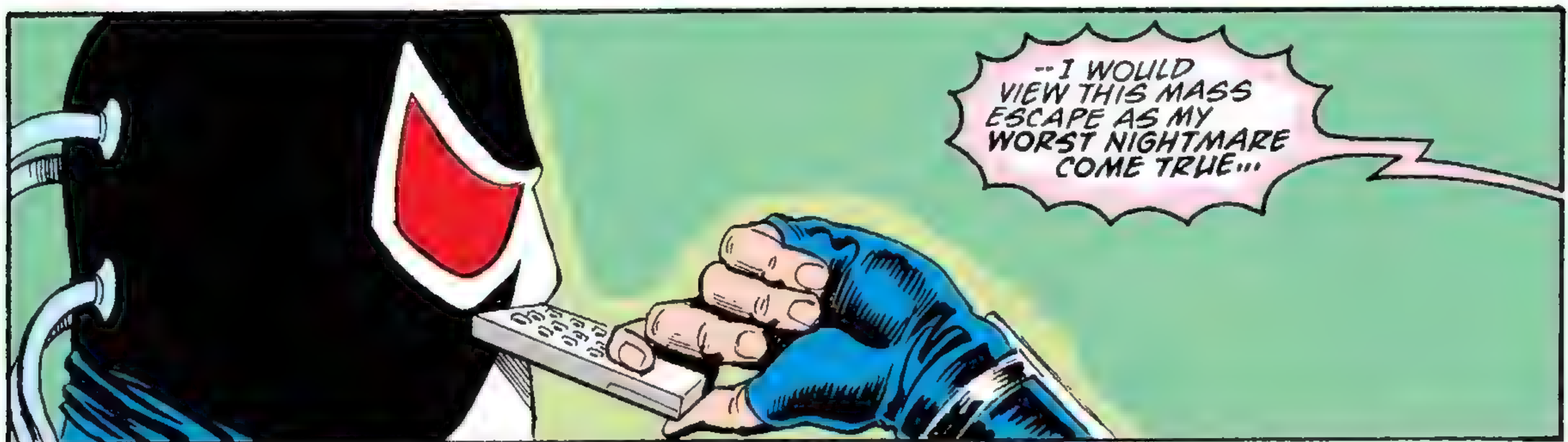
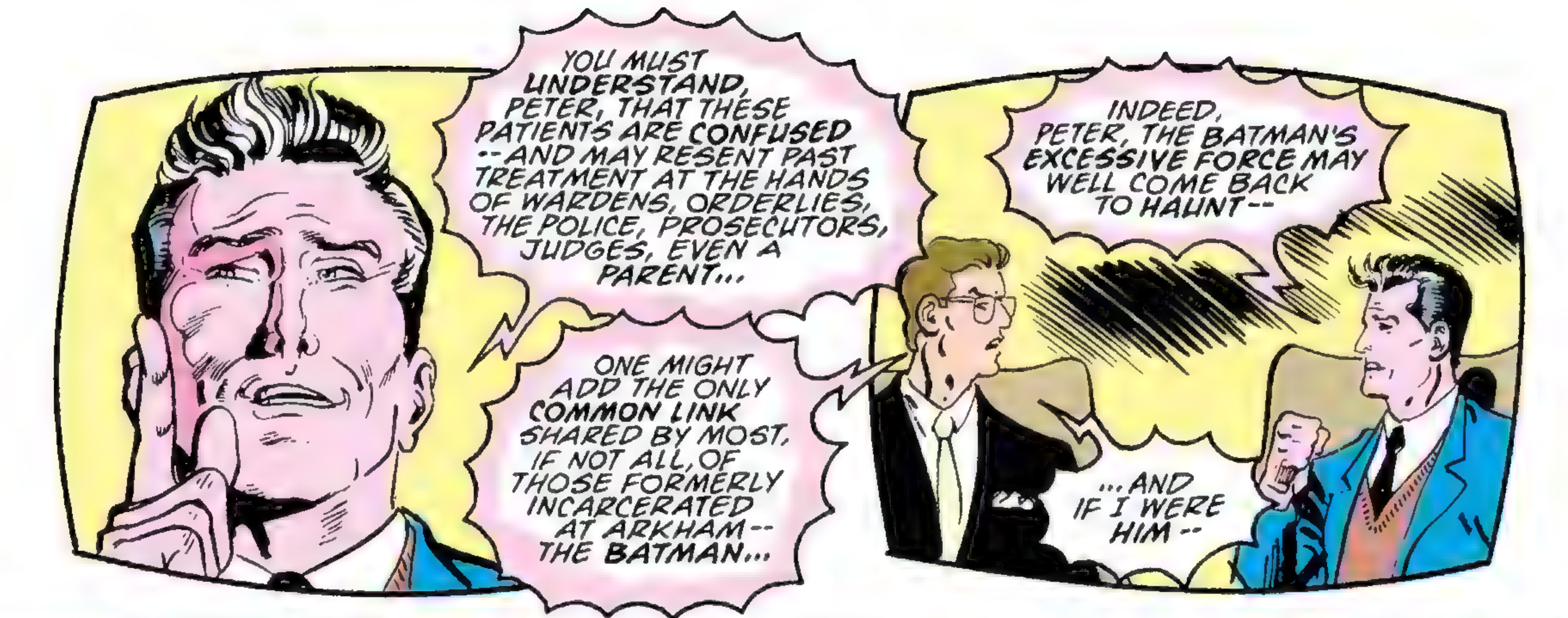
THEREFORE,
THEY HAVE NO REAL
MOTIVES IN THE
TRADITIONAL SENSE,
NOR CAN THEIR
ACTIONS BE
ANTICIPATED.

NO MOTIVE,
DR. FLANDERS?
NOT EVEN
REVENGE?

WELL,
WITHOUT GETTING
OVERLY HYSTERICAL,
PETER, SOME OF THEM
MAY INDEED HARBOR
GRUDGES OVER REAL
OR IMAGINED
SLIGHTS...

"SLIGHTS?"







THERE MAY BE OTHER "GUESTS" AT THIS "TEA PARTY" -- AND THEY MAY STILL BE HEAVILY ARMED.

YOU'RE STRICTLY BACKUP.

BUT--

RESENT ME ALL YOU WANT-- BUT DON'T FORGET IT.

WELCOME, WELCOME, ONE AND ALL! APOLOGIES FOR MAKING YOU LEAVE YOUR WEAPONS AT THE GATE, BUT THEY WILL BE RETURNED SHOULD THE POLICE ARRIVE BEFORE OUR GUEST OF HONOR.

RIGHT NOW, IF YOU WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH TO DON THE PARTY HATS AT YOUR PLACE SETTINGS... OUR FESTIVITIES MAY COMMENCE!

THIS IS STUPID, HATTER, I DON'T WEAR A HAT FOR NOBODY.

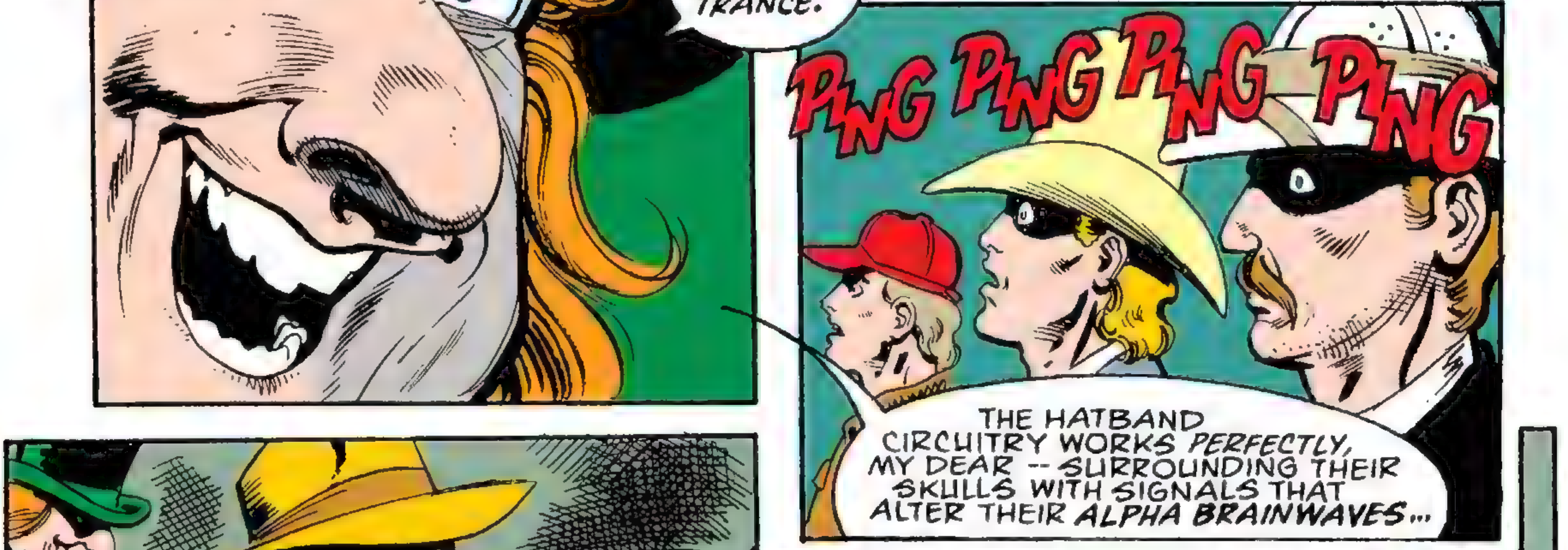
YEAH -- WHEN YOU INVITED US TO YOUR PARTY AFTER THE BREAKOUT, YOU SAID WE COULD KILL THE BATMAN.

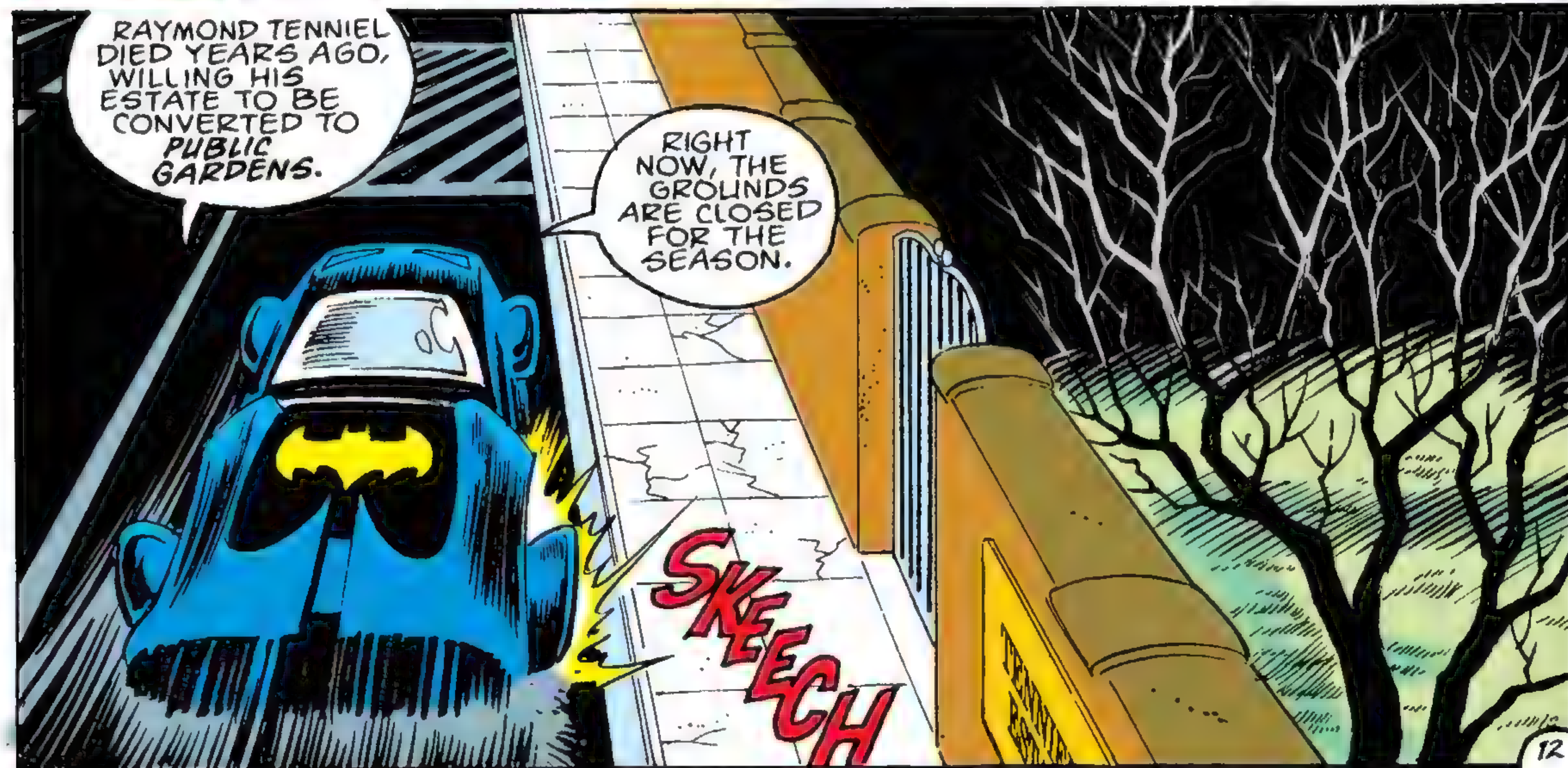
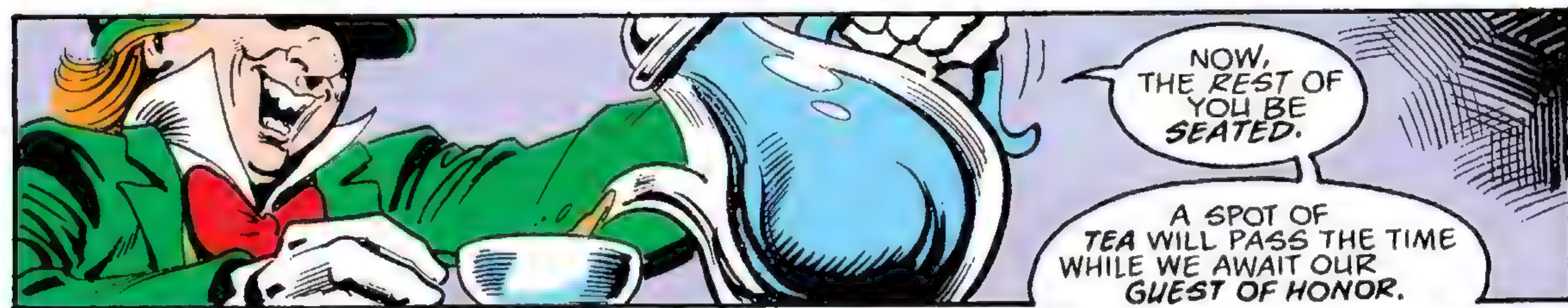
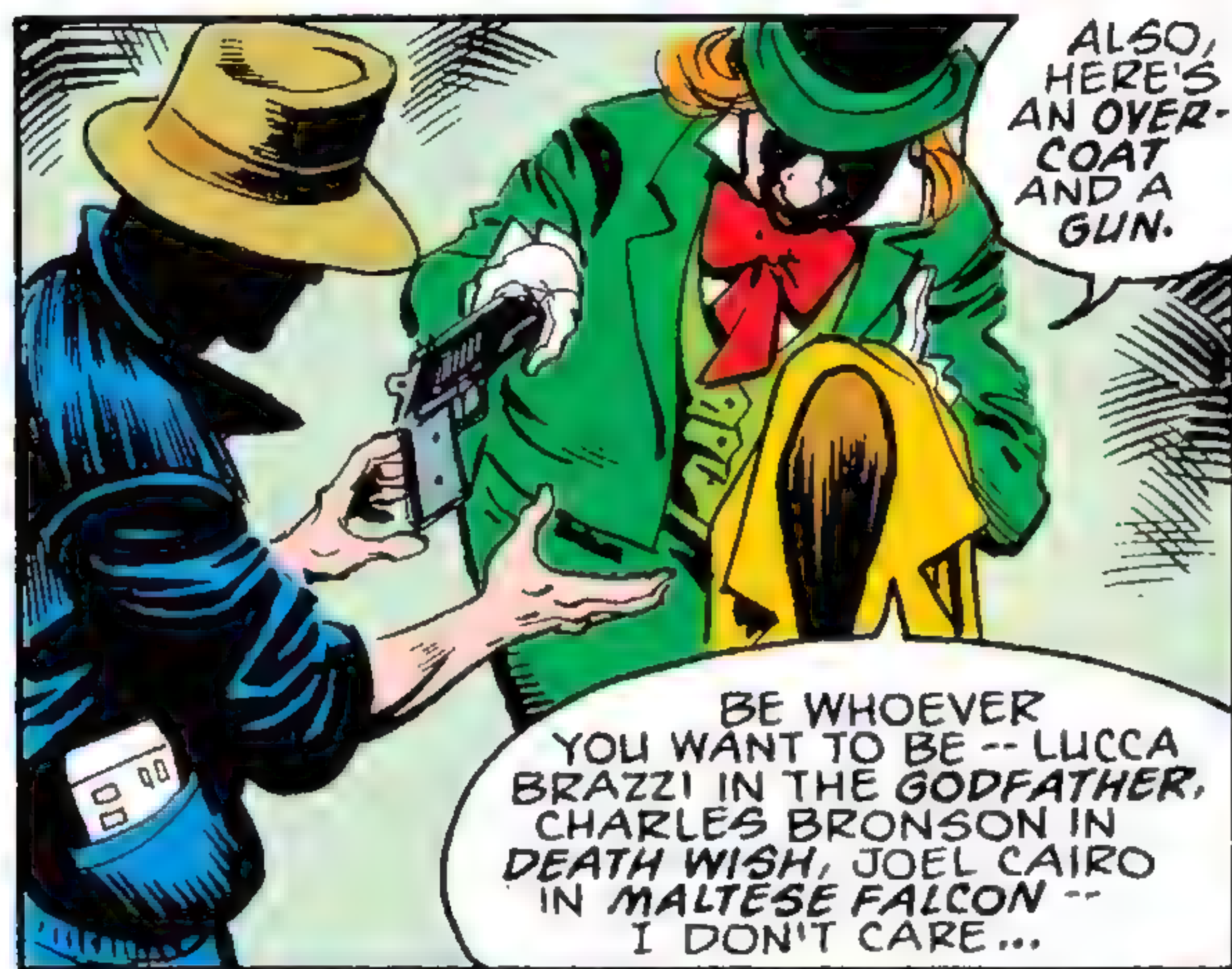
SO, WHERE IS HE? AND WHAT'S WEARIN' HATS GOT TO DO WITH--

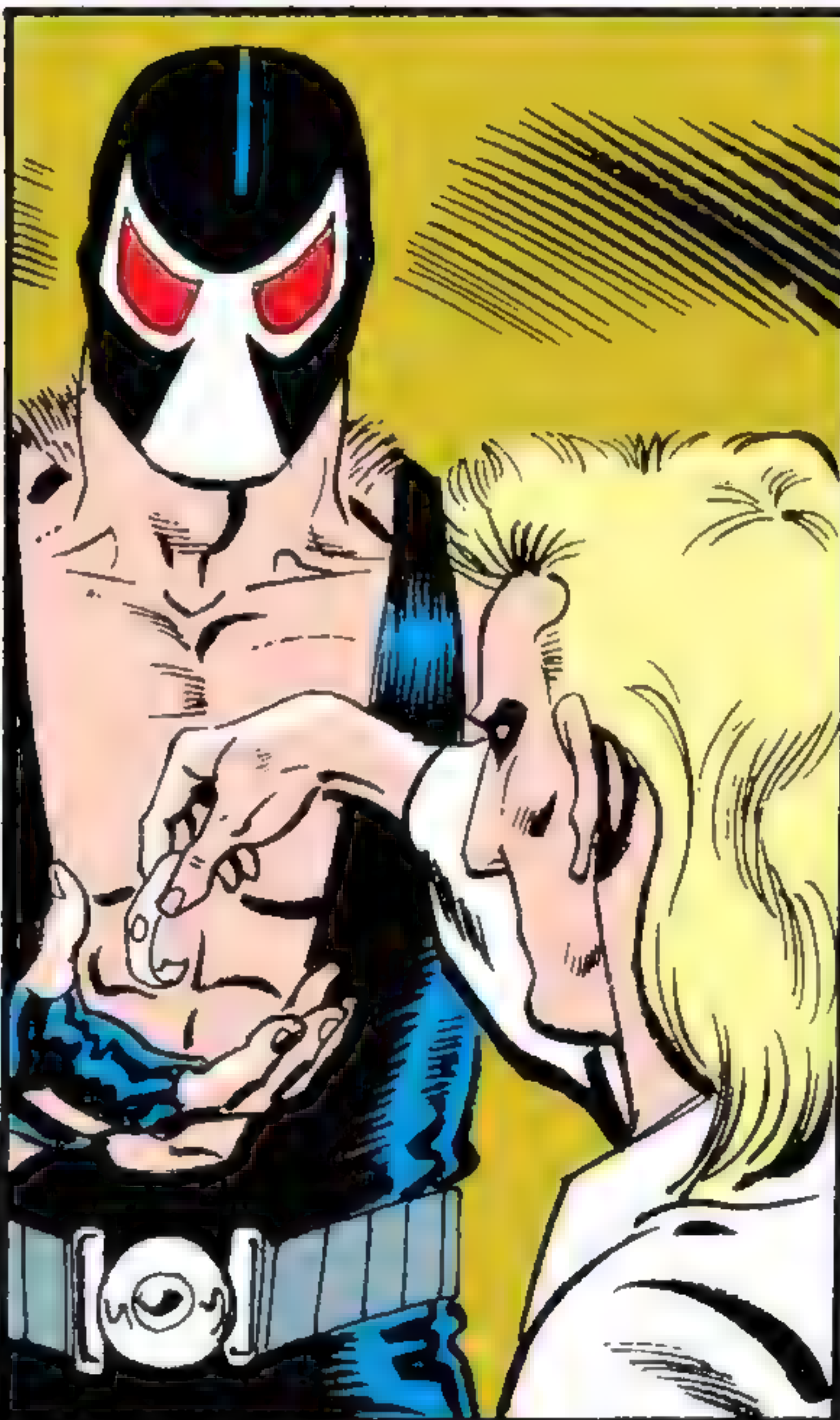
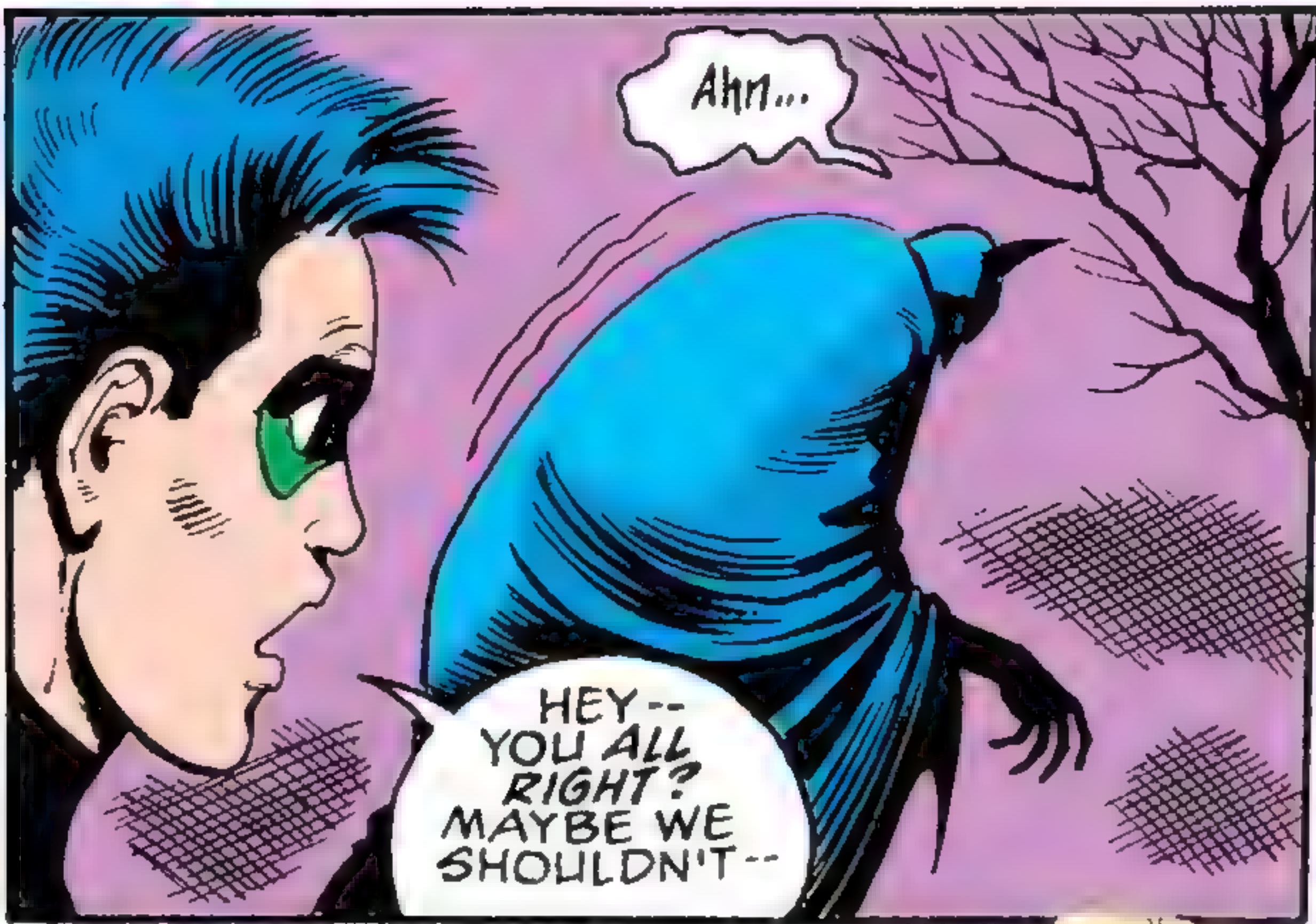
PUT ON THE HATS!

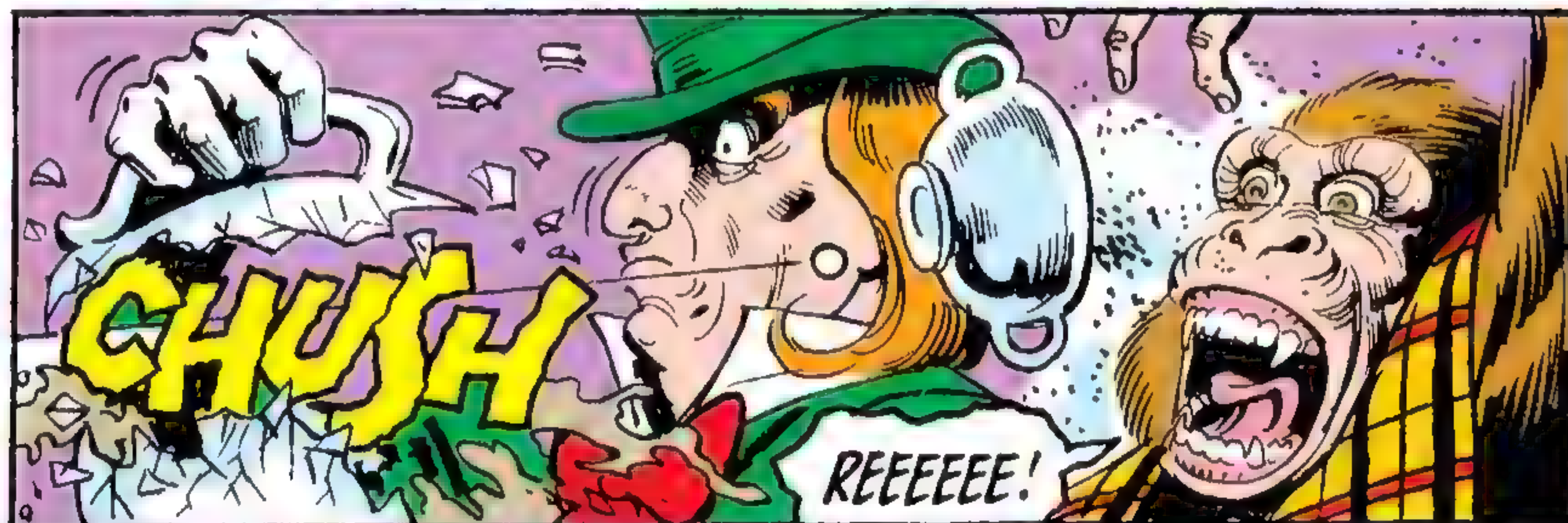
NOW!

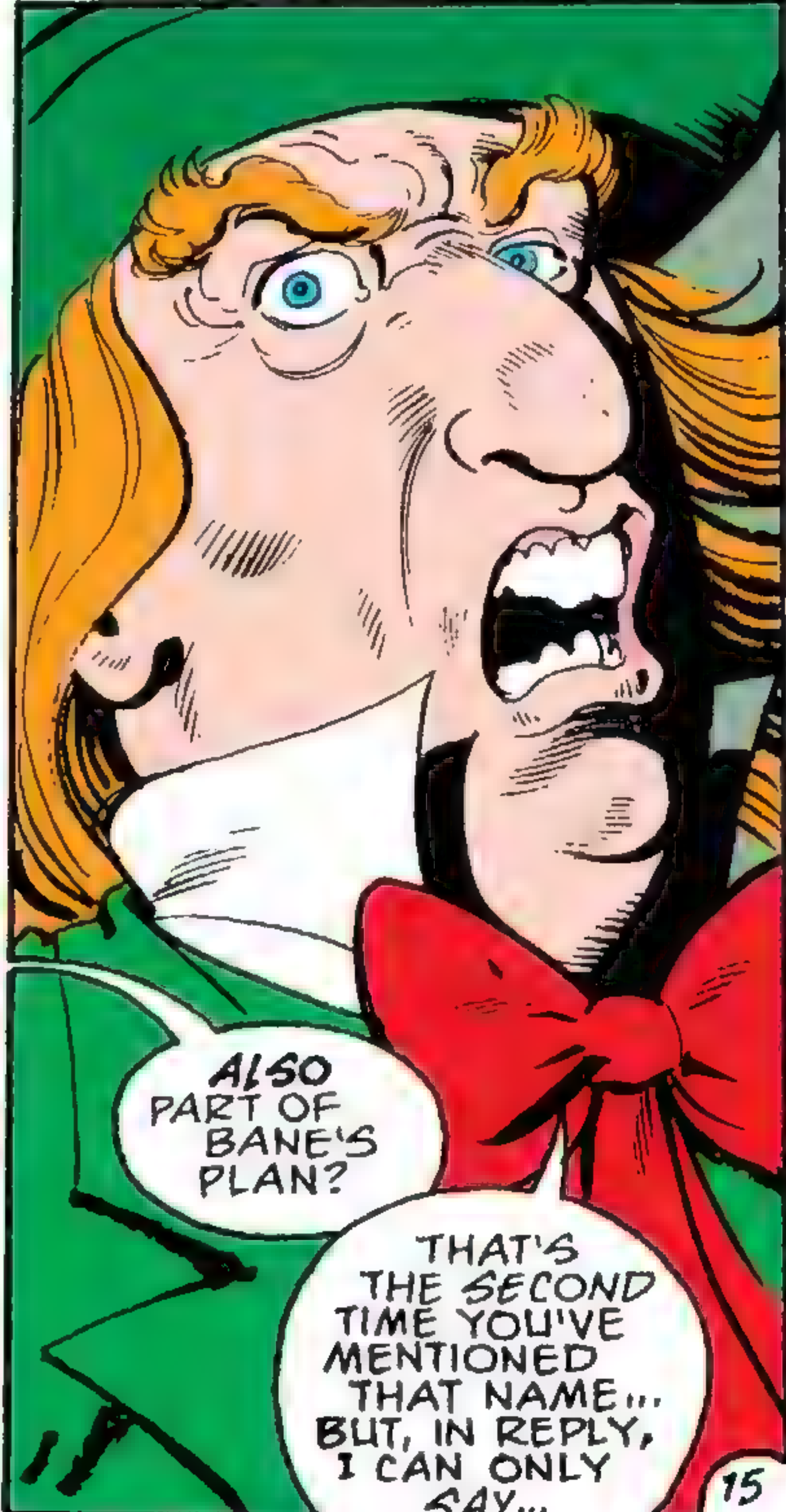
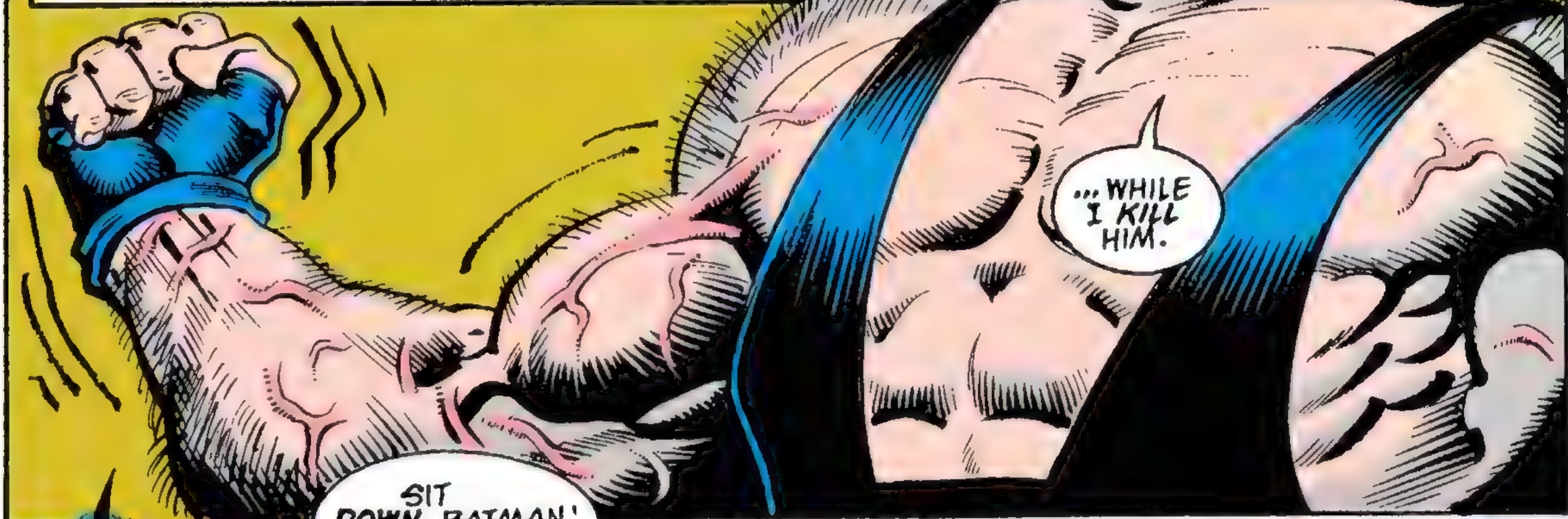
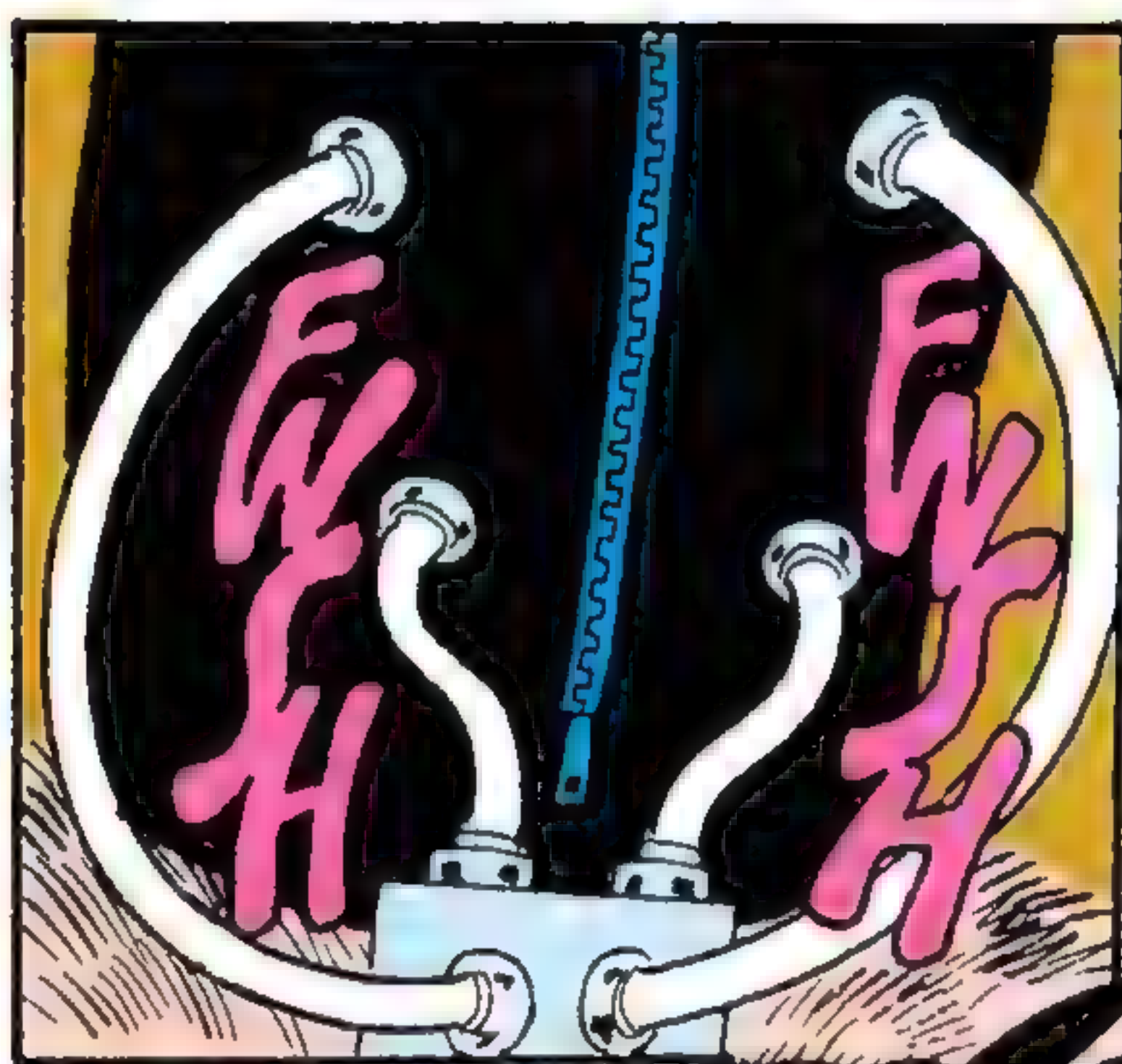
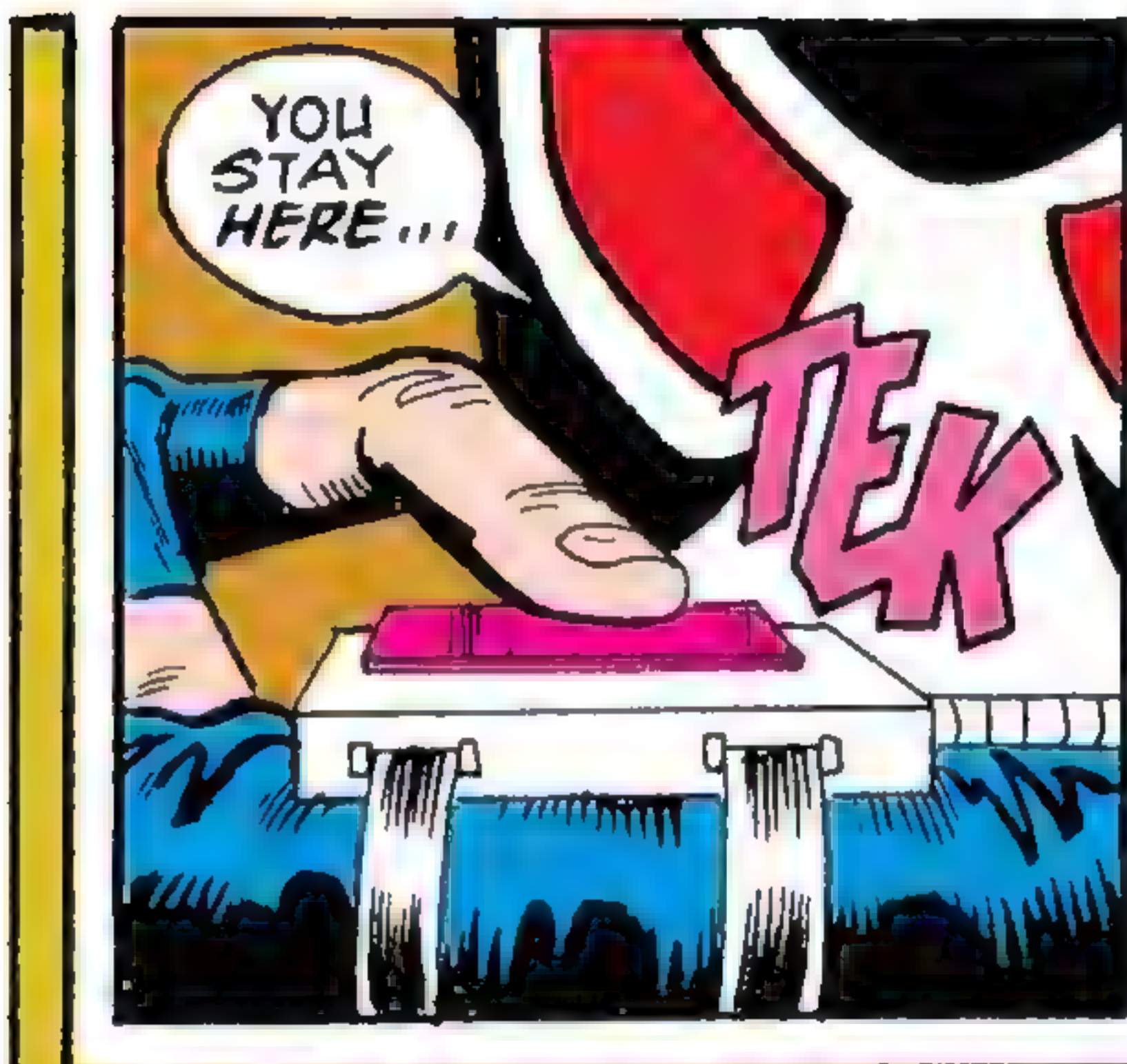


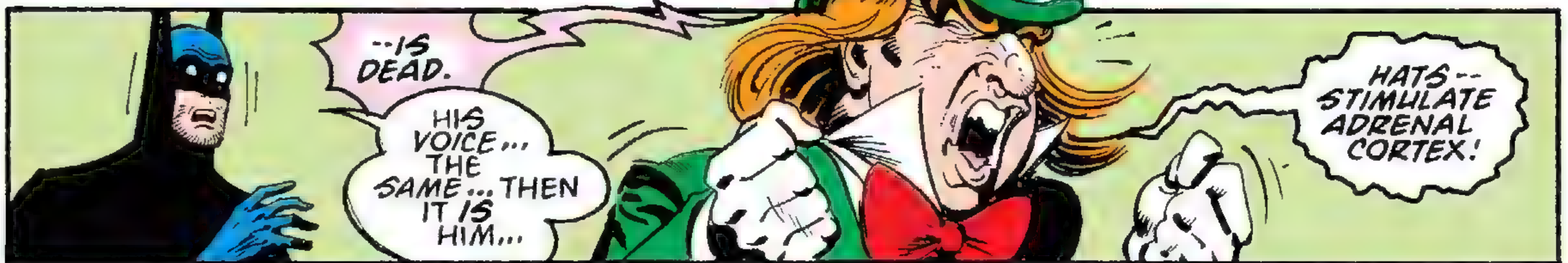
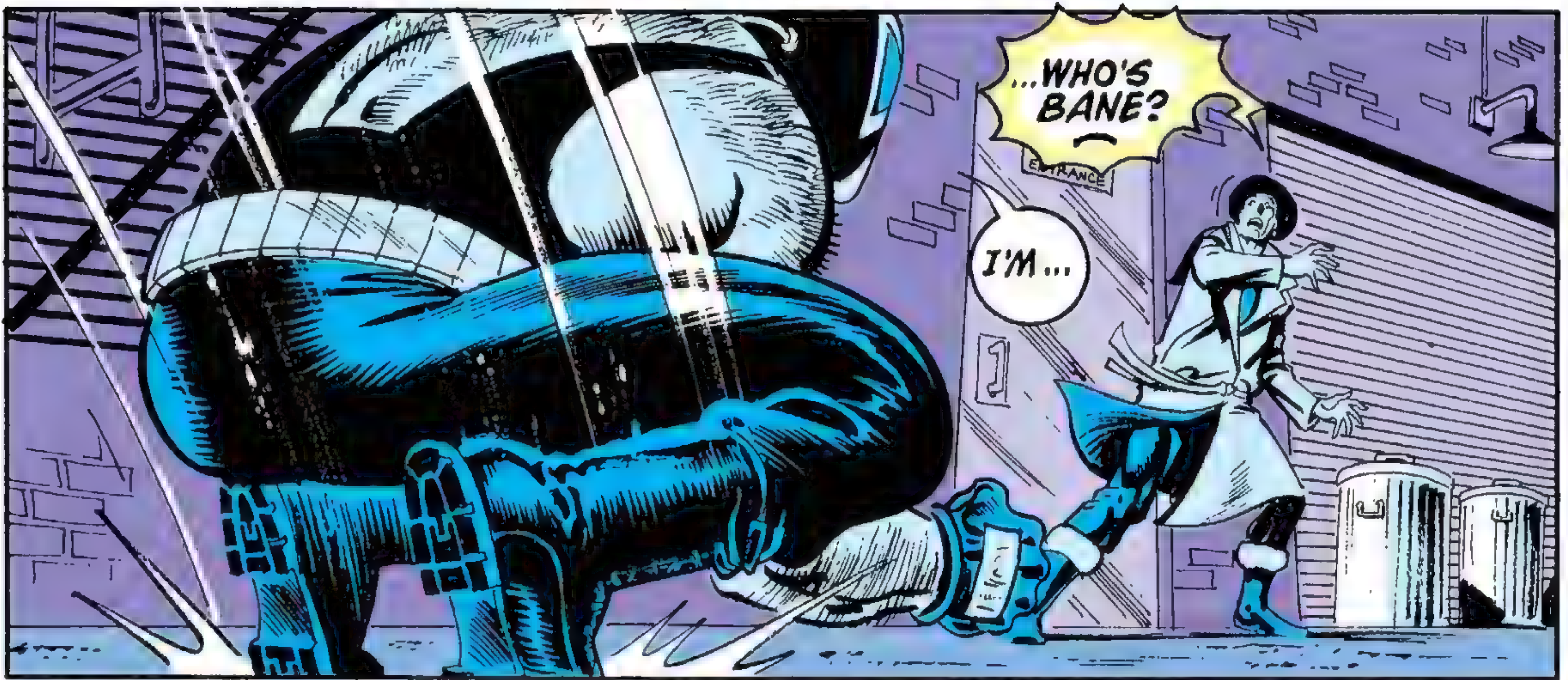


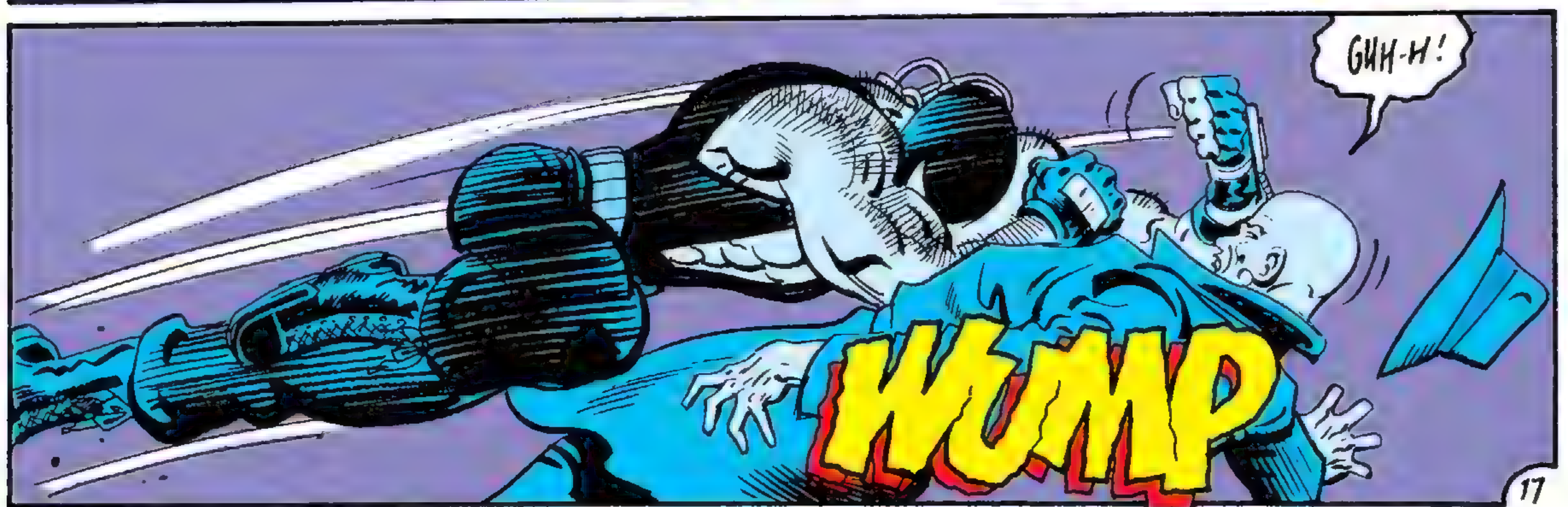
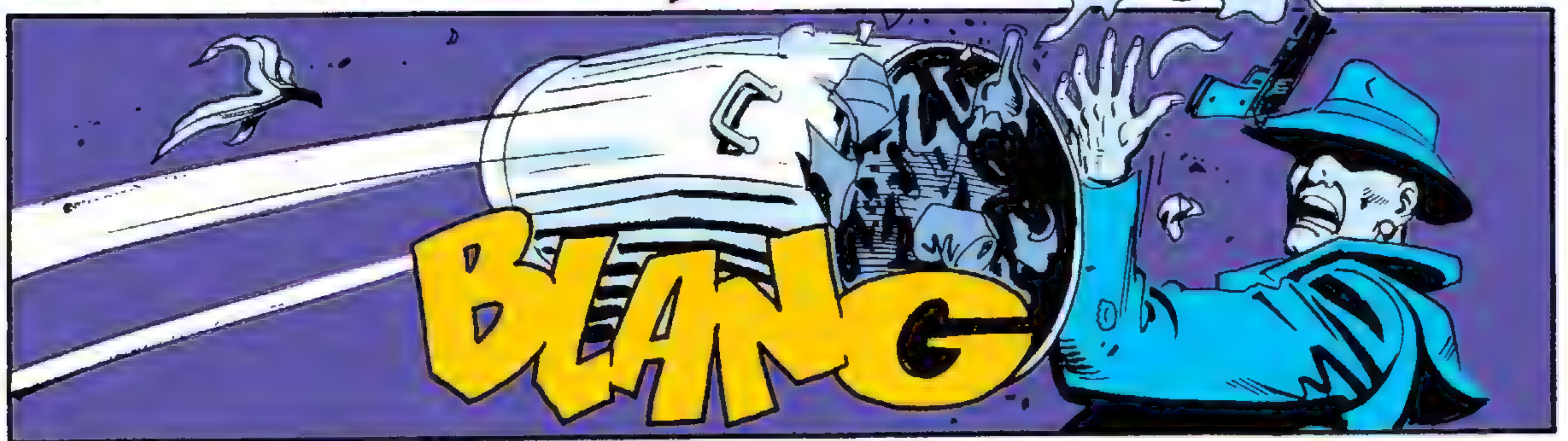
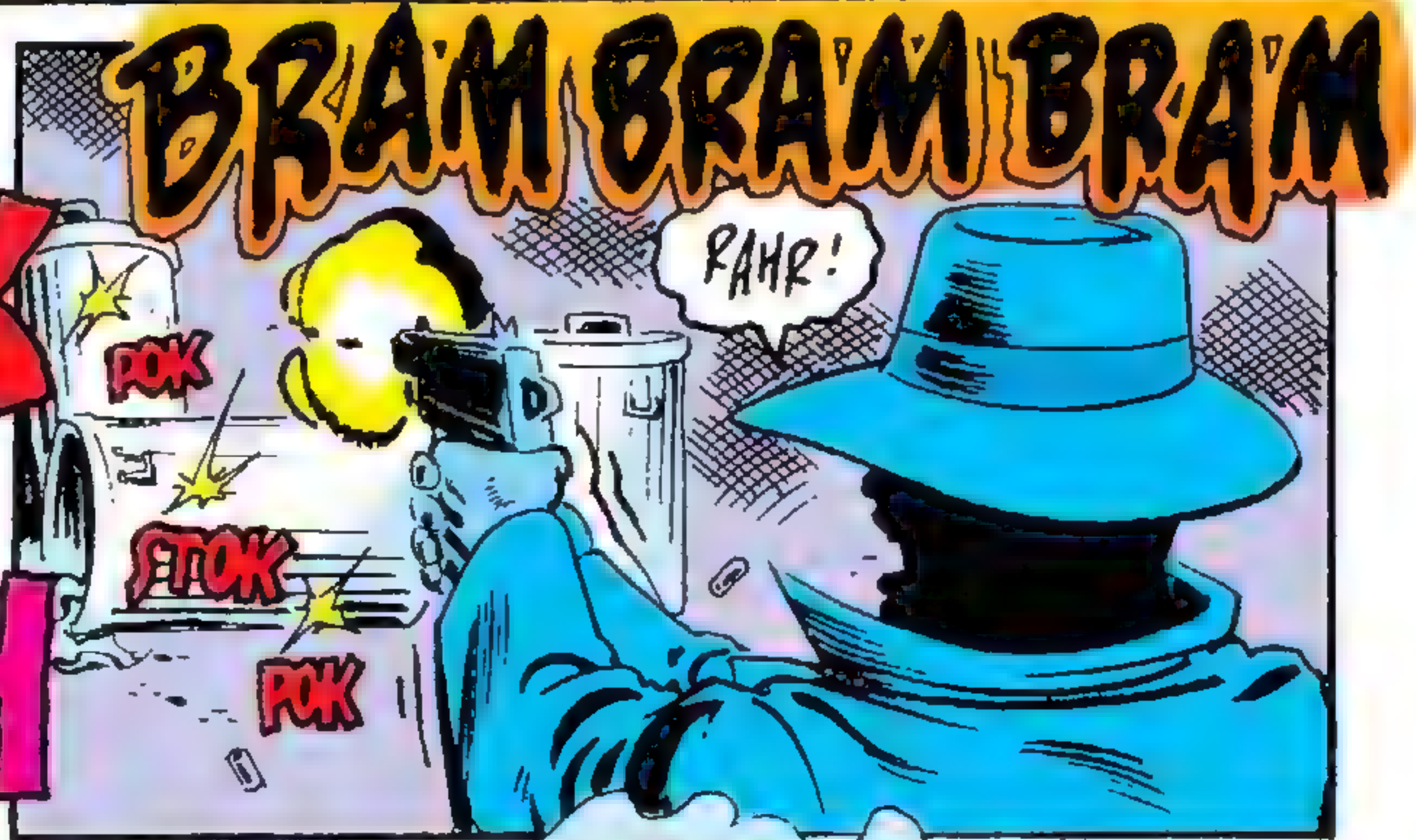
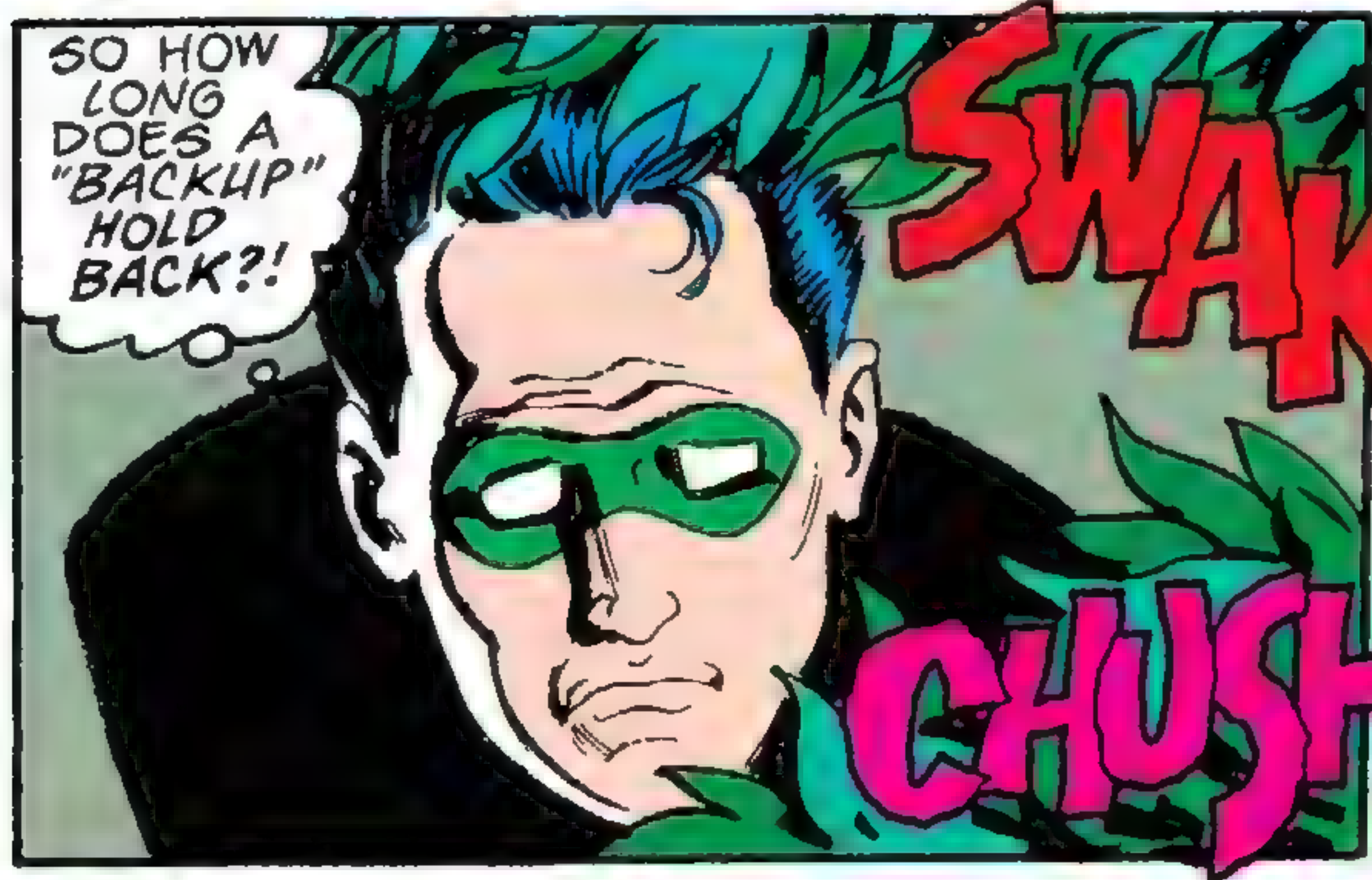
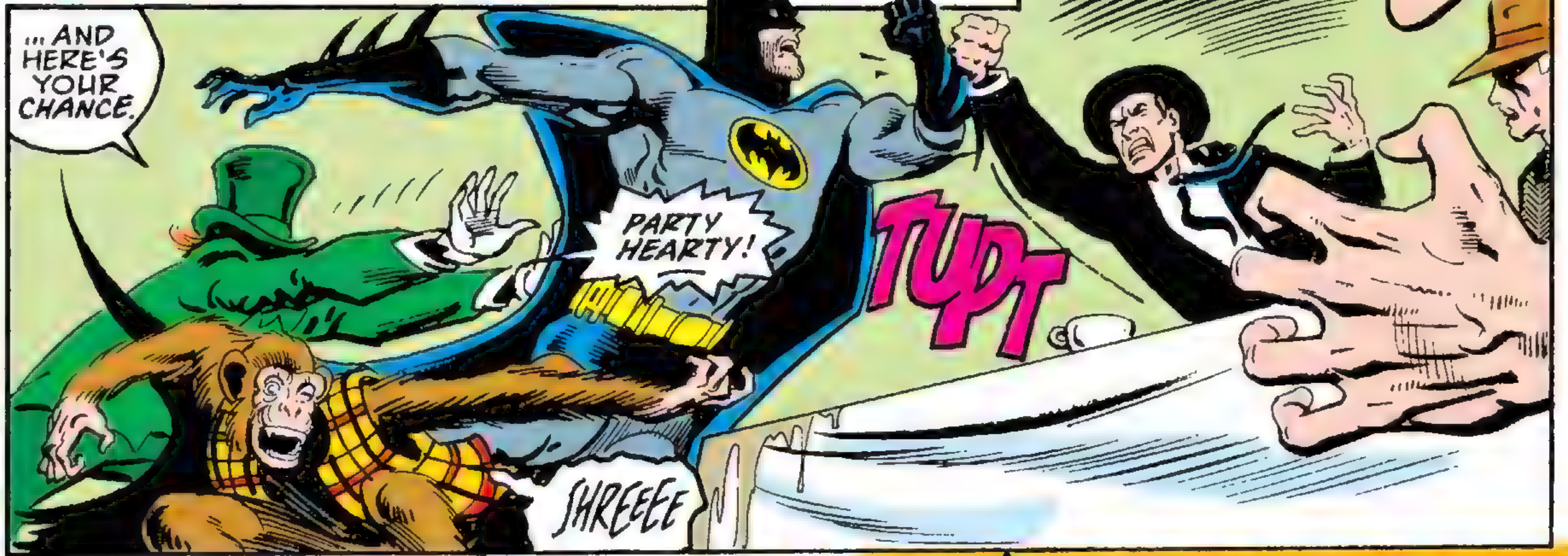
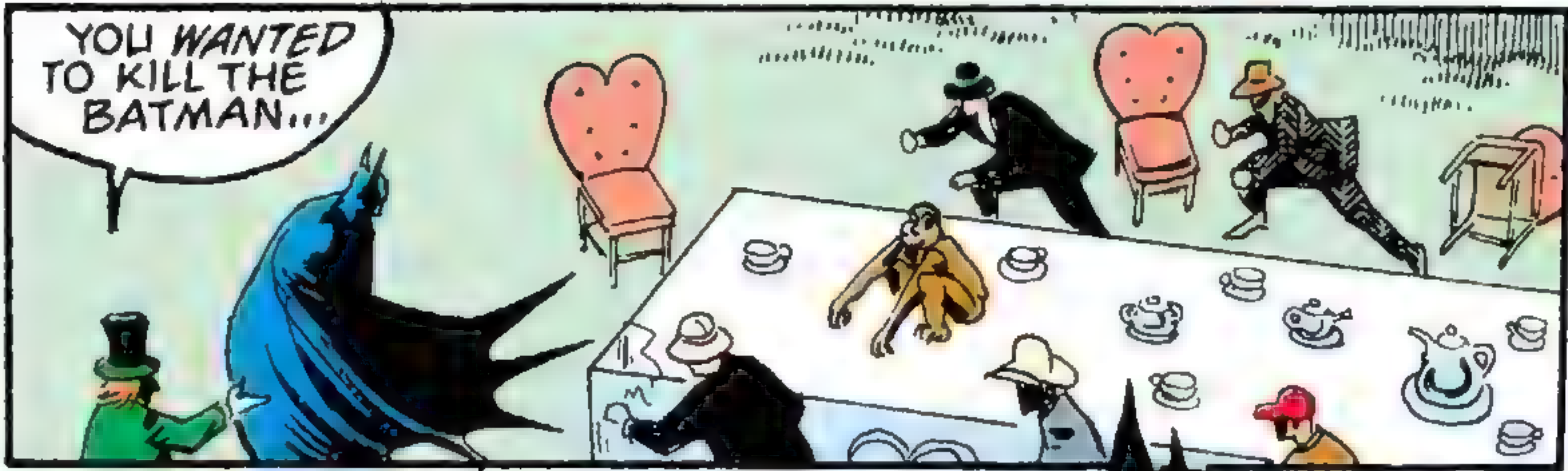


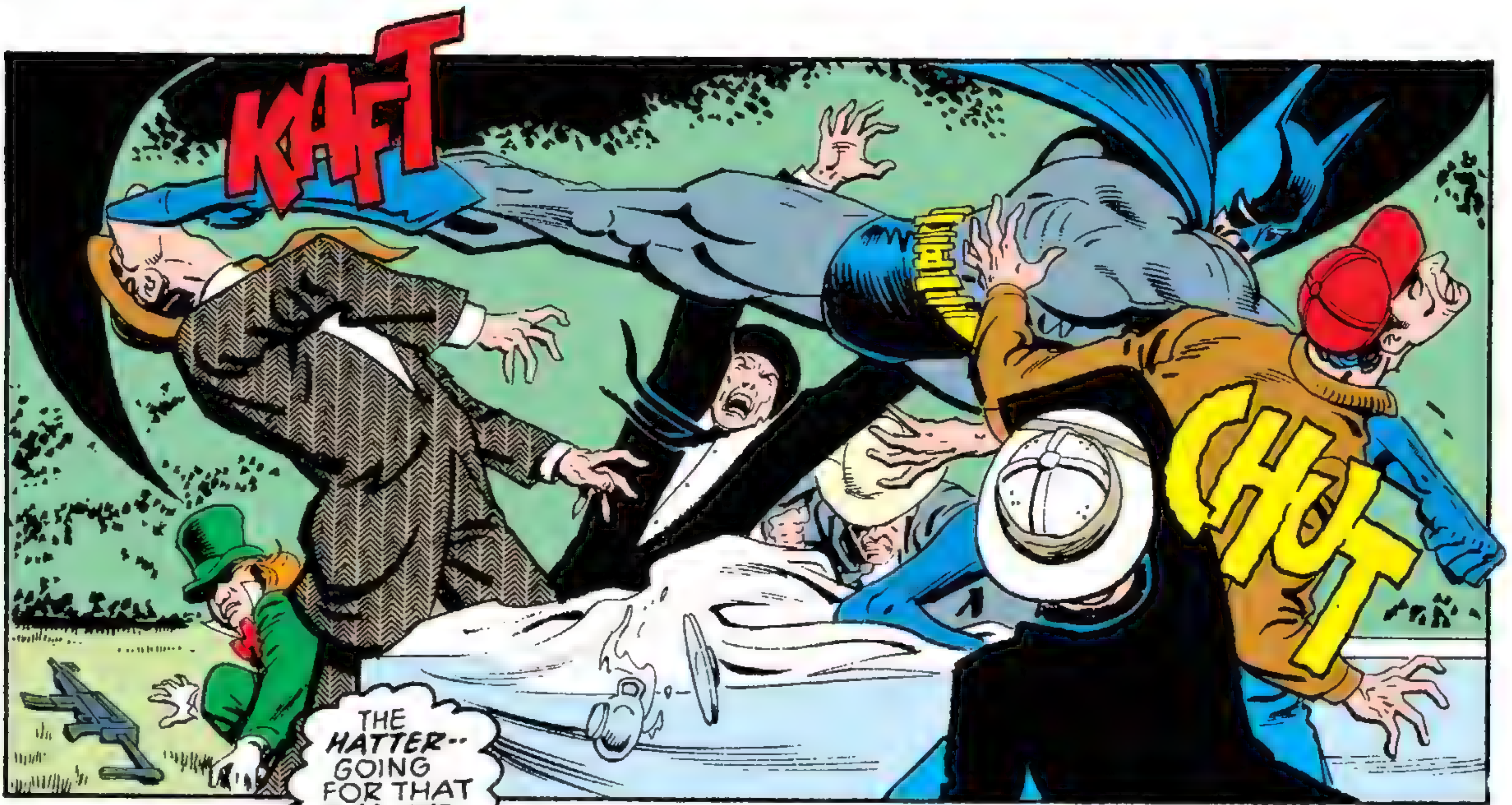






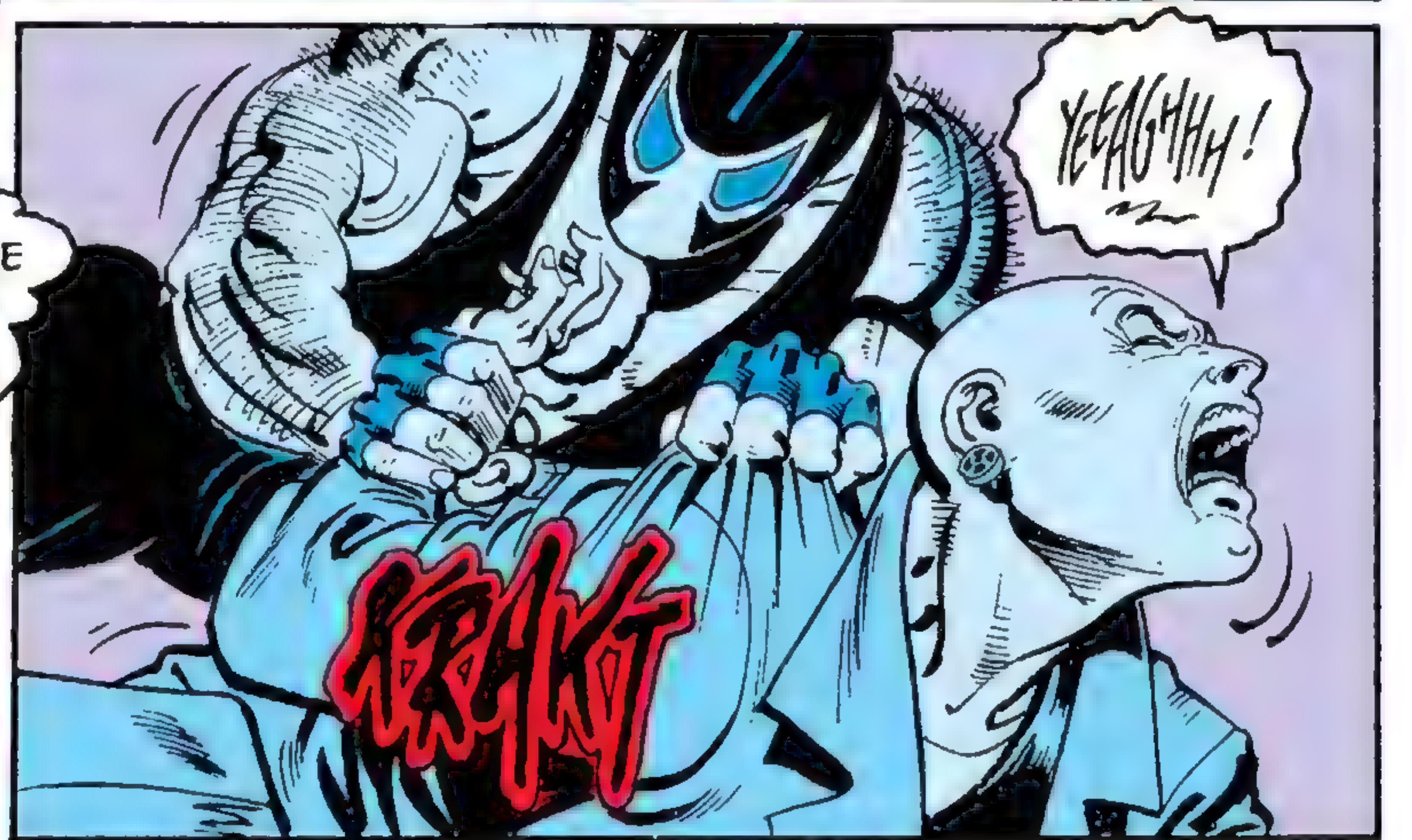


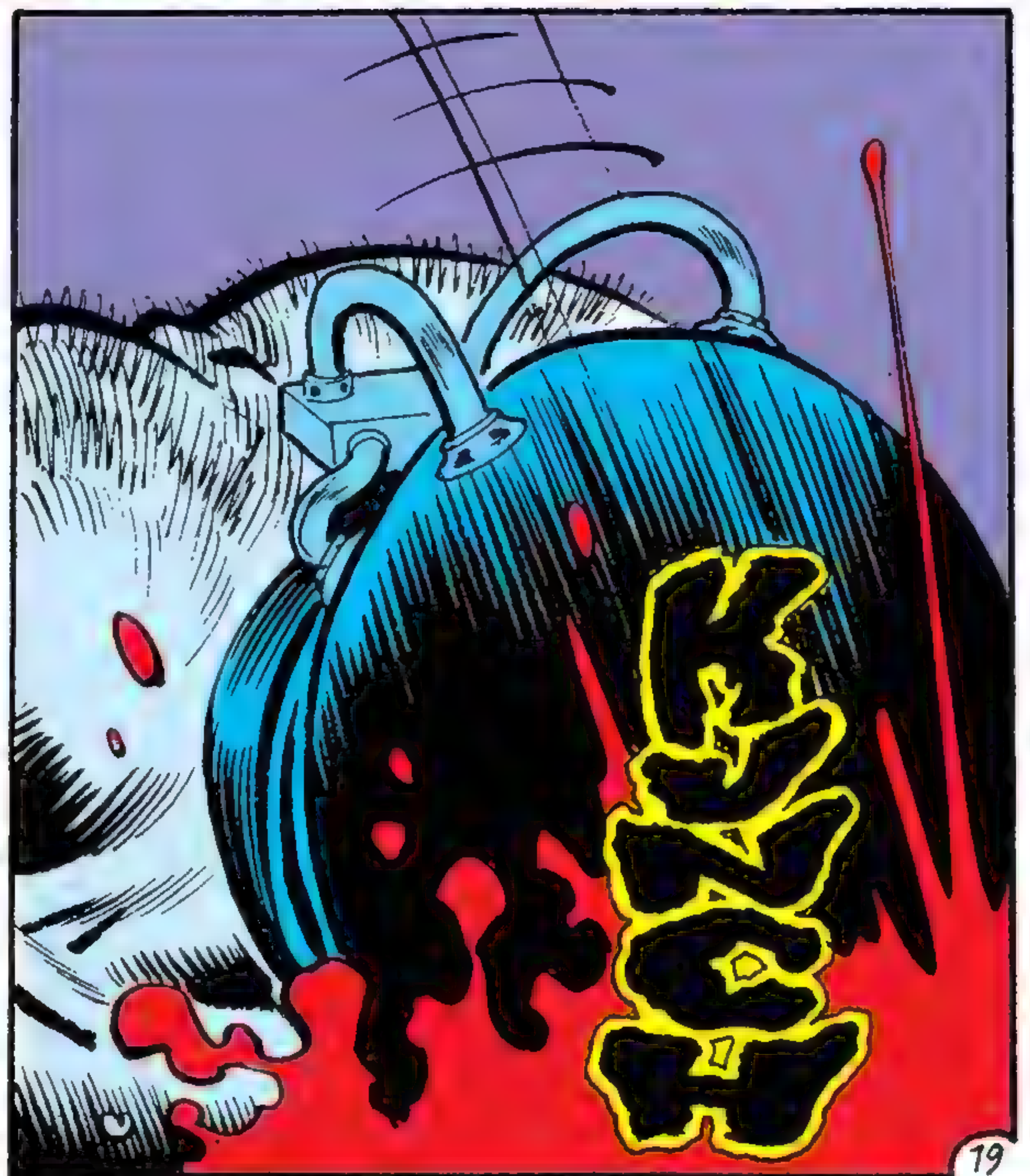


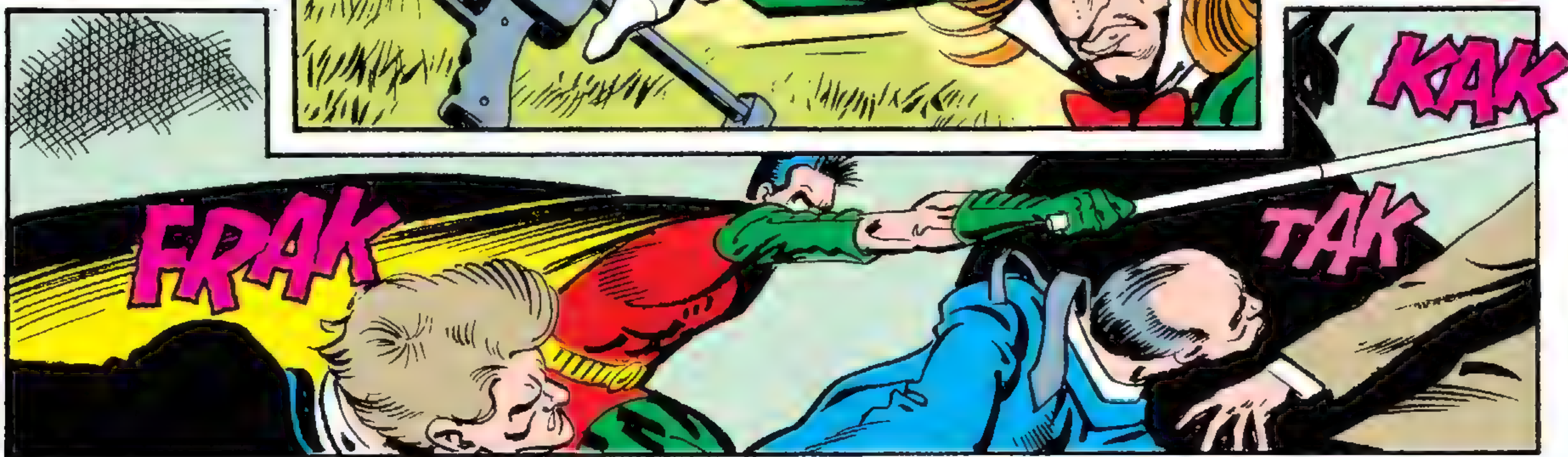
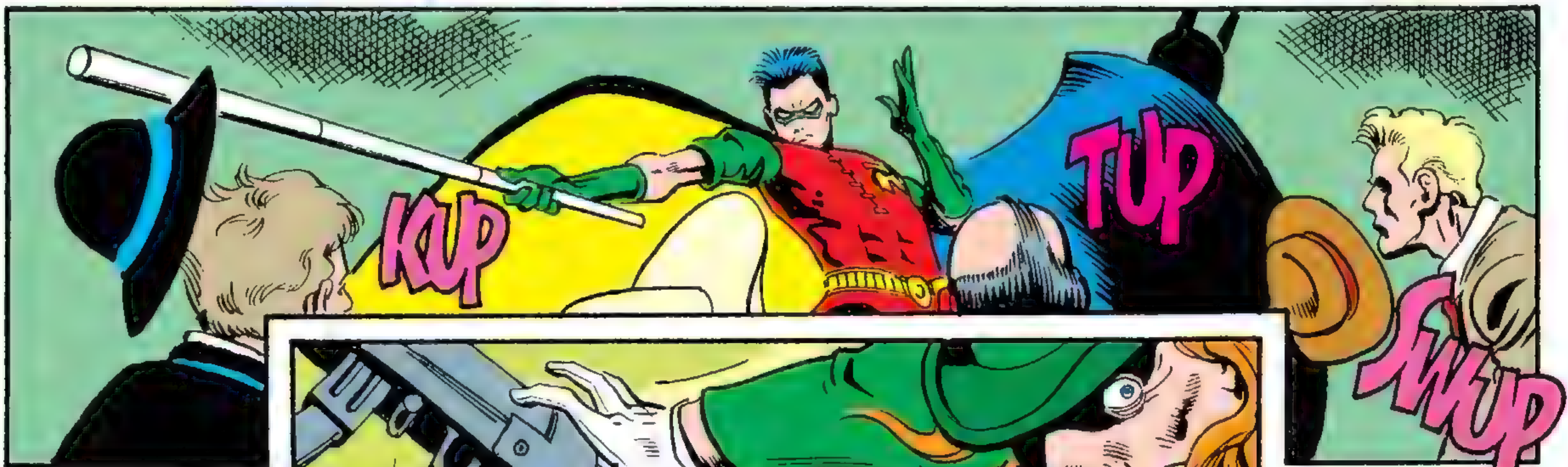


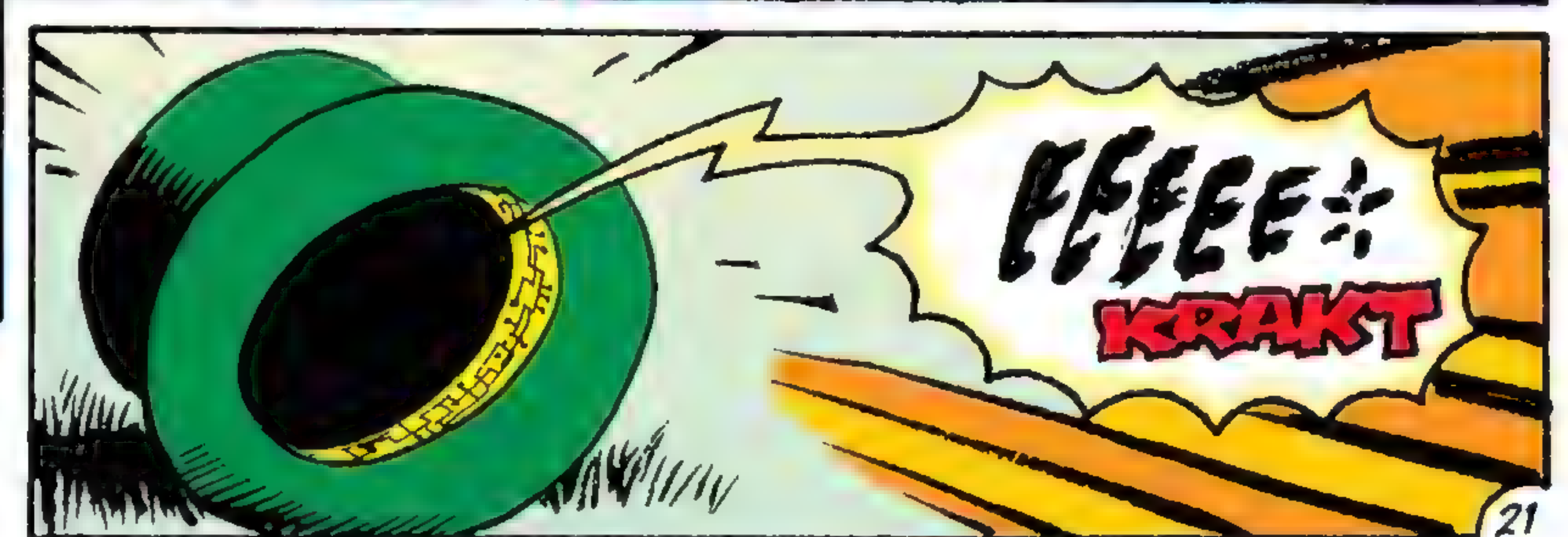
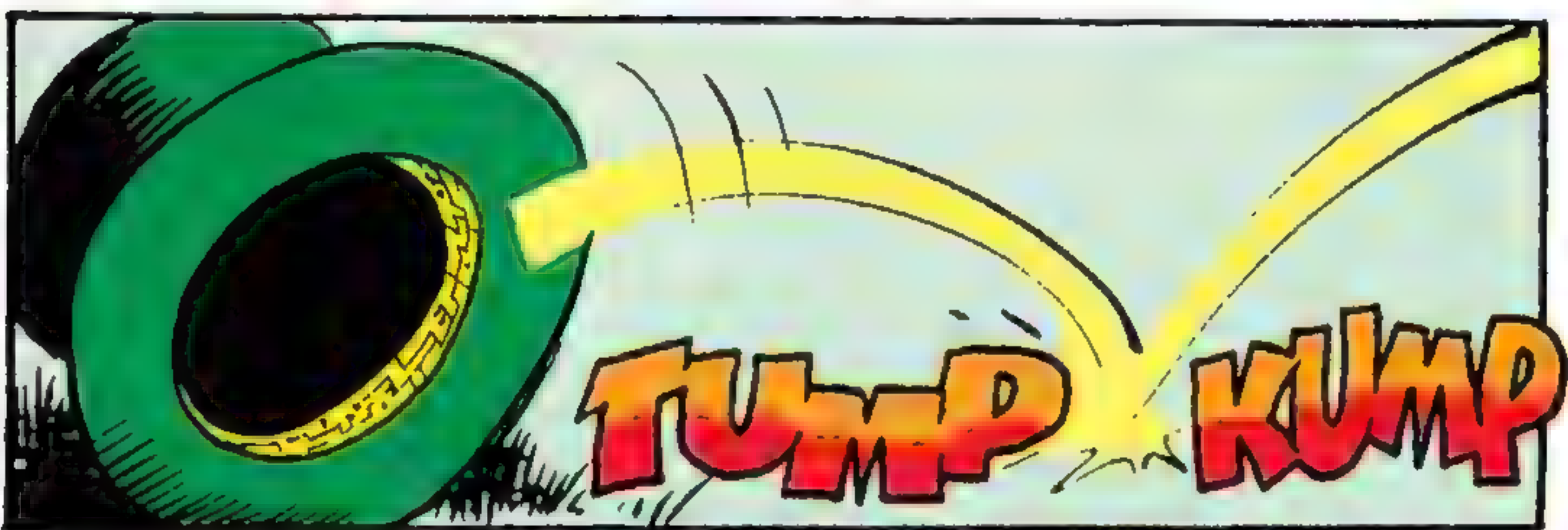
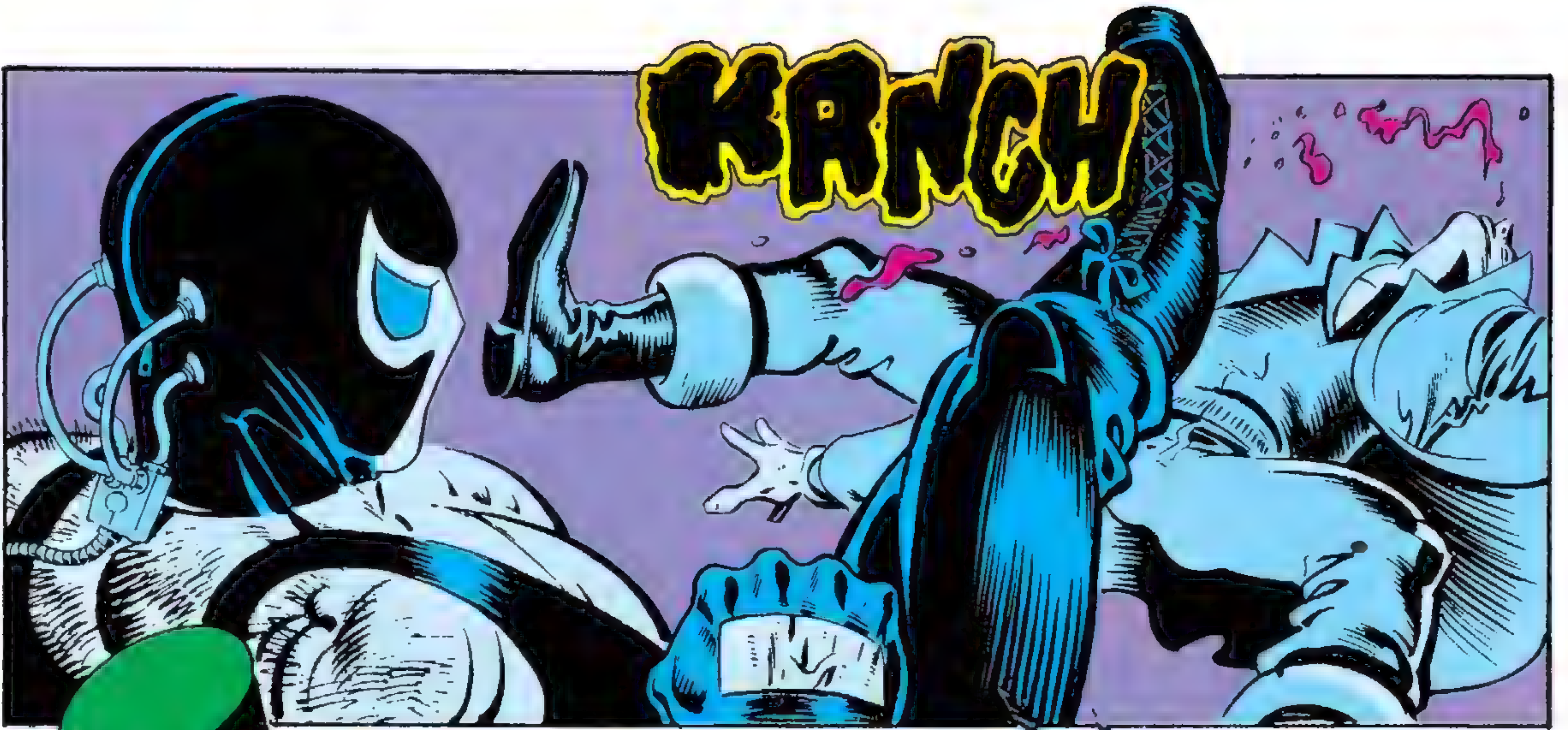
THE
HATTER--
GOING
FOR THAT
MACHINE-
GUN...

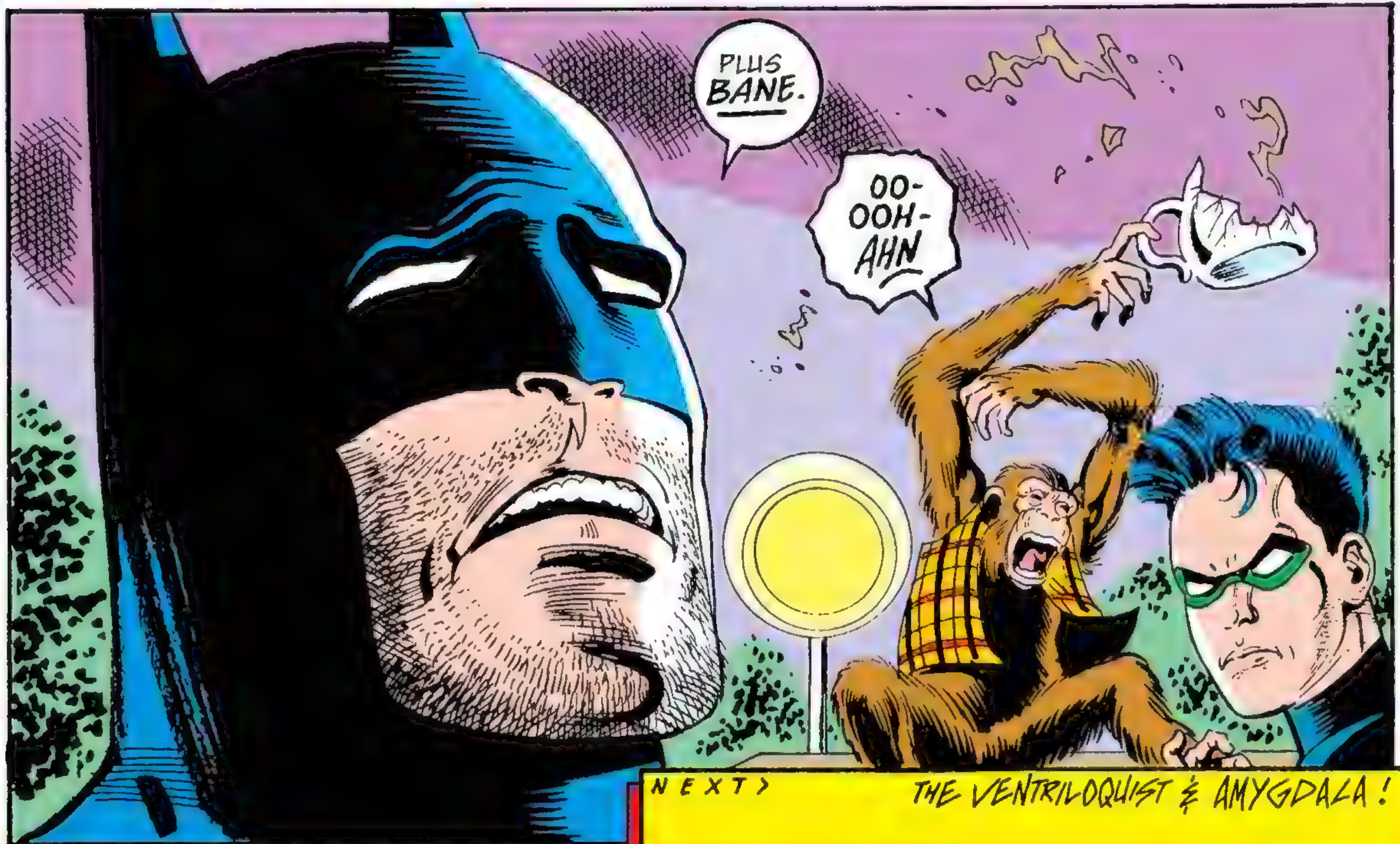
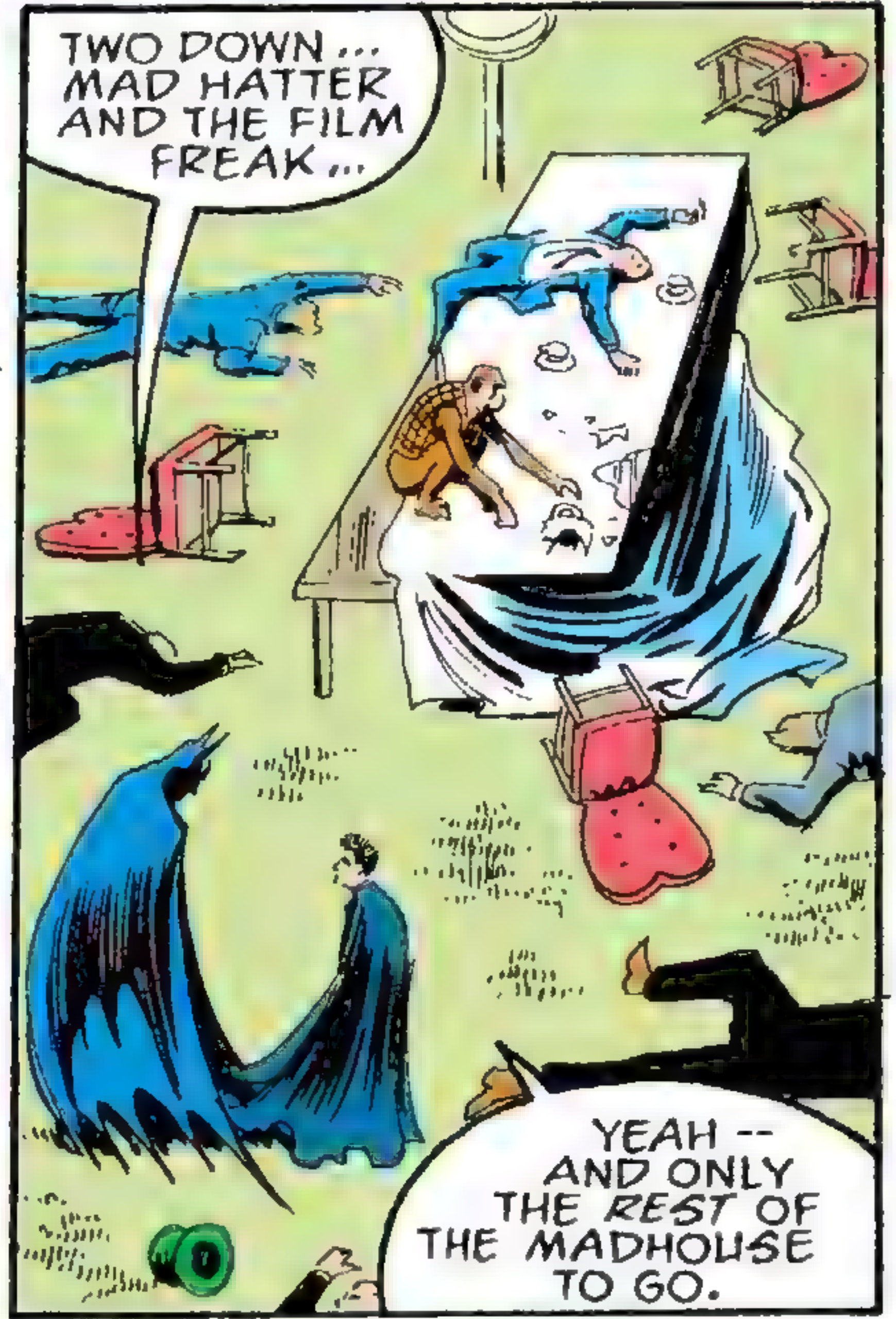
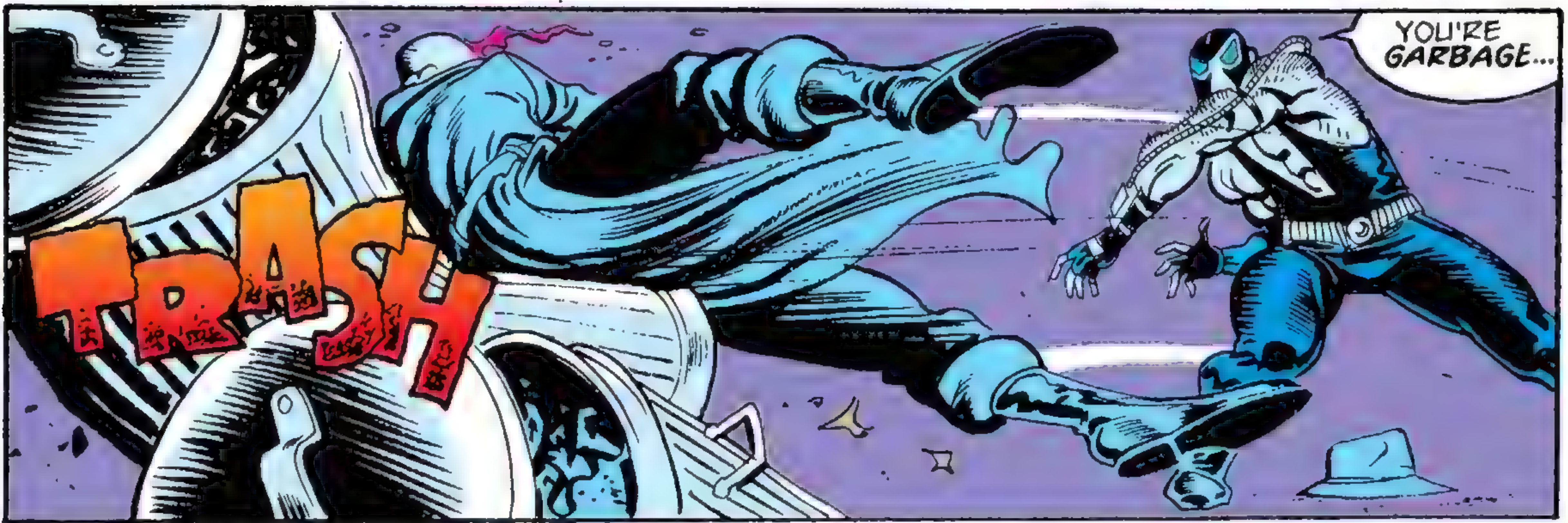
...WHICH
MEANS I'VE
HELD BACK
LONG
ENOUGH!





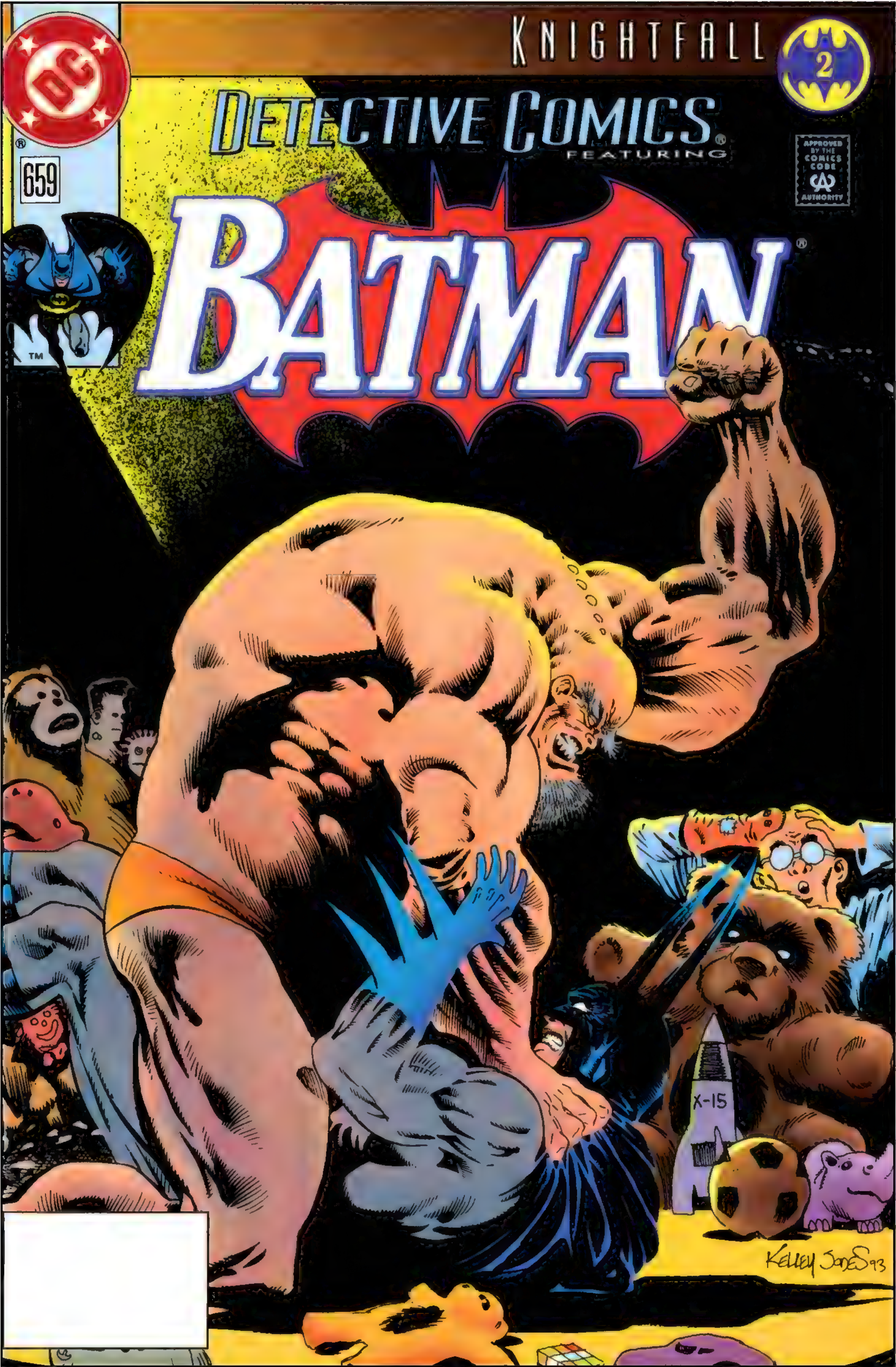






NEXT > THE VENTRILOQUIST & AMYGDALA!

Cover art by KELLEY JONES



R U P T S

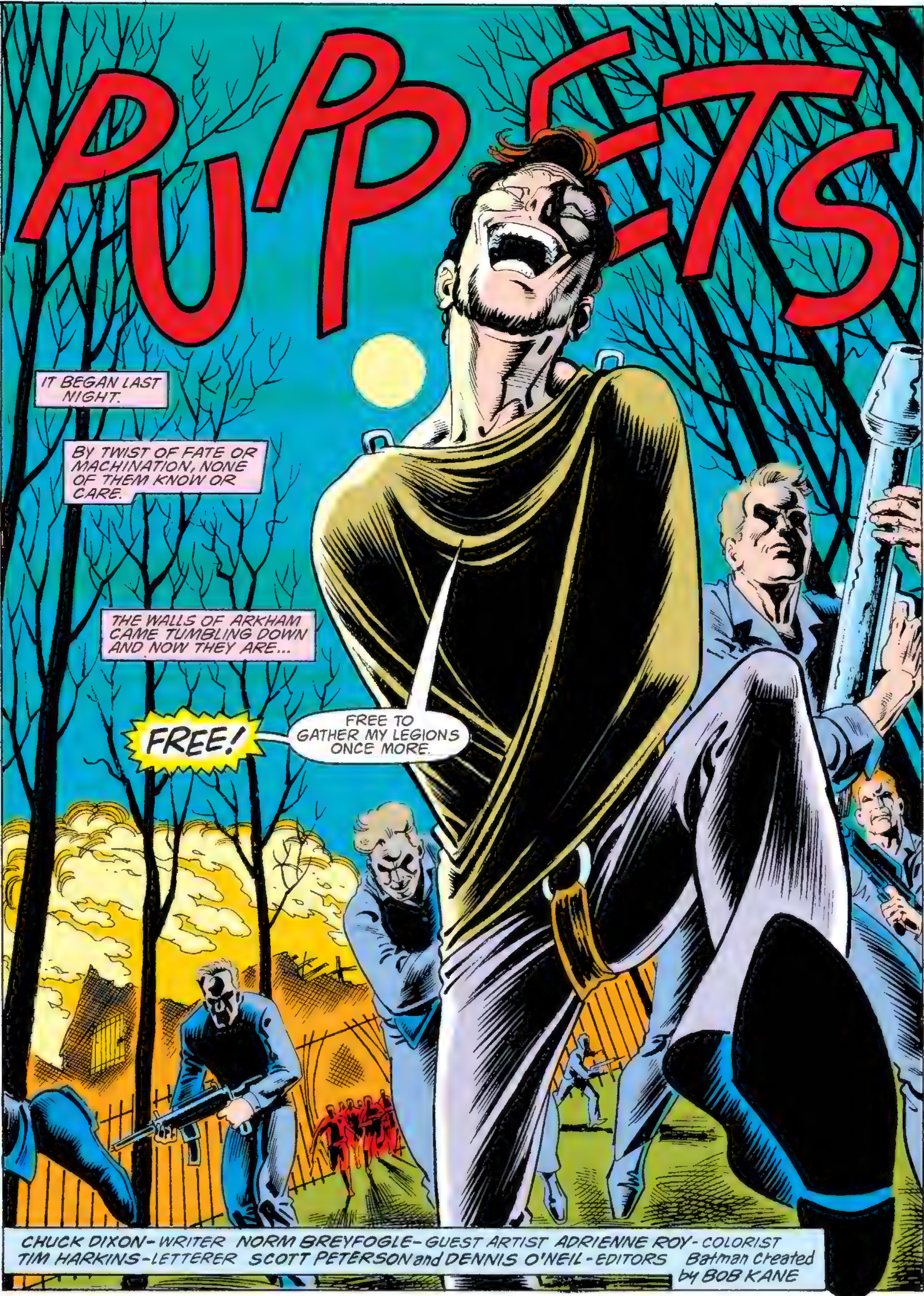
IT BEGAN LAST NIGHT.

BY TWIST OF FATE OR MACHINATION, NONE OF THEM KNOW OR CARE.

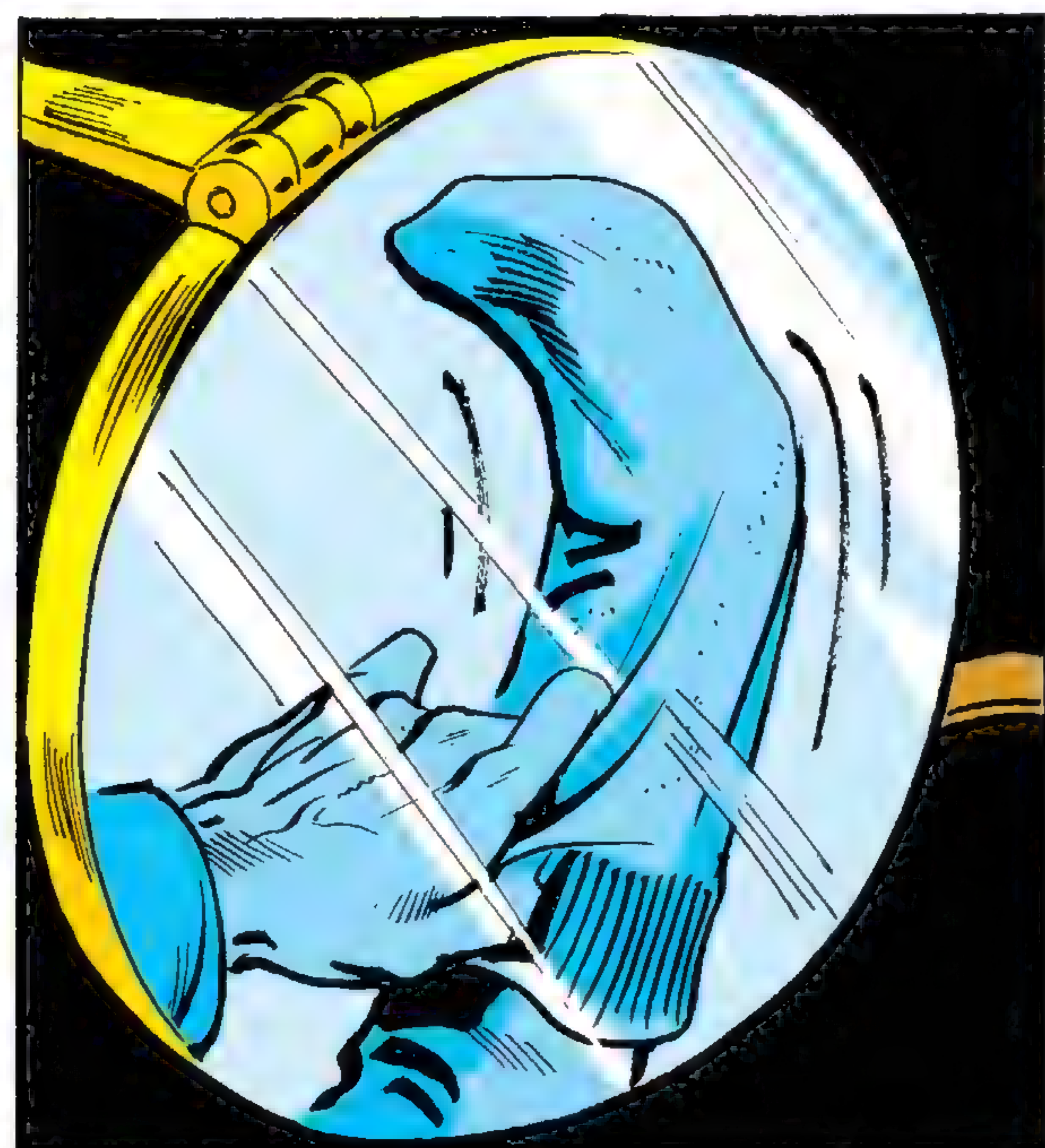
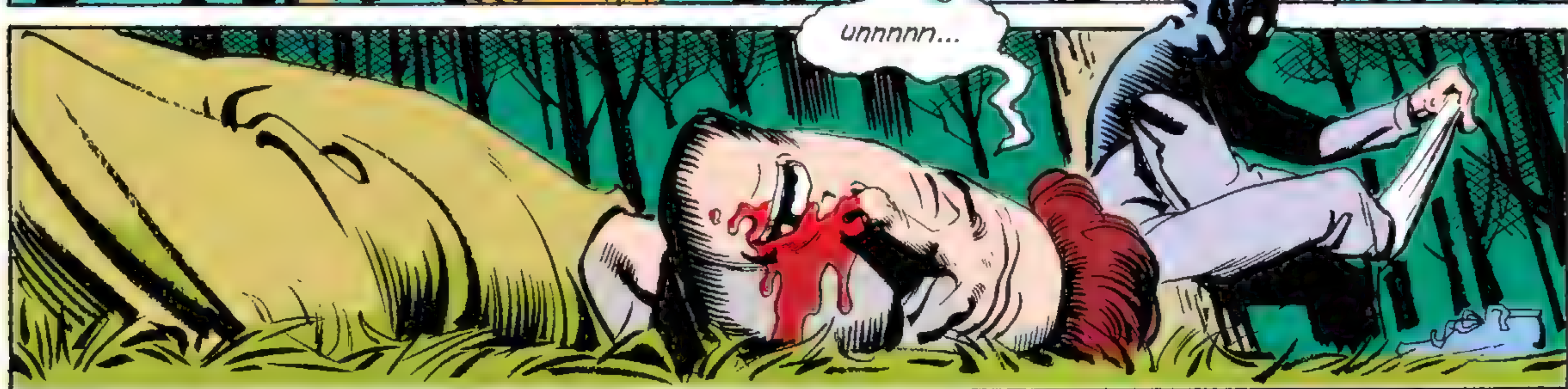
THE WALLS OF ARKHAM CAME TUMBLING DOWN AND NOW THEY ARE...

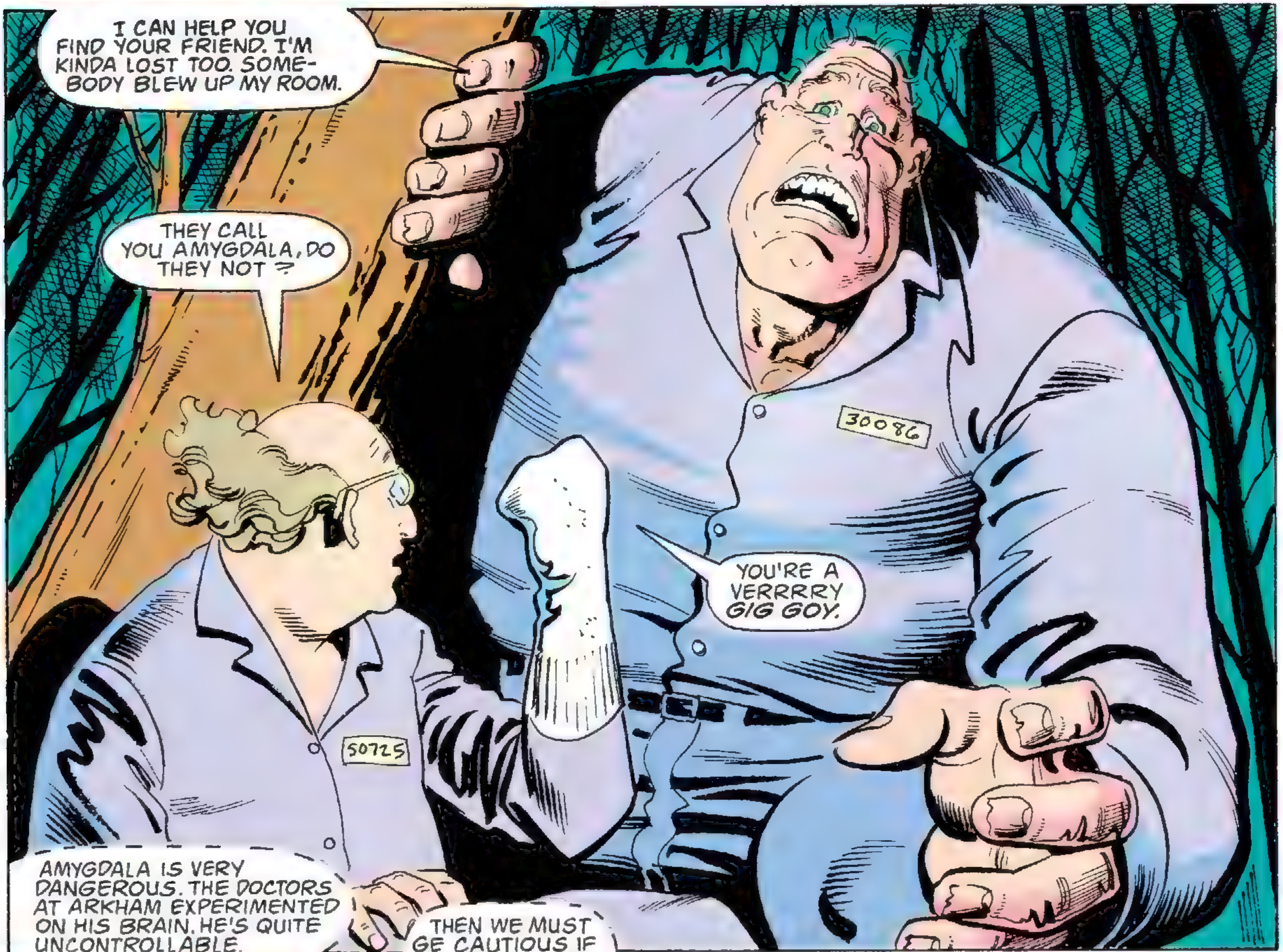
FREE!

FREE TO GATHER MY LEGIONS ONCE MORE.



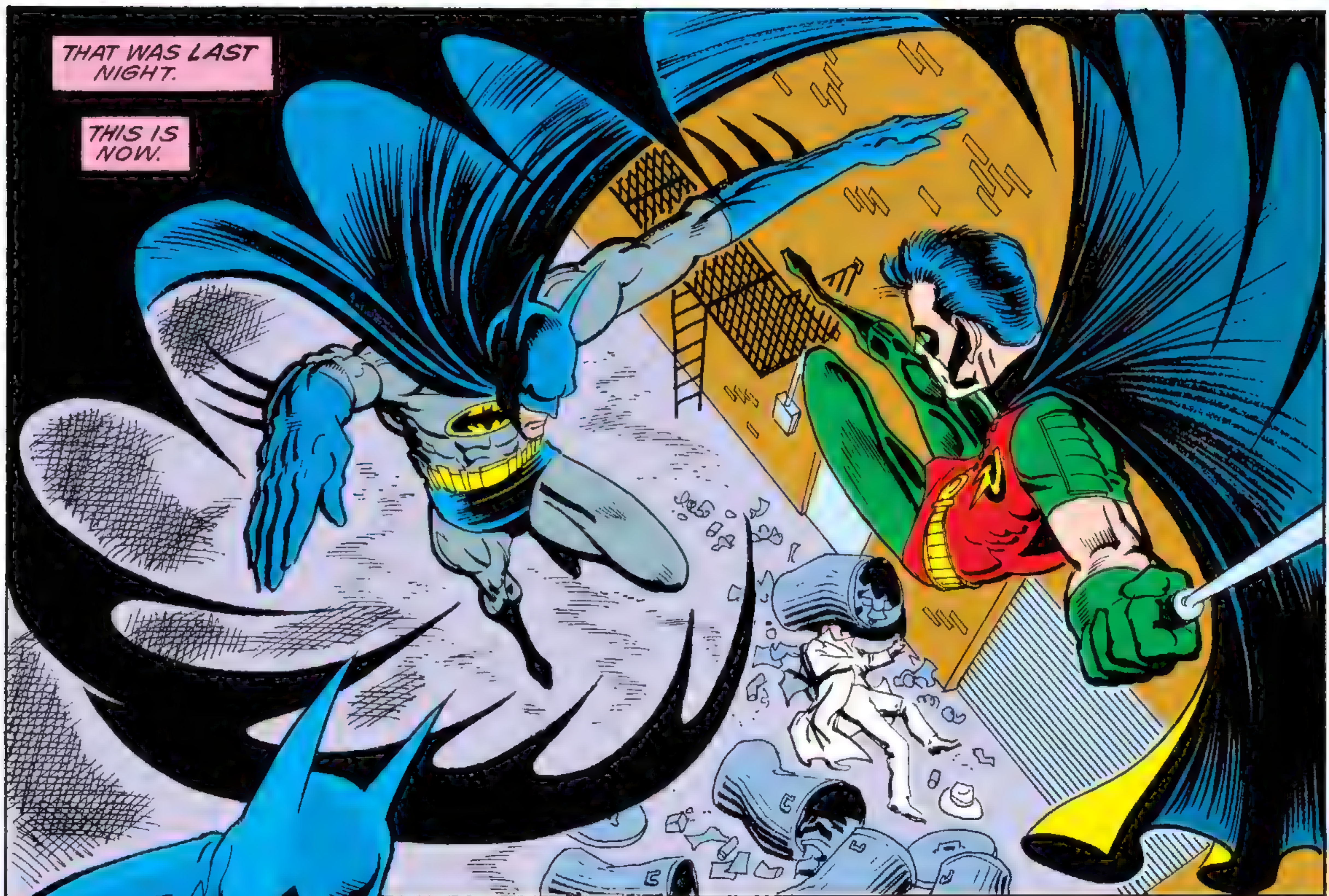
CHUCK DIXON-WRITER NORM BREYFOGLE-GUEST ARTIST ADRIENNE ROY-COLORIST
TIM HARKINS-LETTERER SCOTT PETERSON and DENNIS O'NEIL-EDITORS Batman created
by BOB KANE





THAT WAS LAST NIGHT.

THIS IS NOW.



I HALF EXPECTED THIS. OBVIOUSLY, IT'S BANE'S WORK.

BUT WHY?



NO SIGN OF ENTRY WOUNDS. NO EVIDENCE THAT A WEAPON WAS USED.

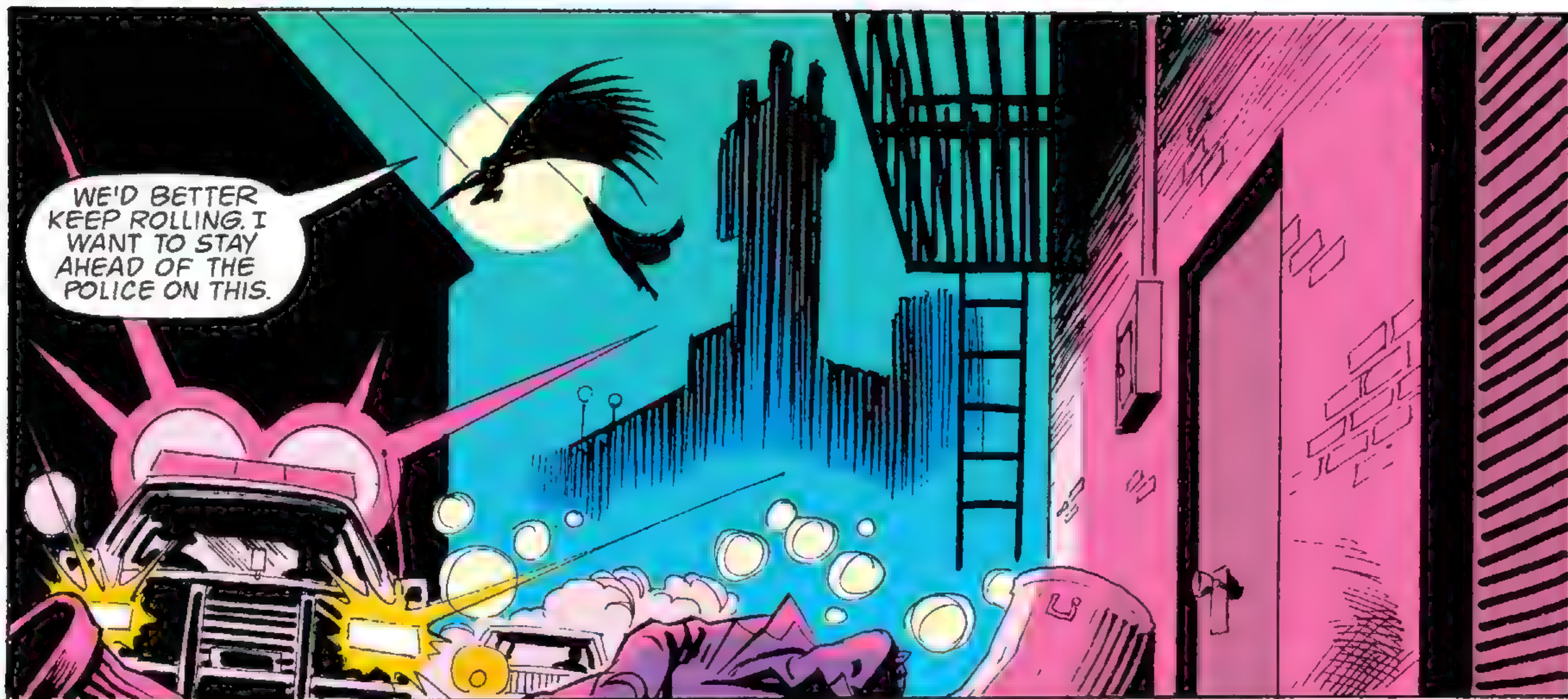
IT LOOKS LIKE EVERY BONE IN HIS BODY IS BROKEN. AS HARD AS IT IS TO BELIEVE, FILM FREAK WAS BEATEN TO DEATH BY SOMEONE USING ONLY THEIR BARE FISTS.



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, ROBIN?

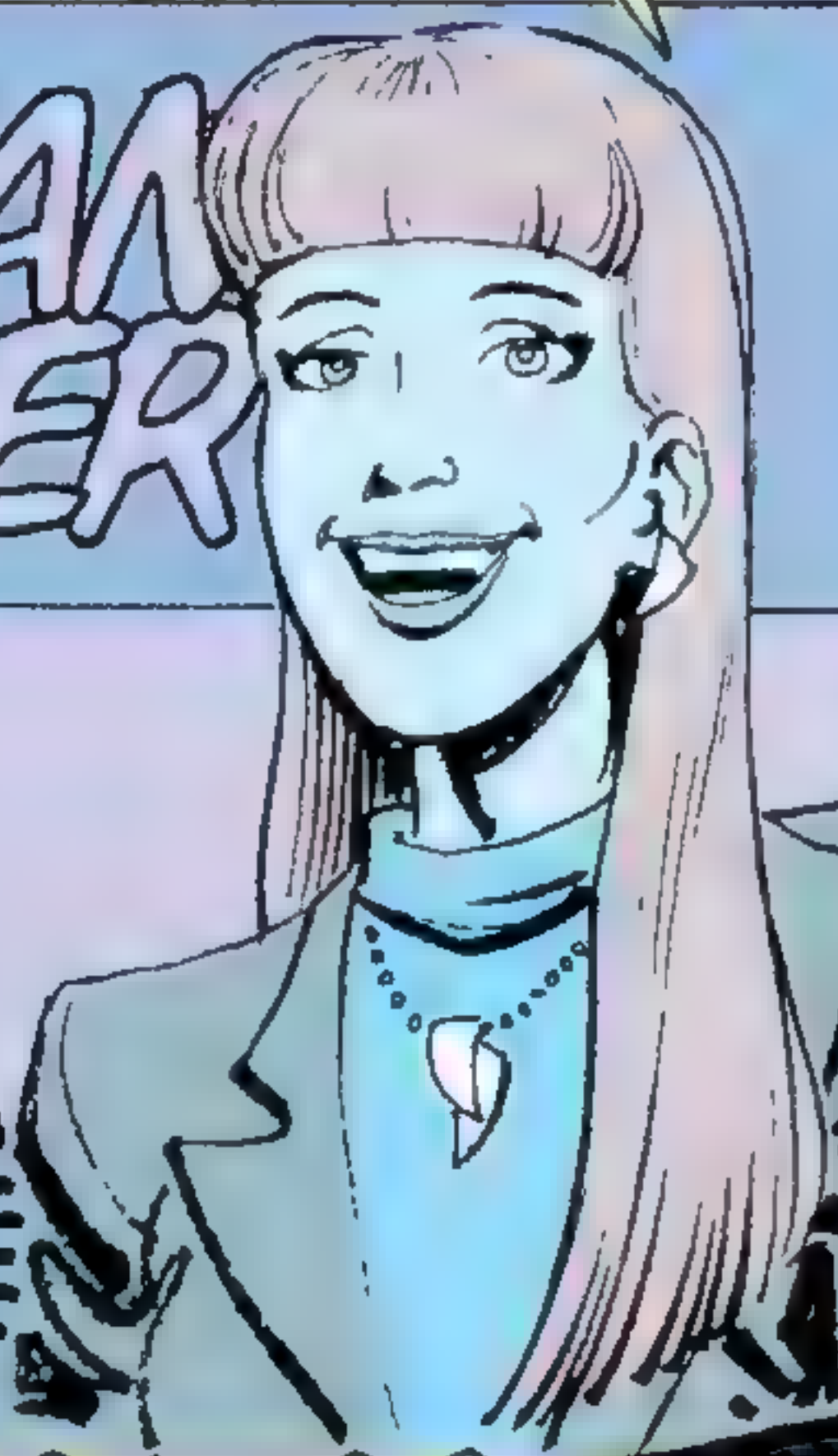
UH... SURE, BATMAN.





-- BACK TO GOTHAM INSIDER. OUR GUEST IS DR. SIMPSON FLANDERS, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND ASSOCIATE AT ARKHAM ASYLUM--

GOTHAM
INSIDER



AS I'VE DETAILED IN MY CURRENT BOOK, "I'M SANE AND SO ARE YOU," THESE PATIENTS ARE MERELY MISUNDERSTOOD.

THEY ARE CRYING OUT FOR HELP, LINDA.

I'm
Sane
and so
YOU!



THAT'S YOUR INNATE PREJUDICE TOWARD THE MENTALLY DIVERGENT--

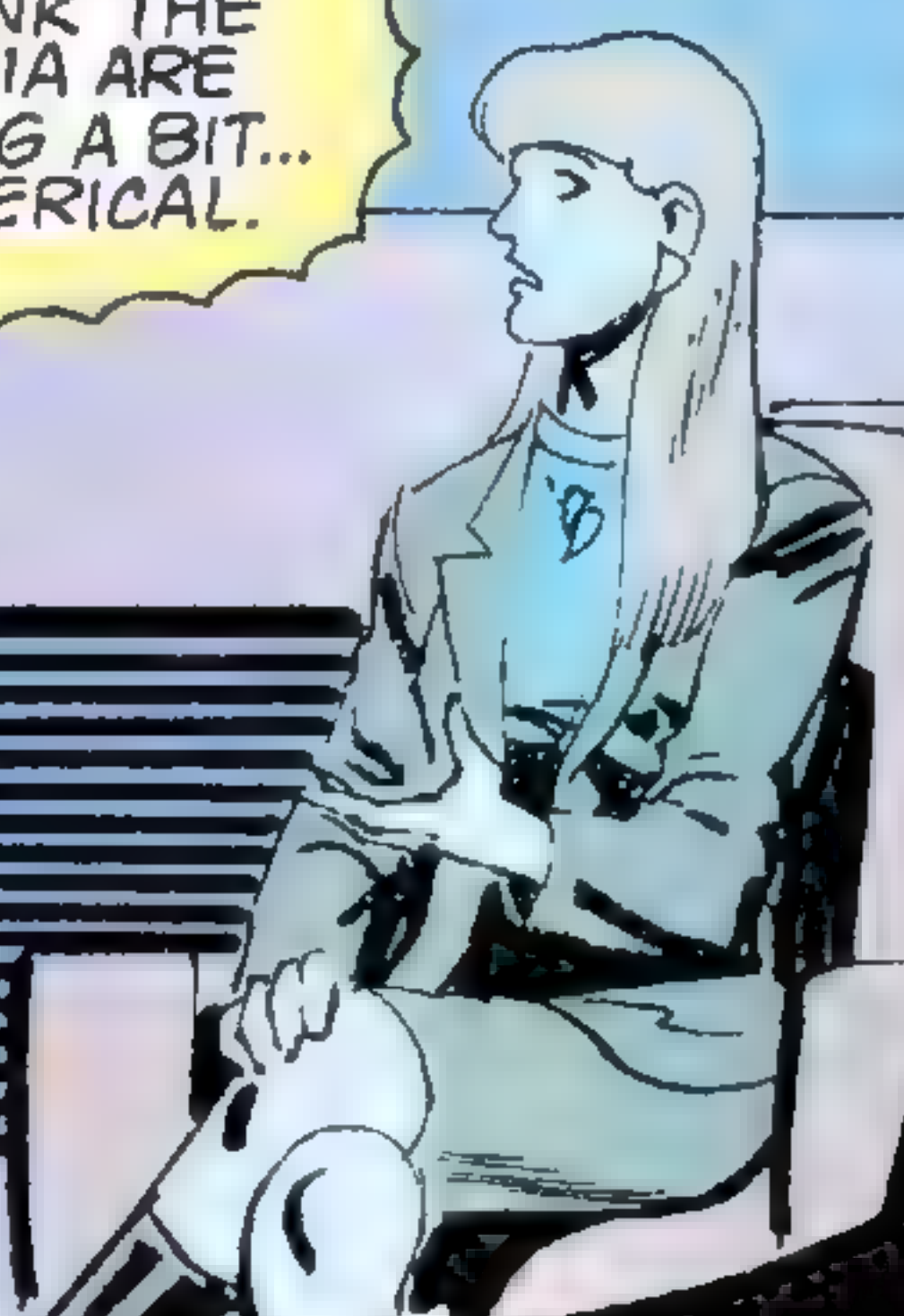
"MENTALLY DIVERGENT"? THAT'S A NEW ONE.

IT'S IN MY BOOK.



-- WHICH IS MUCH IN THE NEWS TONIGHT. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THE MASS ESCAPE FROM ARKHAM, DOCTOR?

EXCUSE ME FOR SAYING SO, LINDA, BUT I THINK THE MEDIA ARE ACTING A BIT... HYSTERICAL.



THERE HAVE BEEN A DOZEN **HOMICIDES** SINCE THE BREAKOUT.

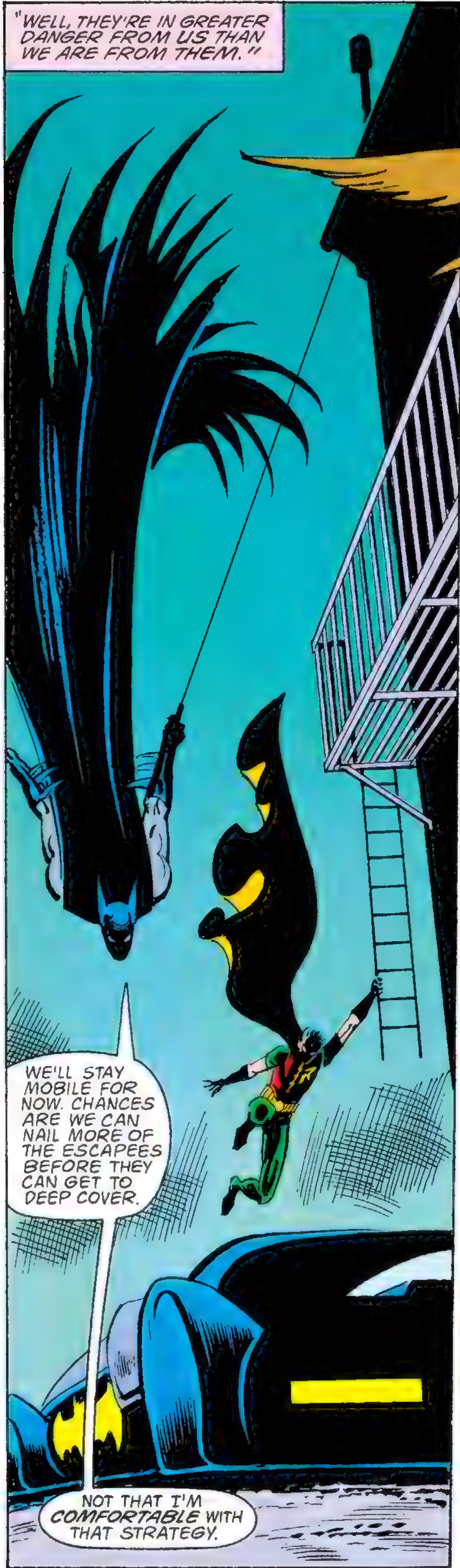
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE MOST DANGEROUS COLLECTION OF PSYCHOPATHS EVER ASSEMBLED. THEY ARE **HARDLY** "MISUNDERSTOOD."



AND LET ME MAKE ANOTHER POINT. THESE PATIENTS ARE CONFUSED, LOST. THEY CANNOT OPERATE IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

YOU THINK THEY ARE A DANGER TO SOCIETY?





"WELL, THEY'RE IN GREATER DANGER FROM US THAN WE ARE FROM THEM."

WE'LL STAY MOBILE FOR NOW. CHANCES ARE WE CAN NAIL MORE OF THE ESCAPEES BEFORE THEY CAN GET TO DEEP COVER.

NOT THAT I'M COMFORTABLE WITH THAT STRATEGY.



I'M SURE WE WON'T HAVE TO LOOK FOR ALL OF THEM.

SOME OF THEM WILL BE LOOKING FOR US.



MAYBE SOME OF THEM ALREADY ARE.

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE

DREAM BIG!

HEAVY HEAVY CLUB SOLID BLOOD

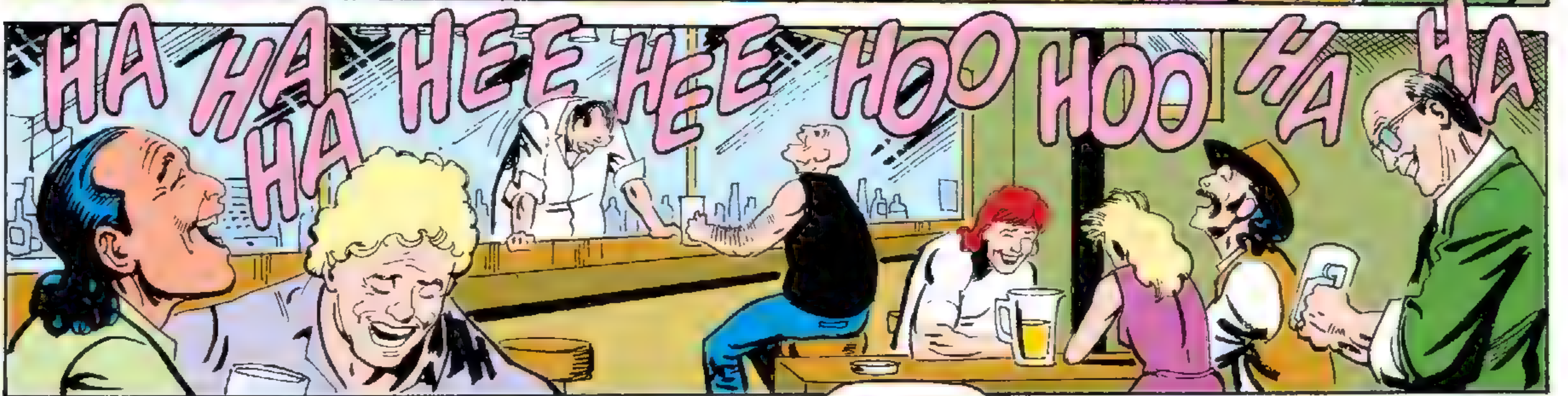
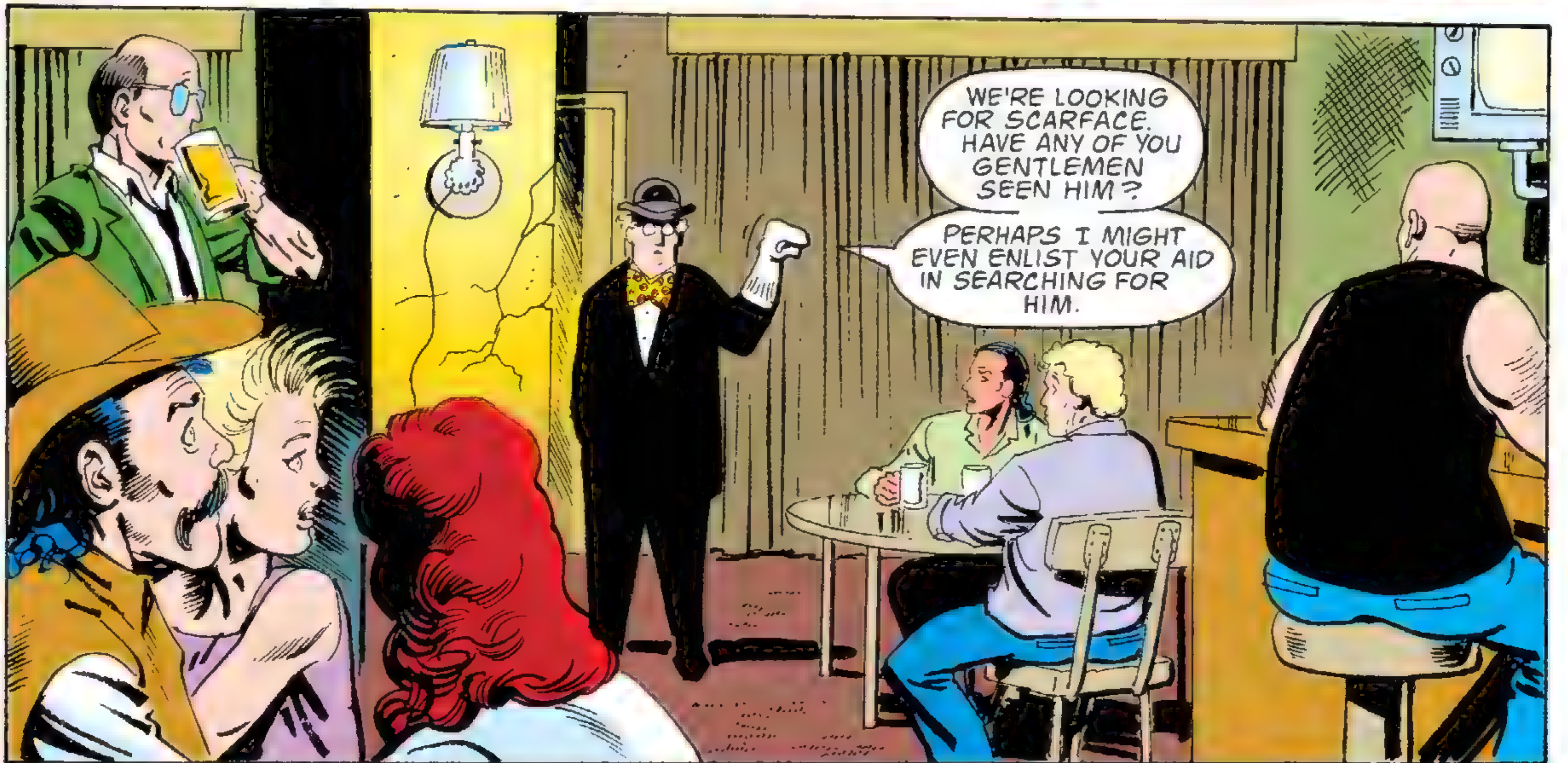
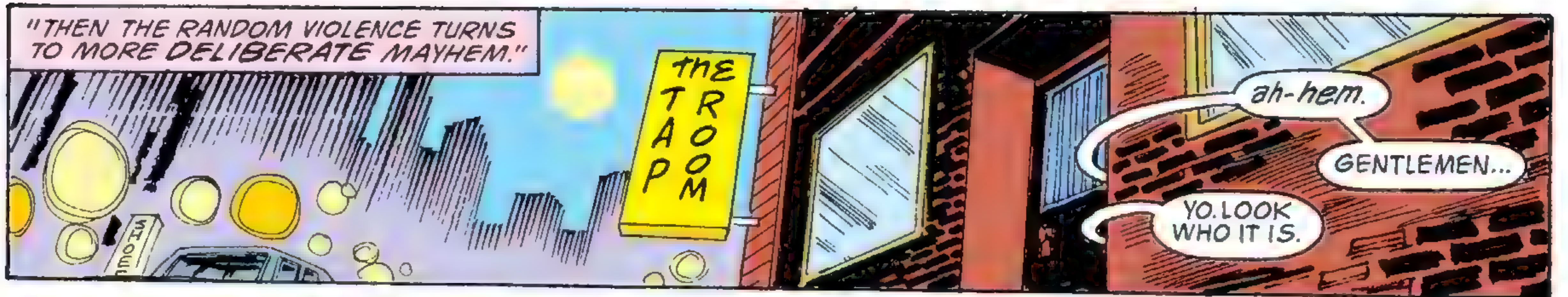
BEEP WSHSHSH

BEEP

I'D PREFER TO BE ACTING MORE AND RE-ACTING LESS. BUT THERE'S NO RHYME OR REASON TO ANY OF THIS.

YET.

THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO MOVE FAST. THE REALLY DANGEROUS ONES WILL BE THOSE WHO GET A CHANCE TO PLAN.





YOU'RE LAUGHING
AT MY LITTLE
FRIEND?

NOBODY
LAUGHS AT MY
LITTLE
FRIEND!

...GUT I THINK
YOU'D GEST TAKE MY
PAL AMYGDALA MORE
SERIOUSLY.

CHSH



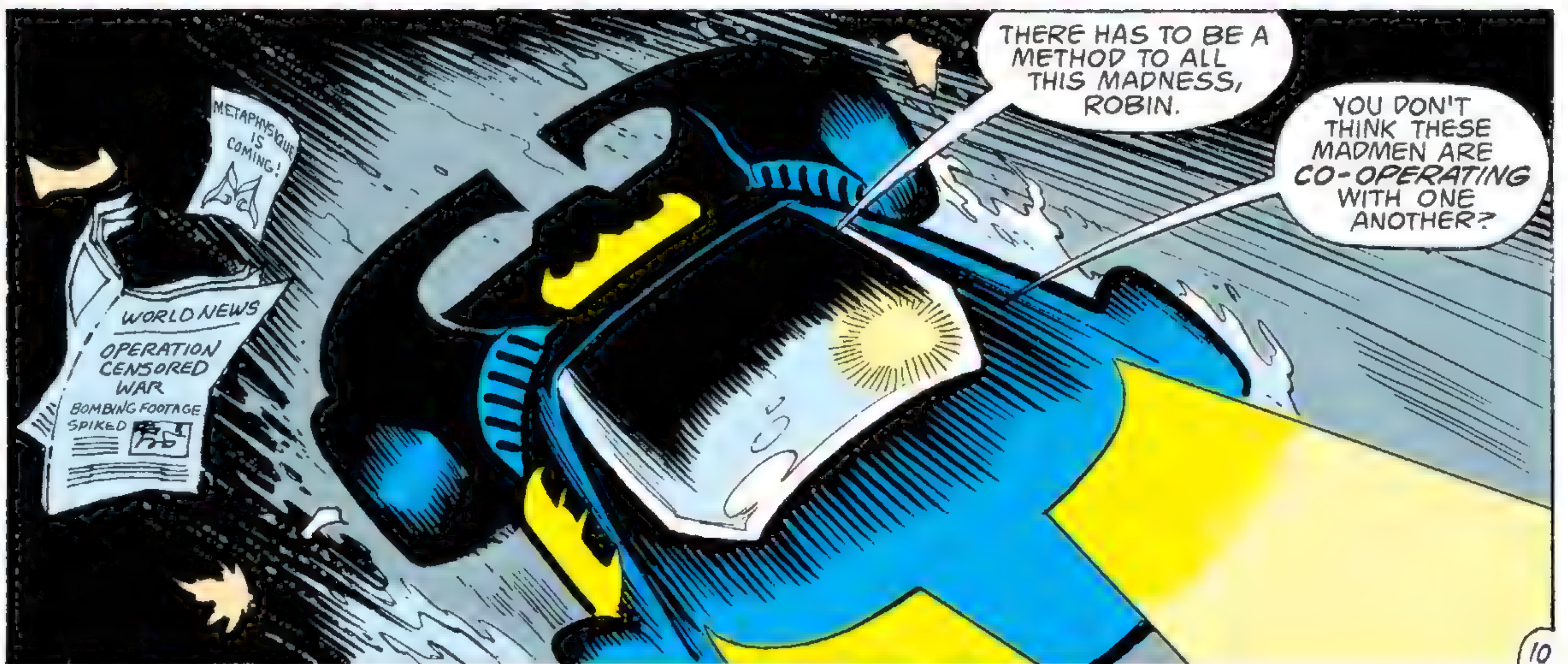
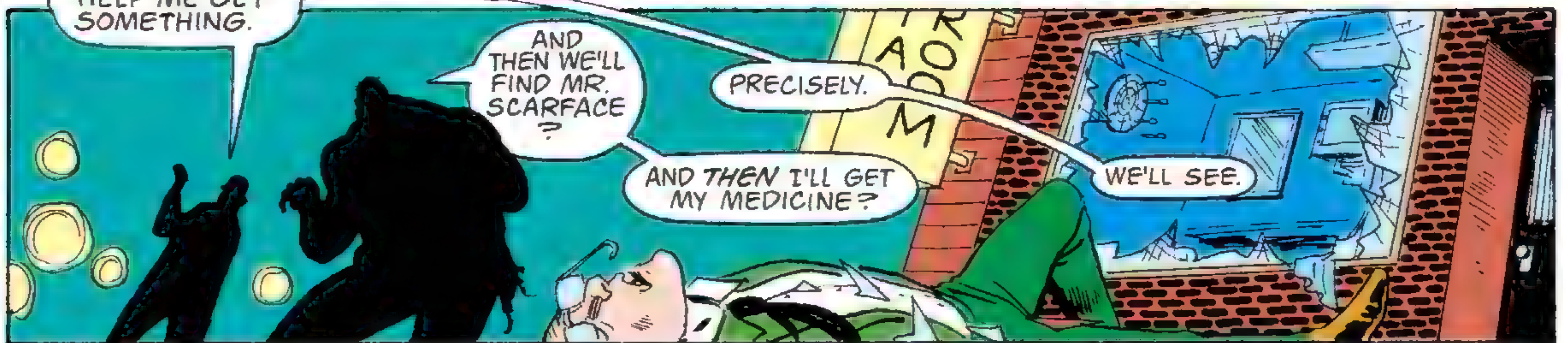
WHAT'S SO
FUNNY?

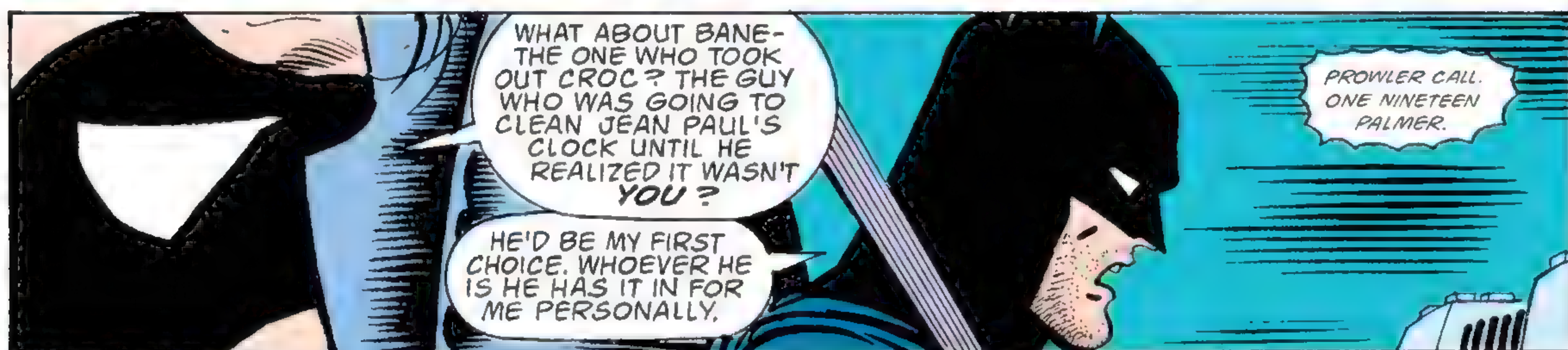
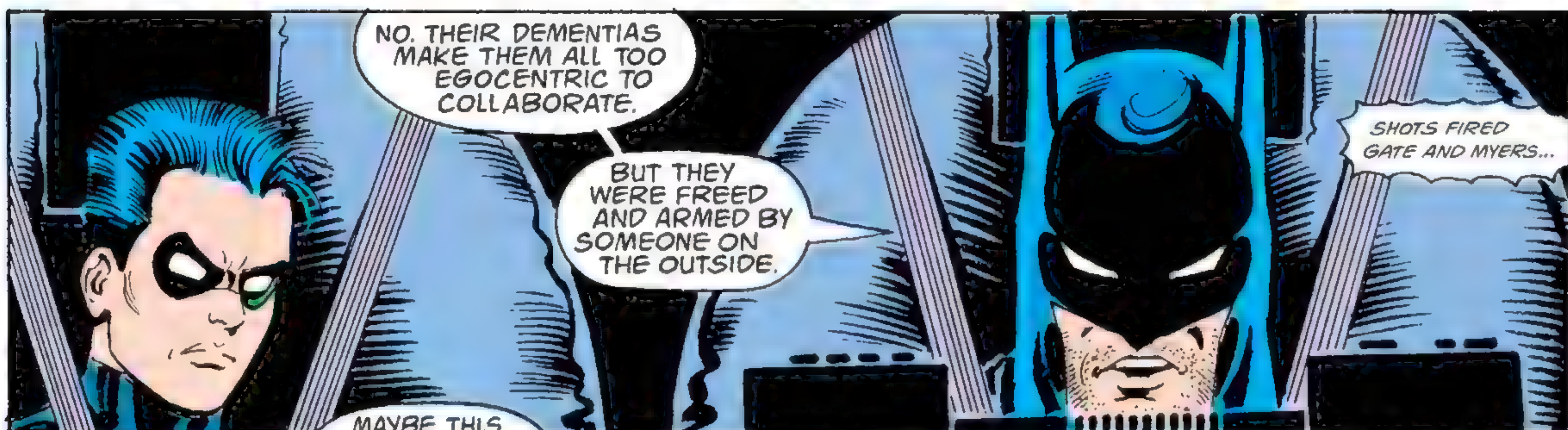
POOM

SLURP

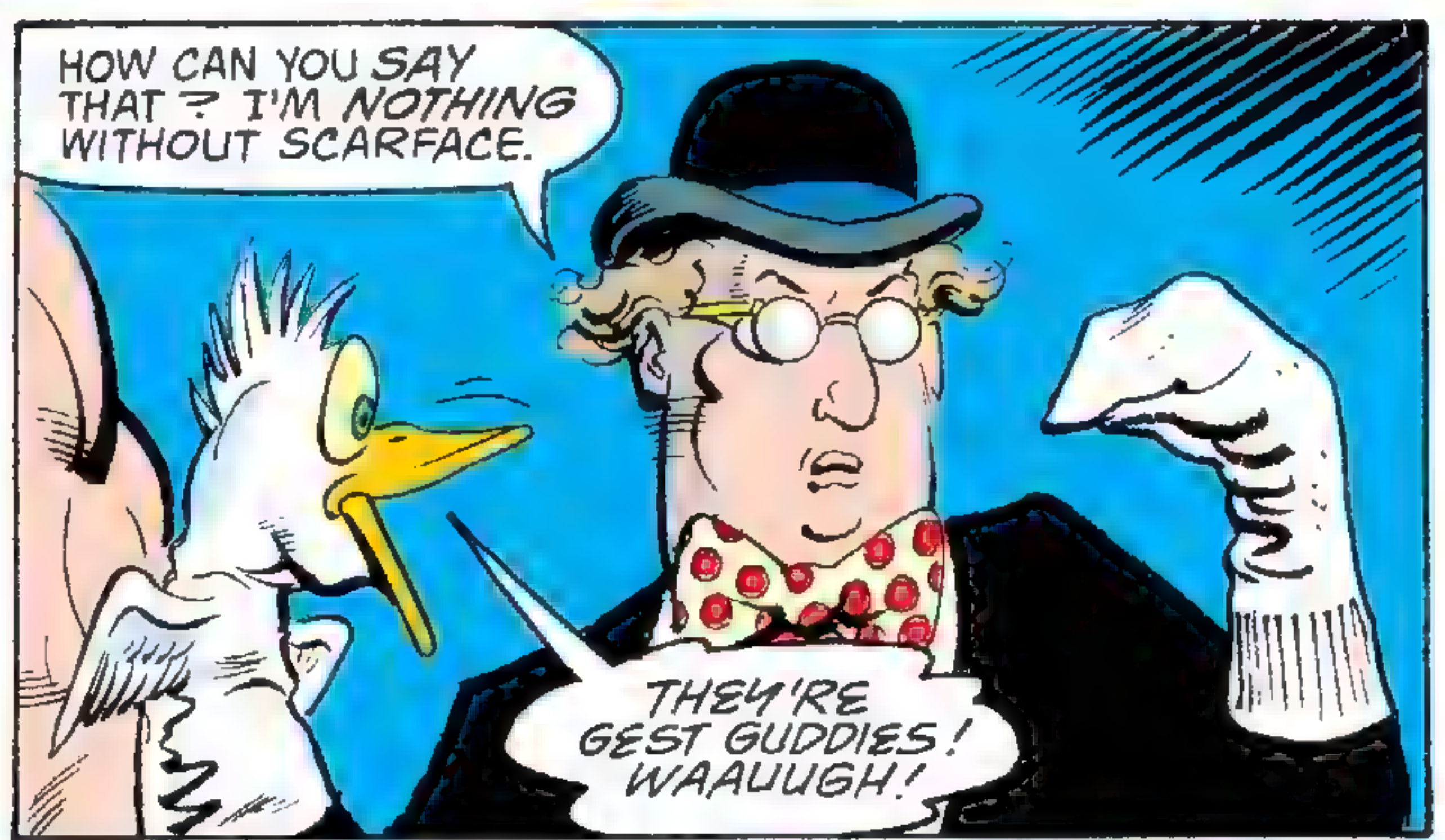
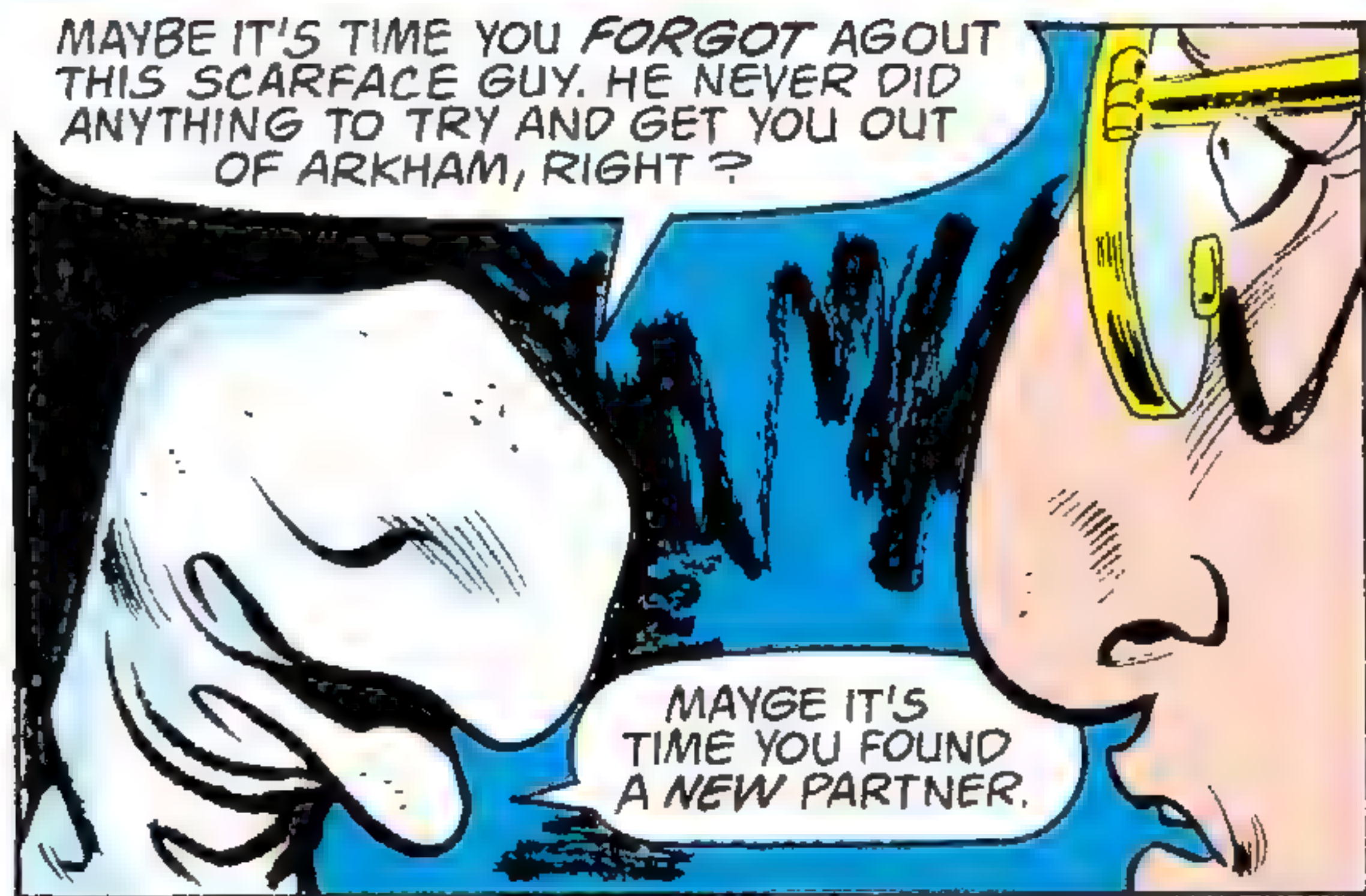
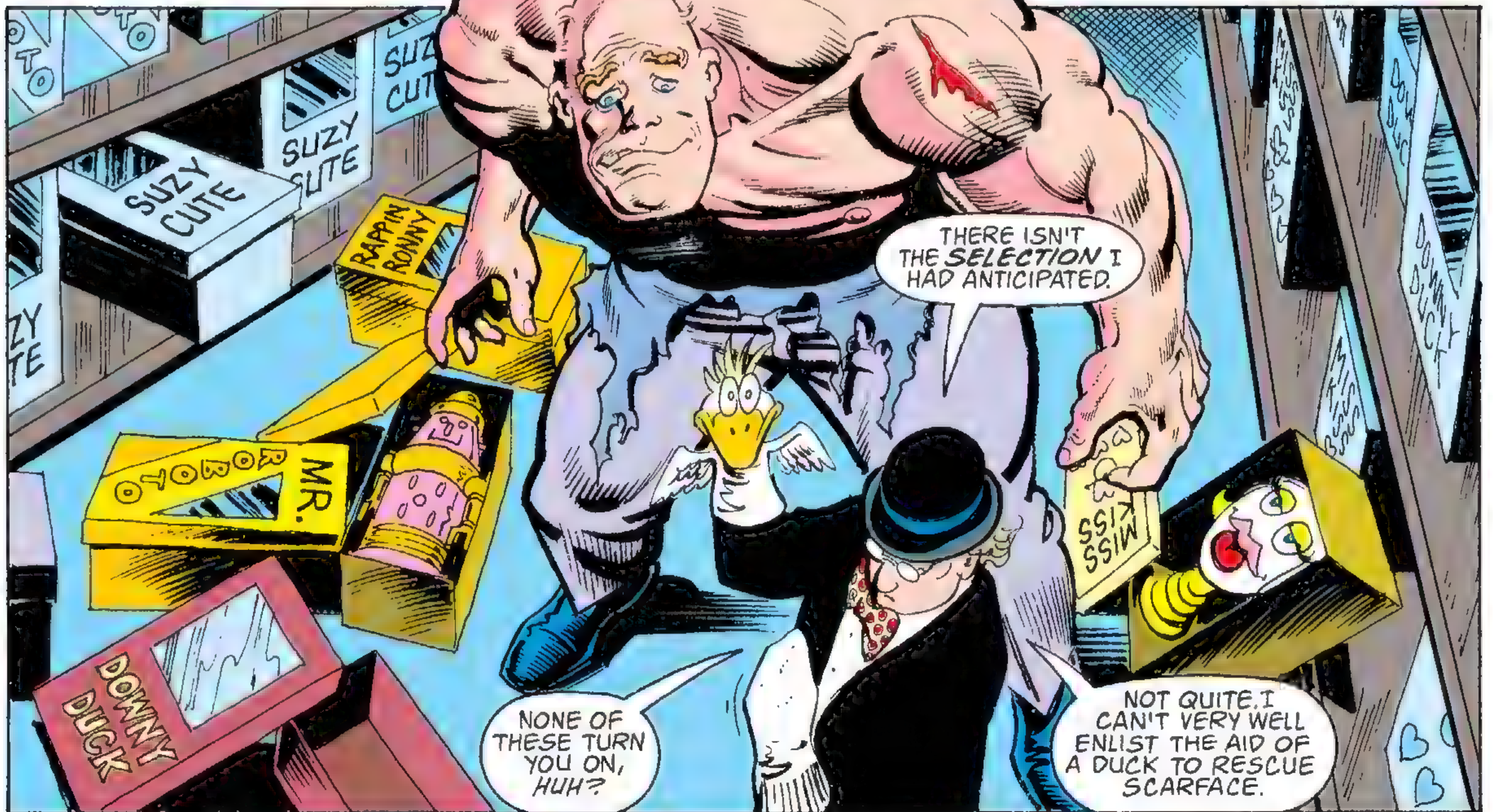
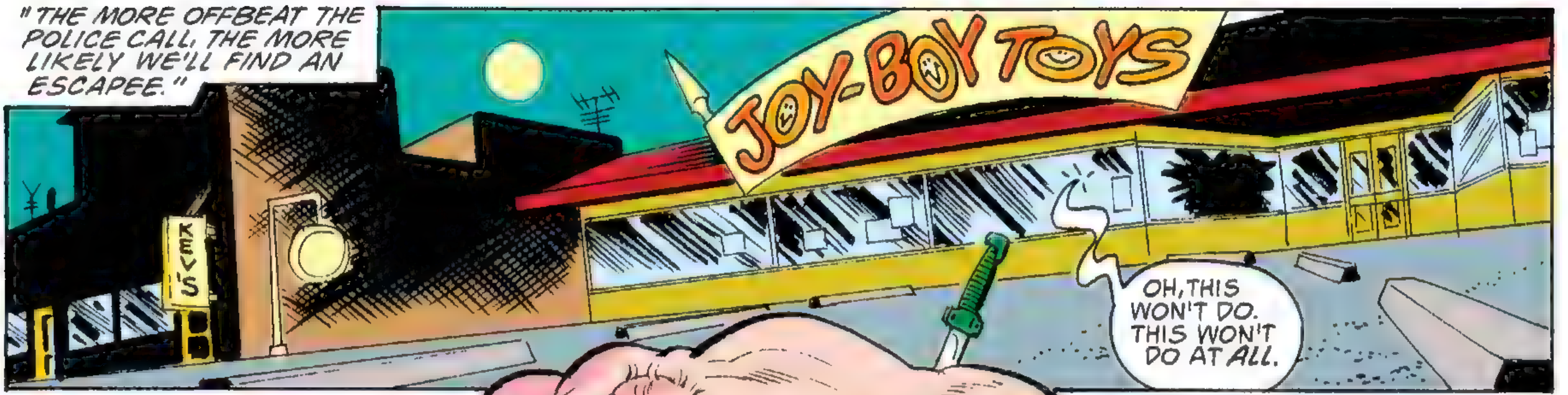
SOCKO, PERHAPS
YOU'RE NOT UP TO
THE DEMANDS I'M
PLACING ON YOU. AND
AMYGDALA IS TOO...
ENERGETIC.

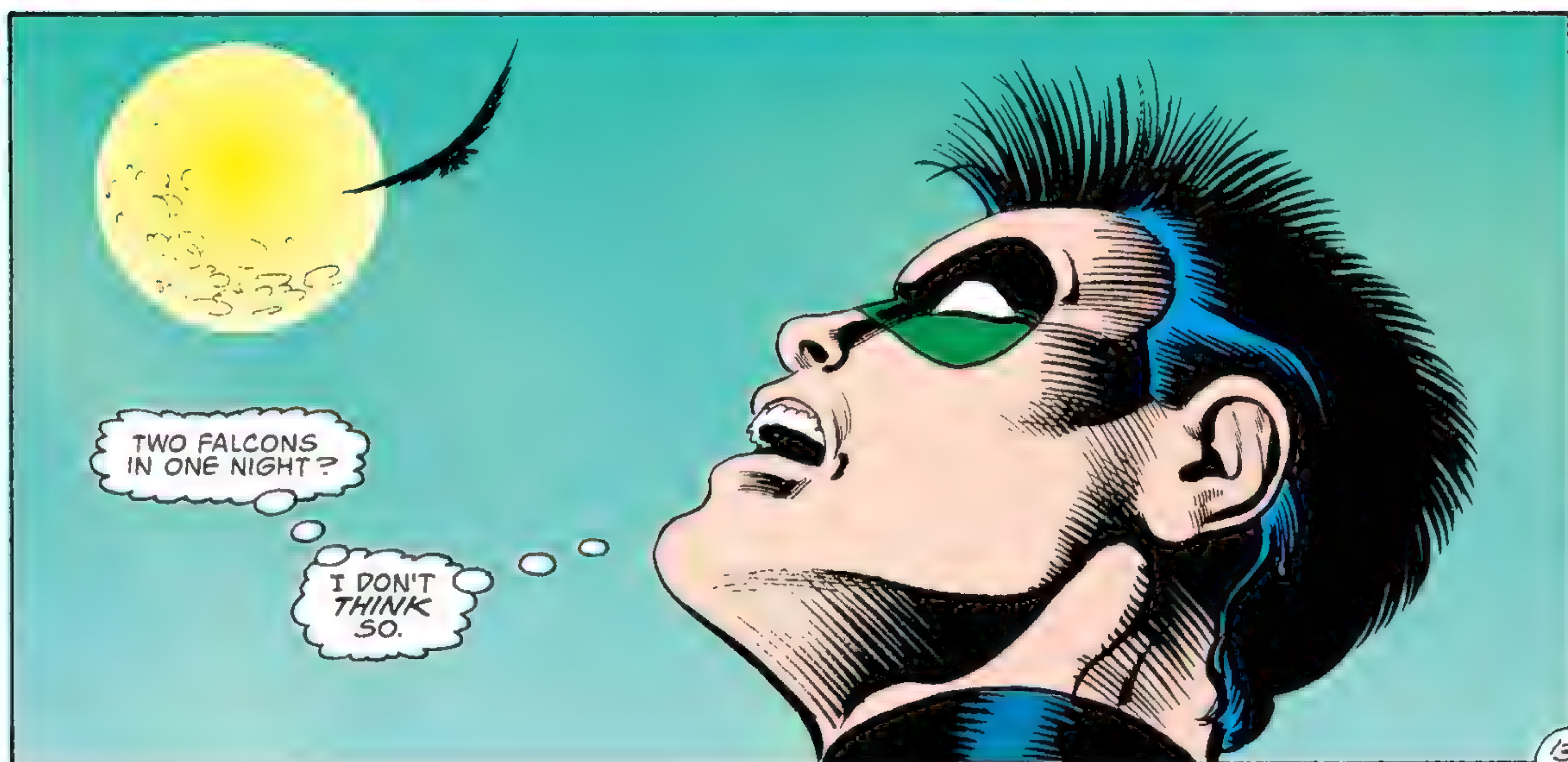
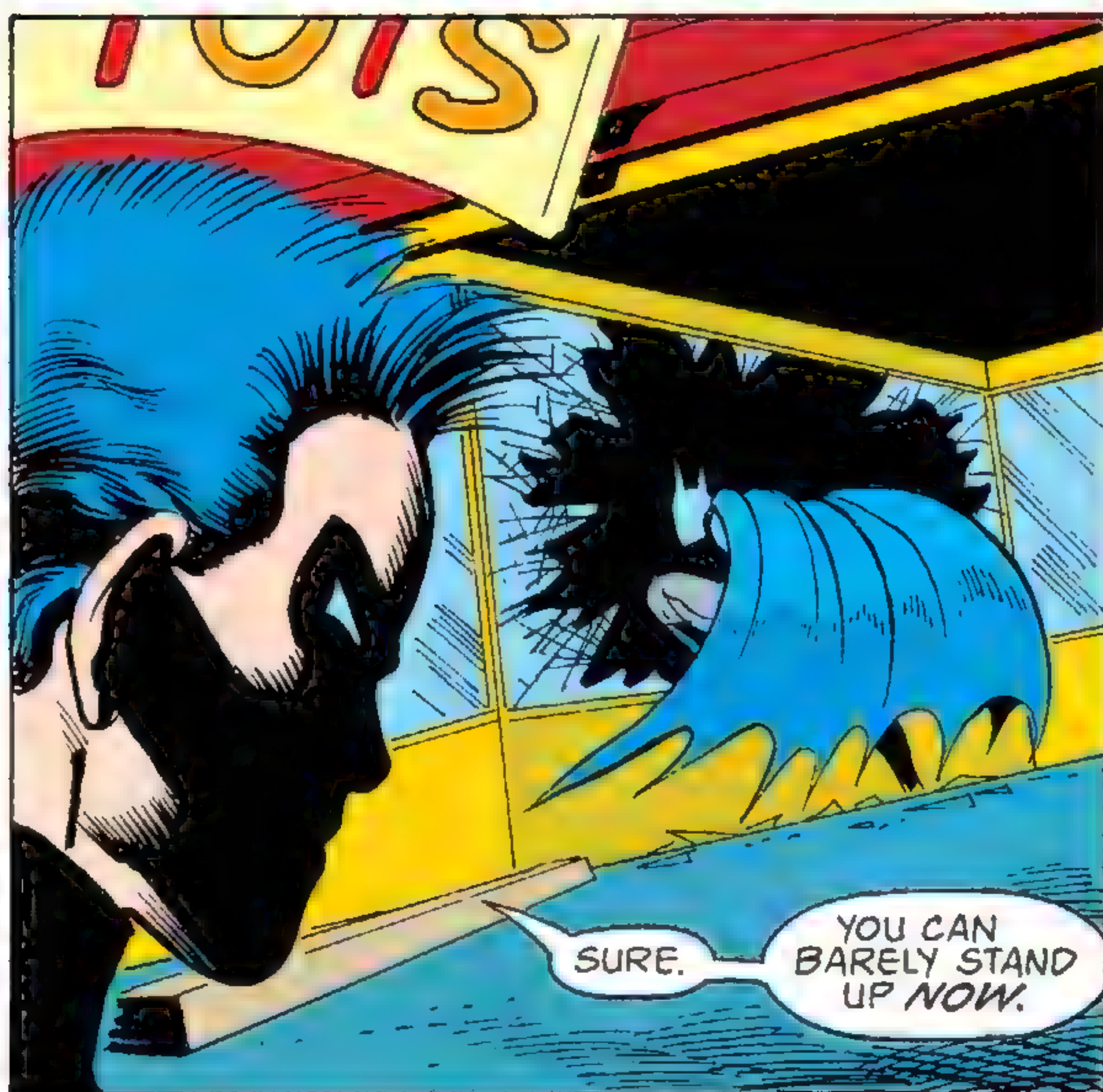
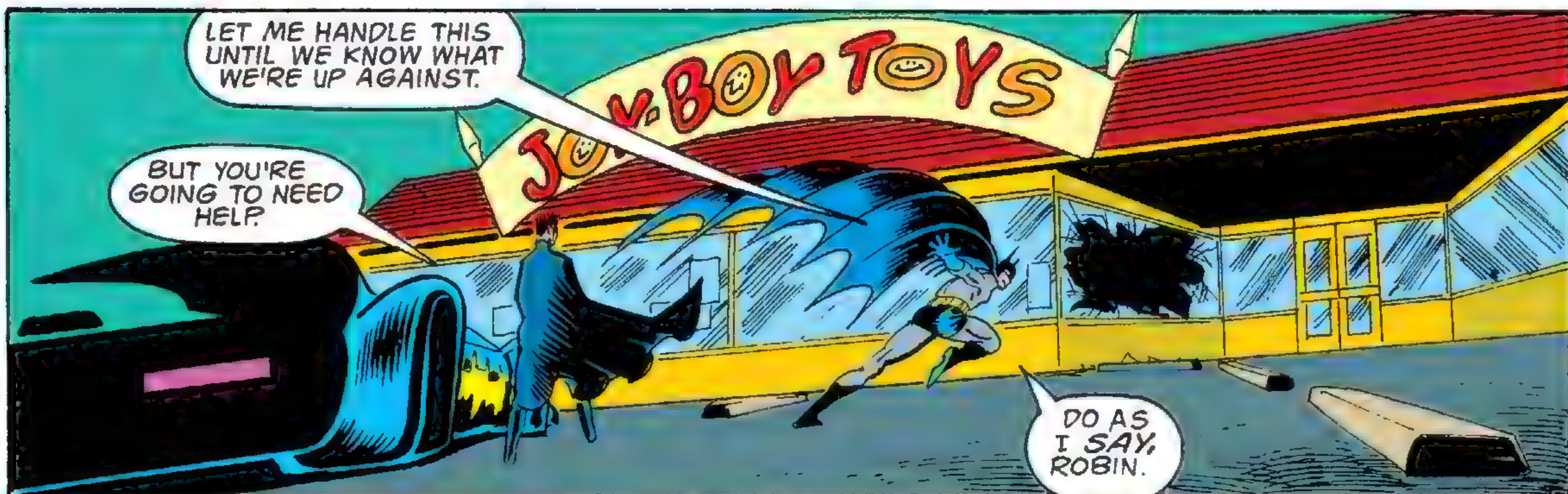
I NEED
SOMEONE WITH
FINESSE TO
HELP ME FIND
SCARFACE.

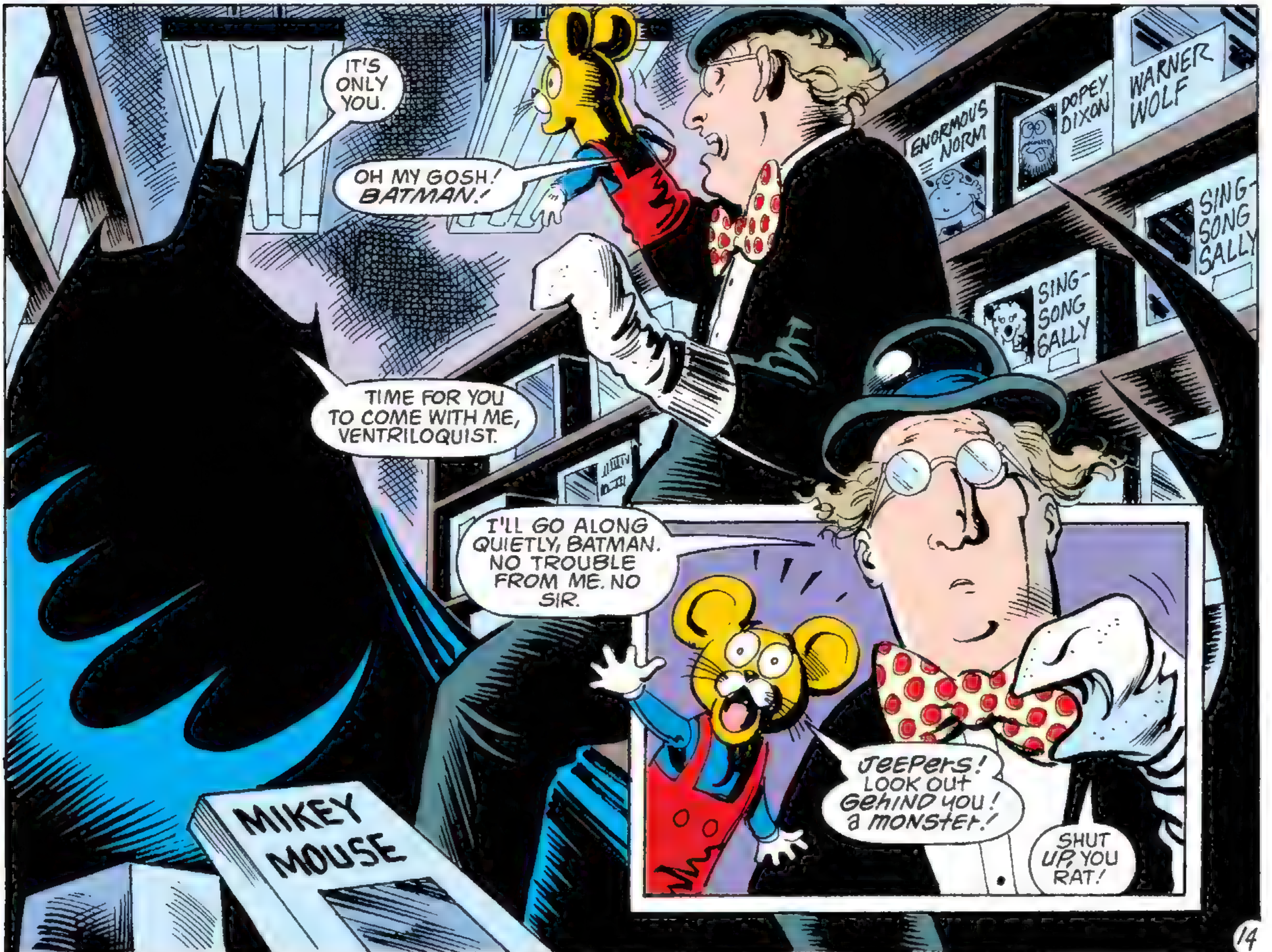
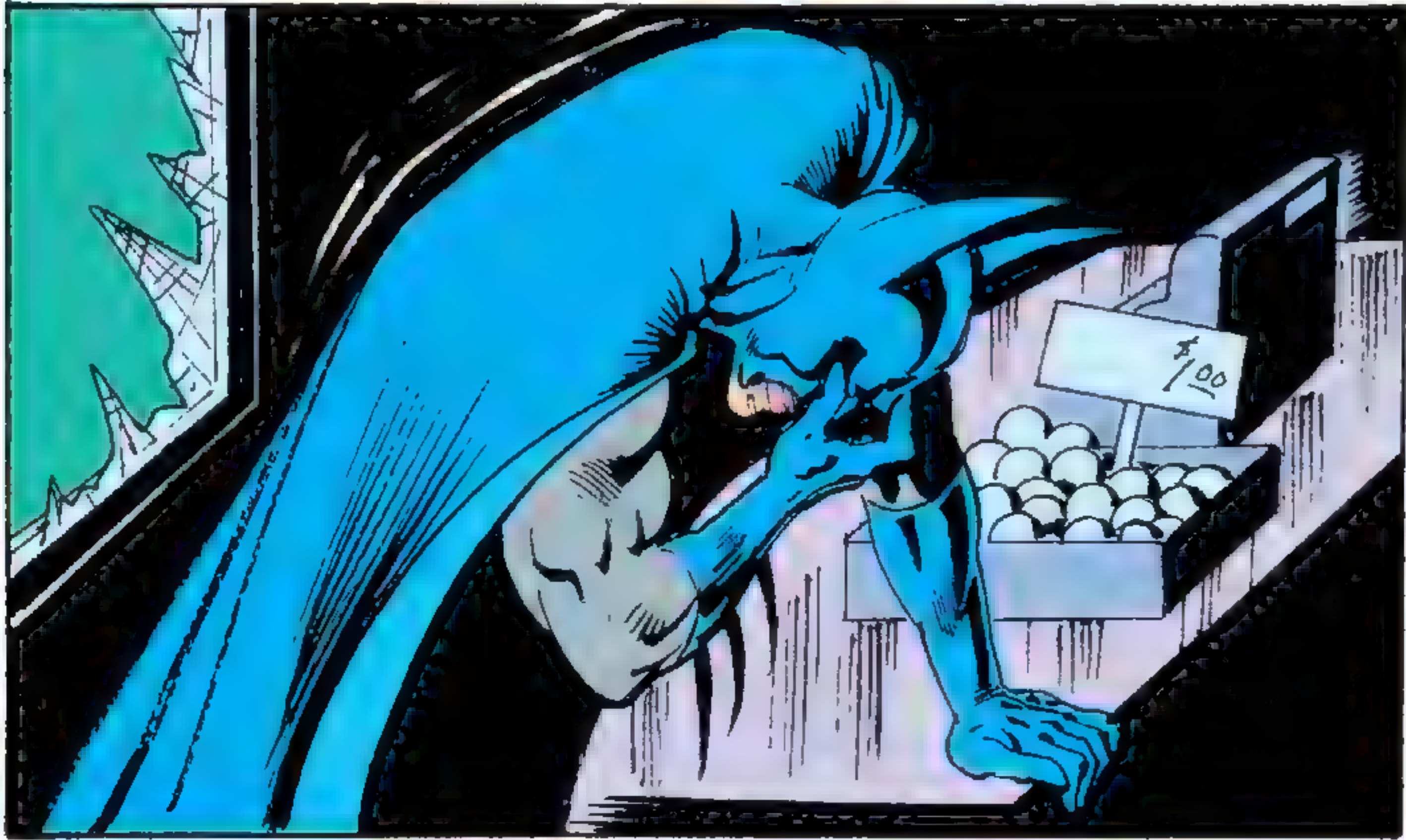
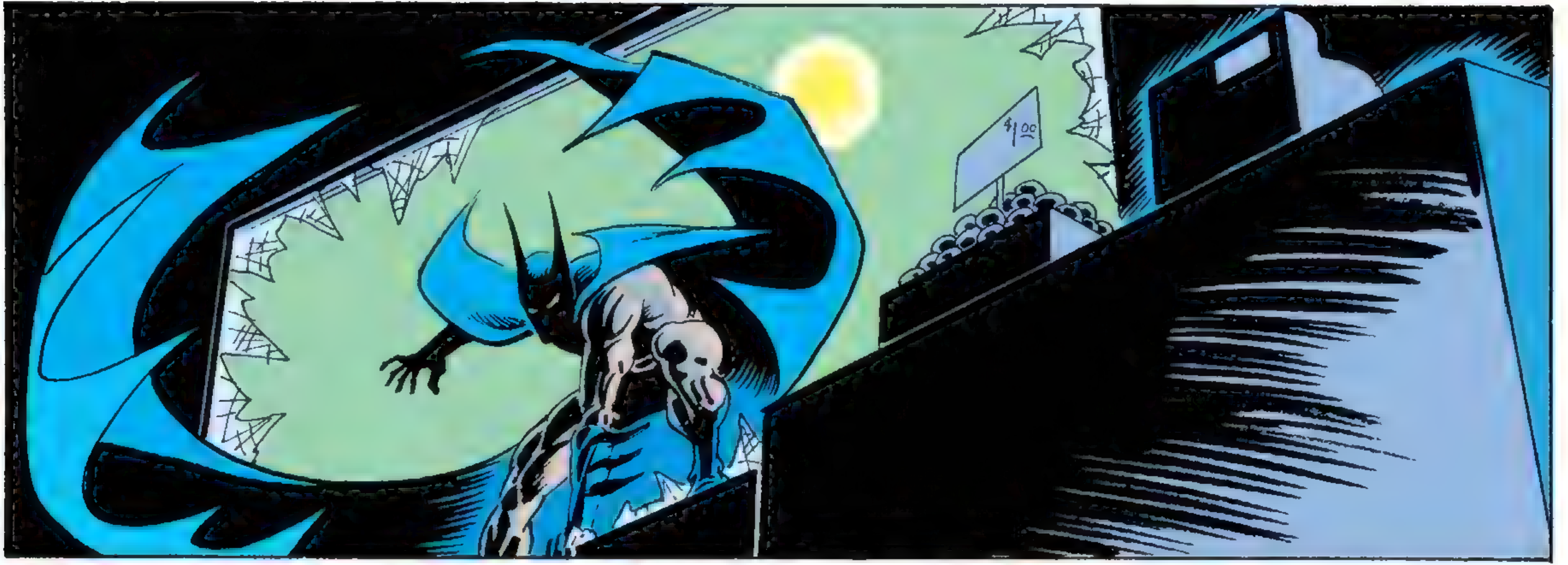




"THE MORE OFFBEAT THE POLICE CALL, THE MORE LIKELY WE'LL FIND AN ESCAPEE."









I'M NOT
IN THE MOOD
FOR OLD JOKE,
VENTRILOQUIST.

KEEP YOUR
HANDS WHERE
I CAN SEE
THEM.

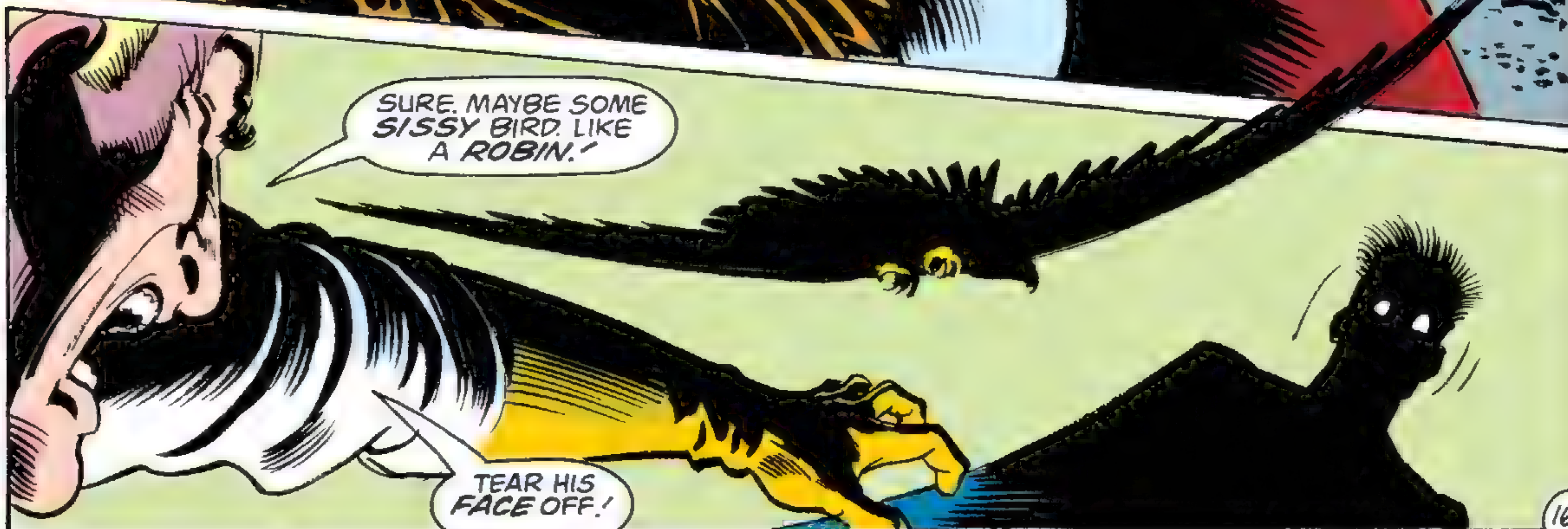
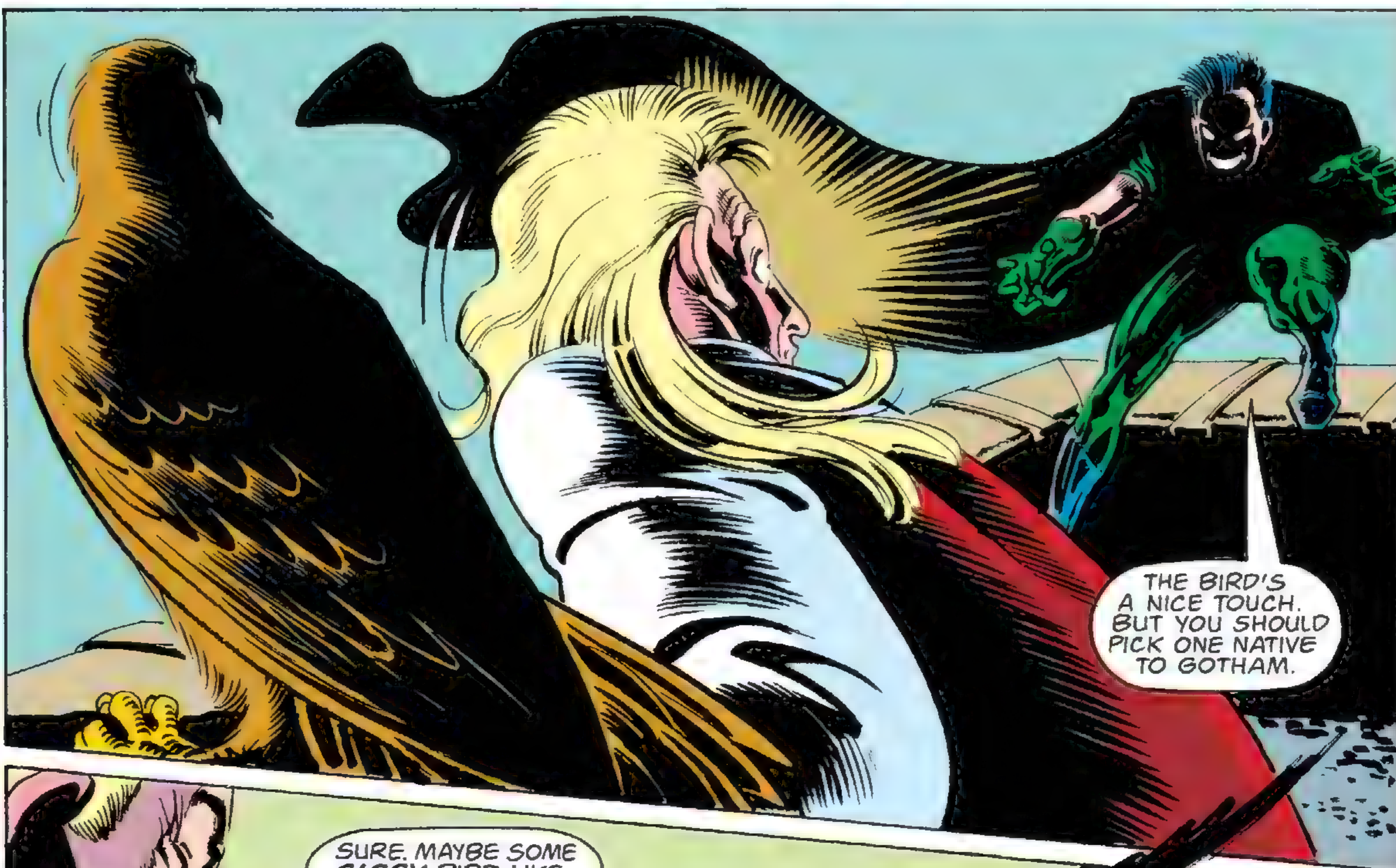
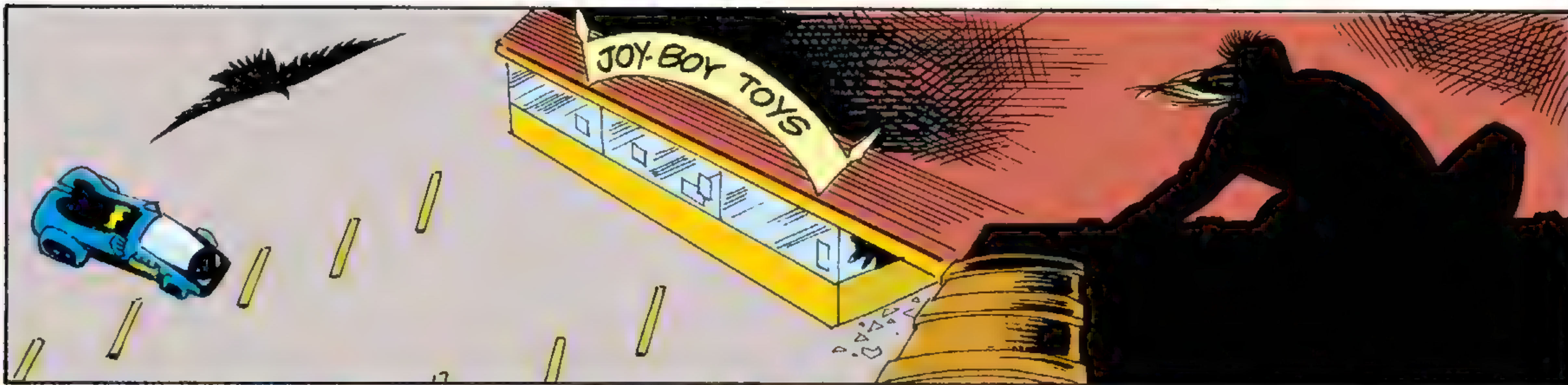


LEAVE MY
FRIENDS
ALONE!

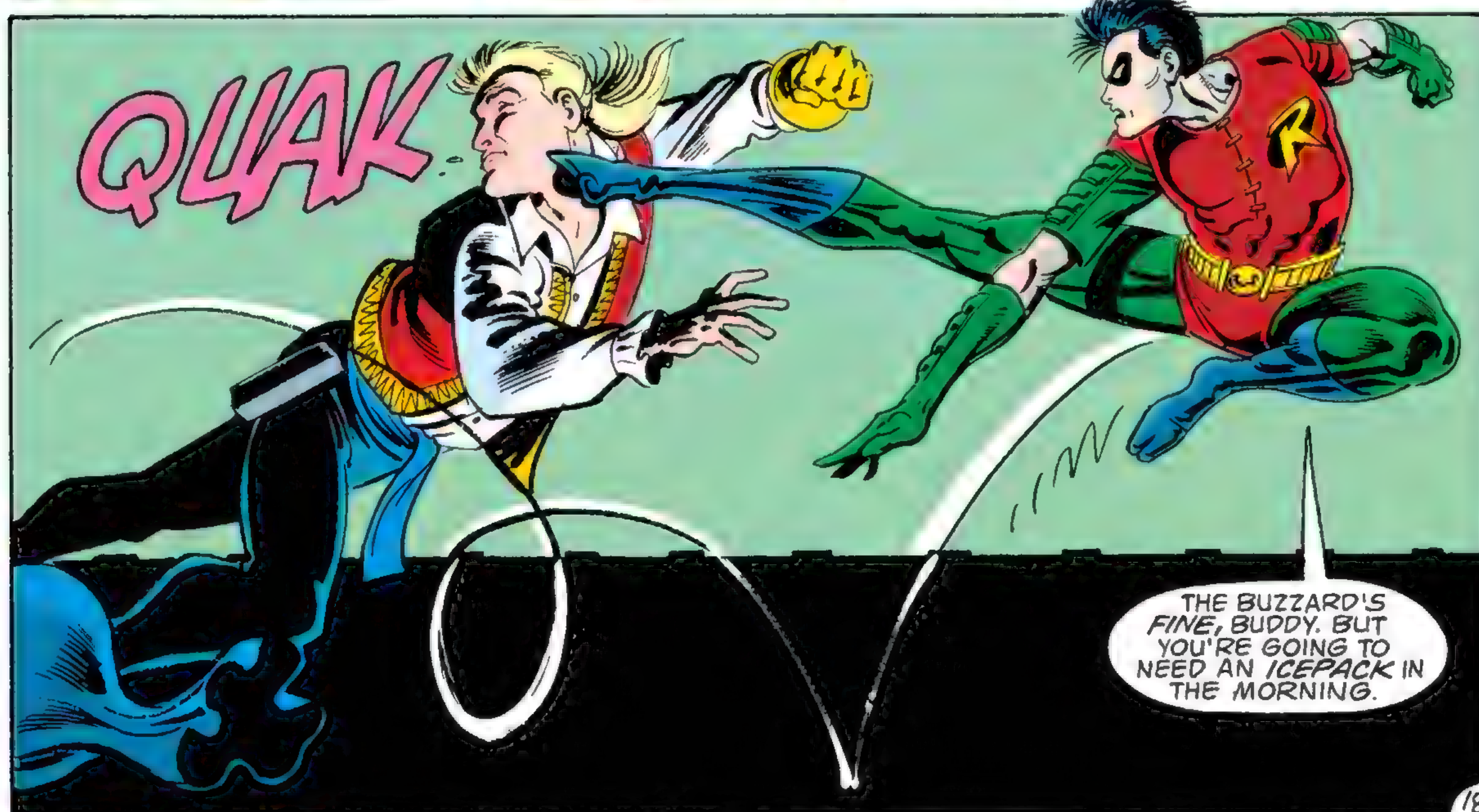
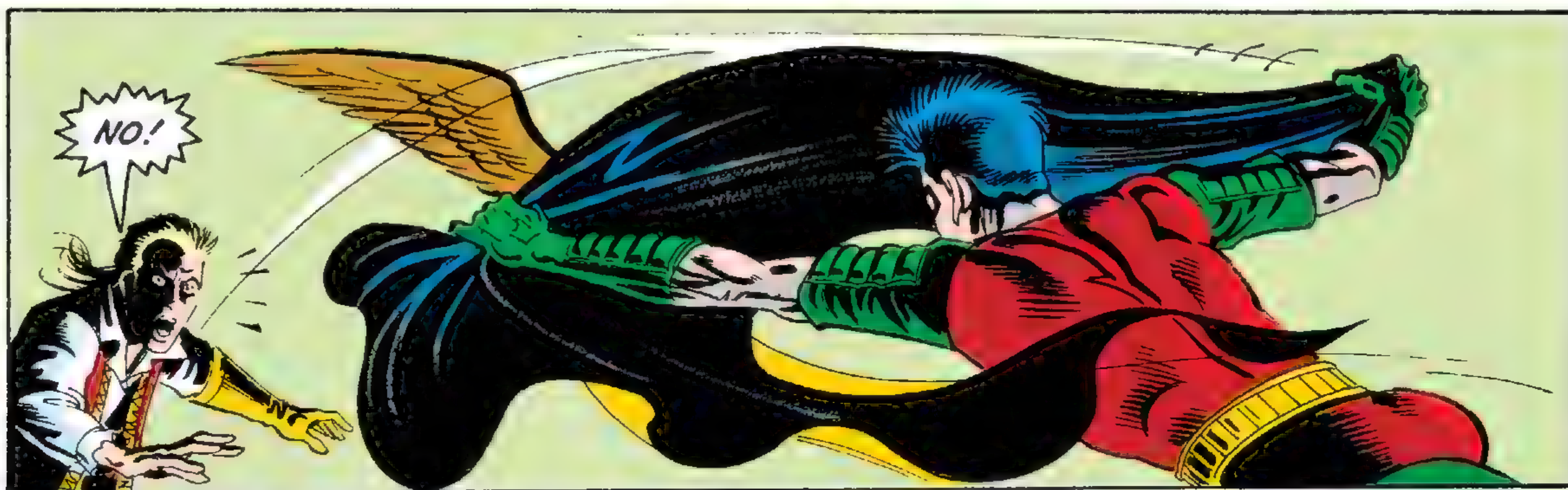


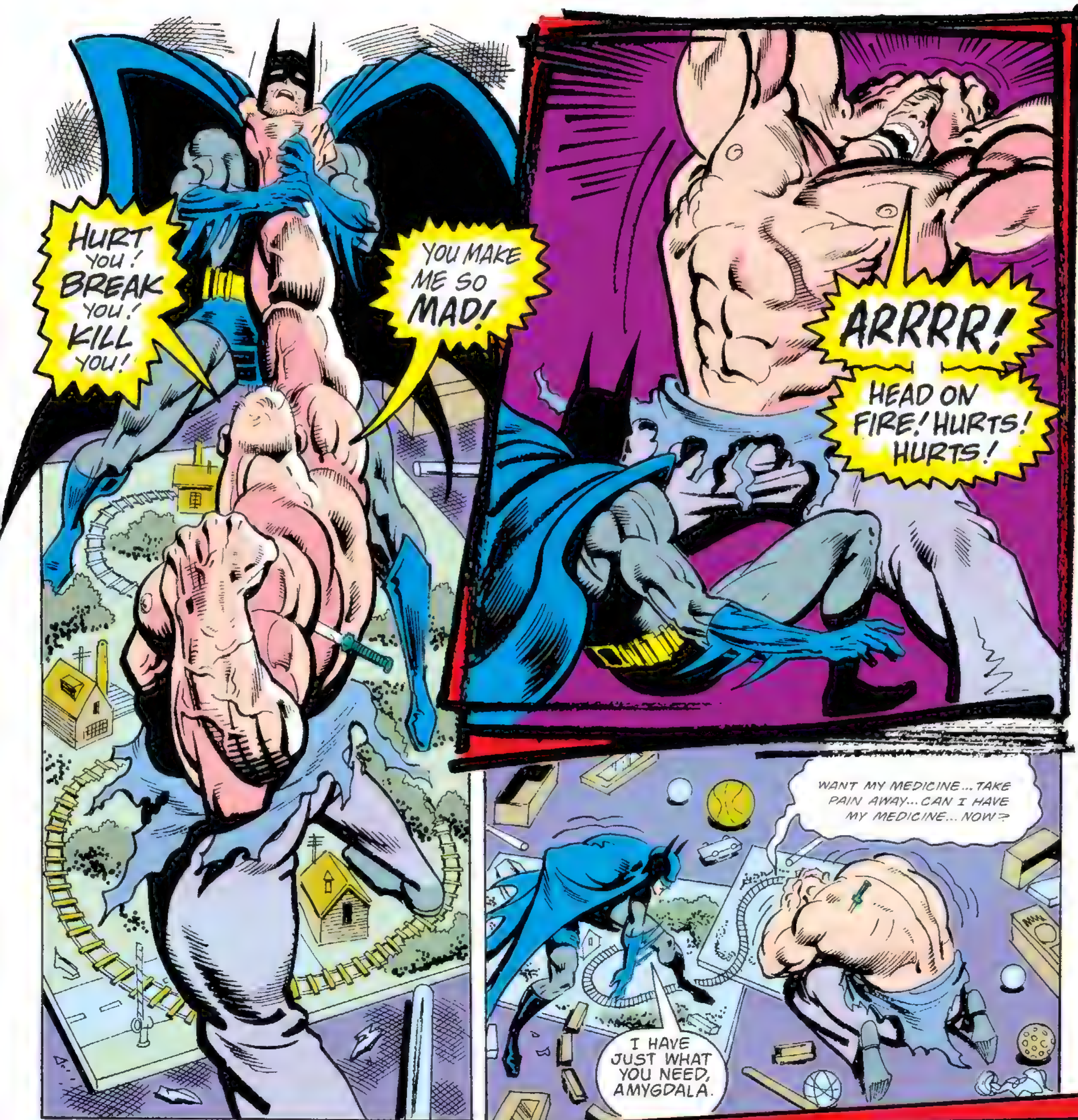
DON'T TOUCH
THEM!

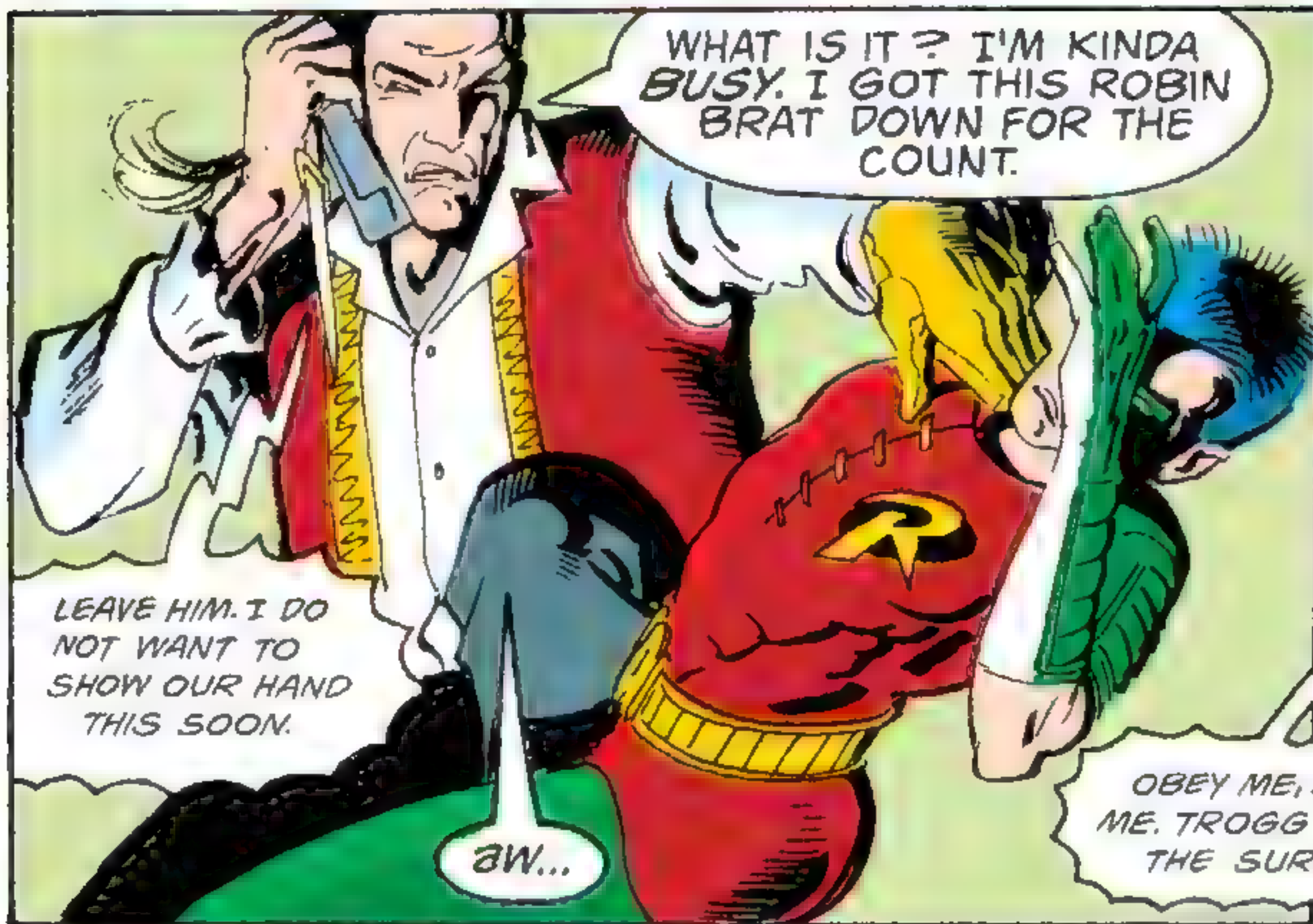
I'LL HURT YOU!
I'LL HURT YOU
REAL BAD!

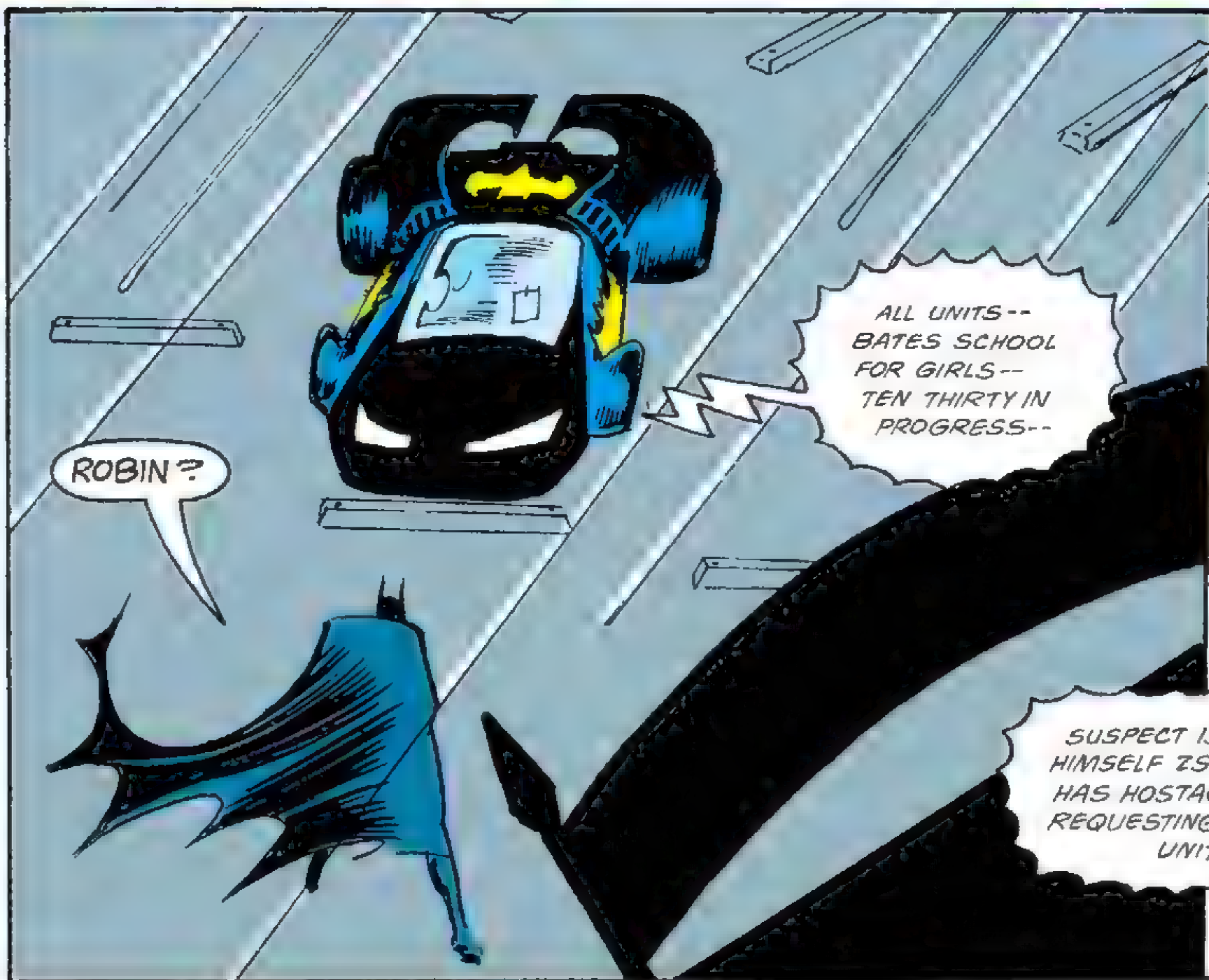
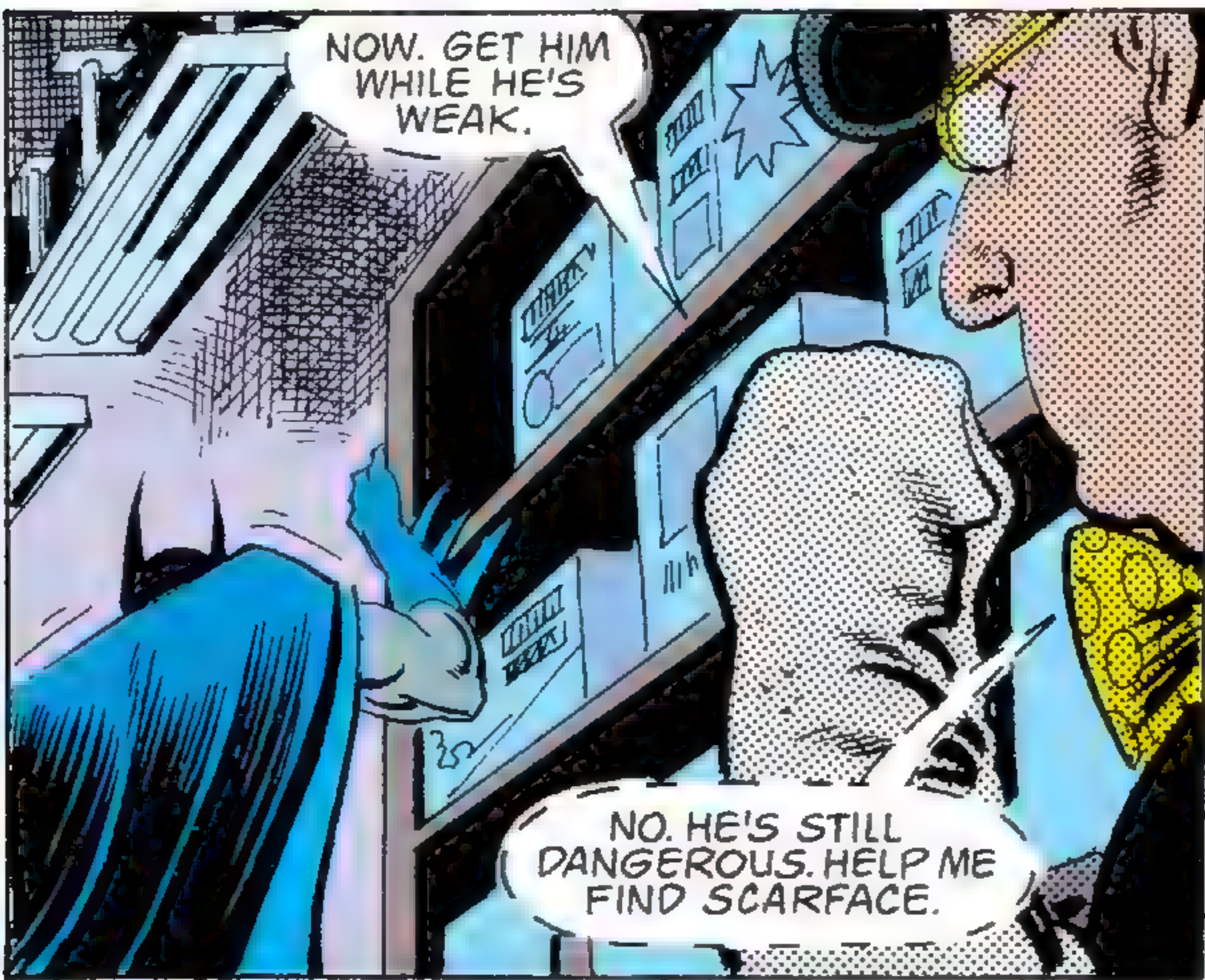
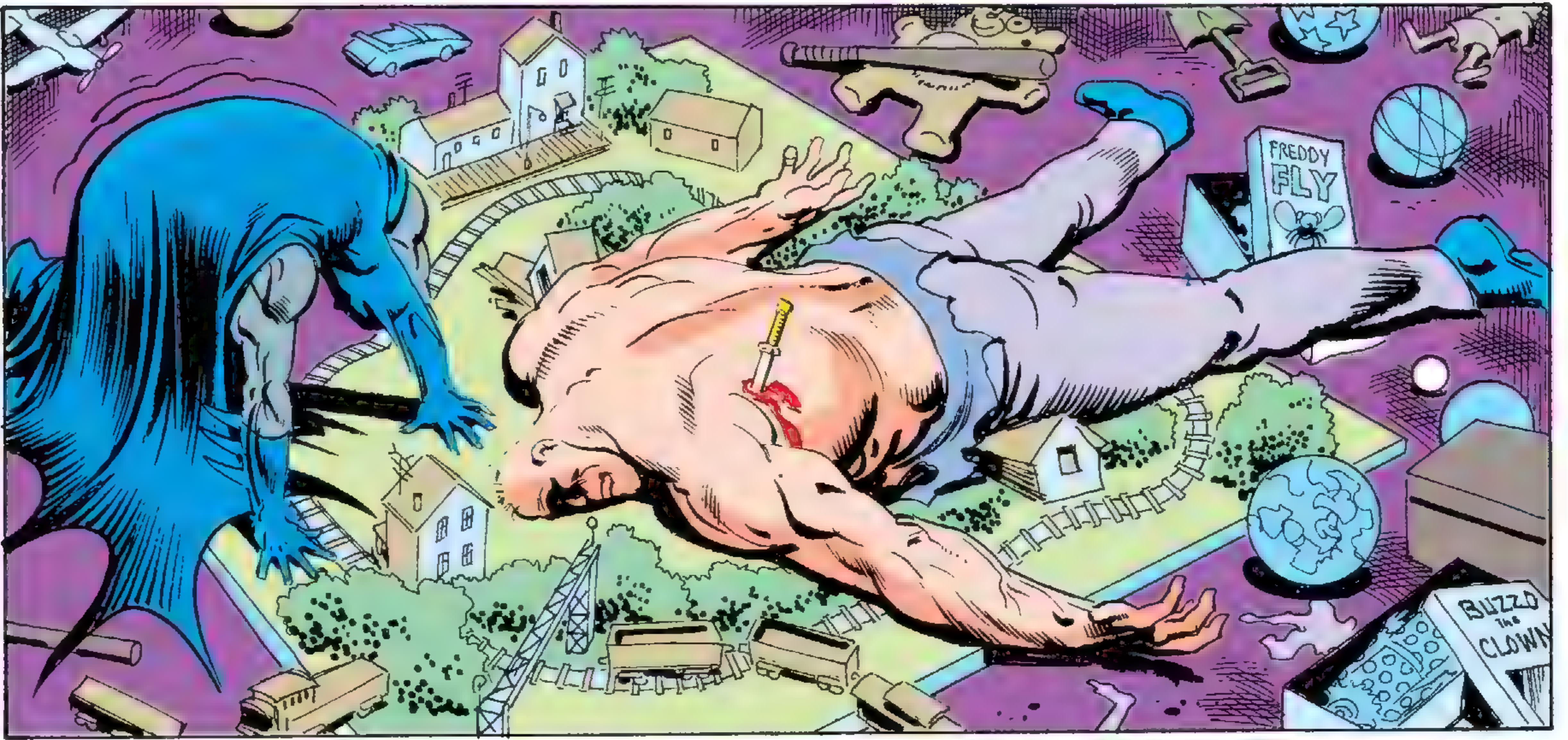


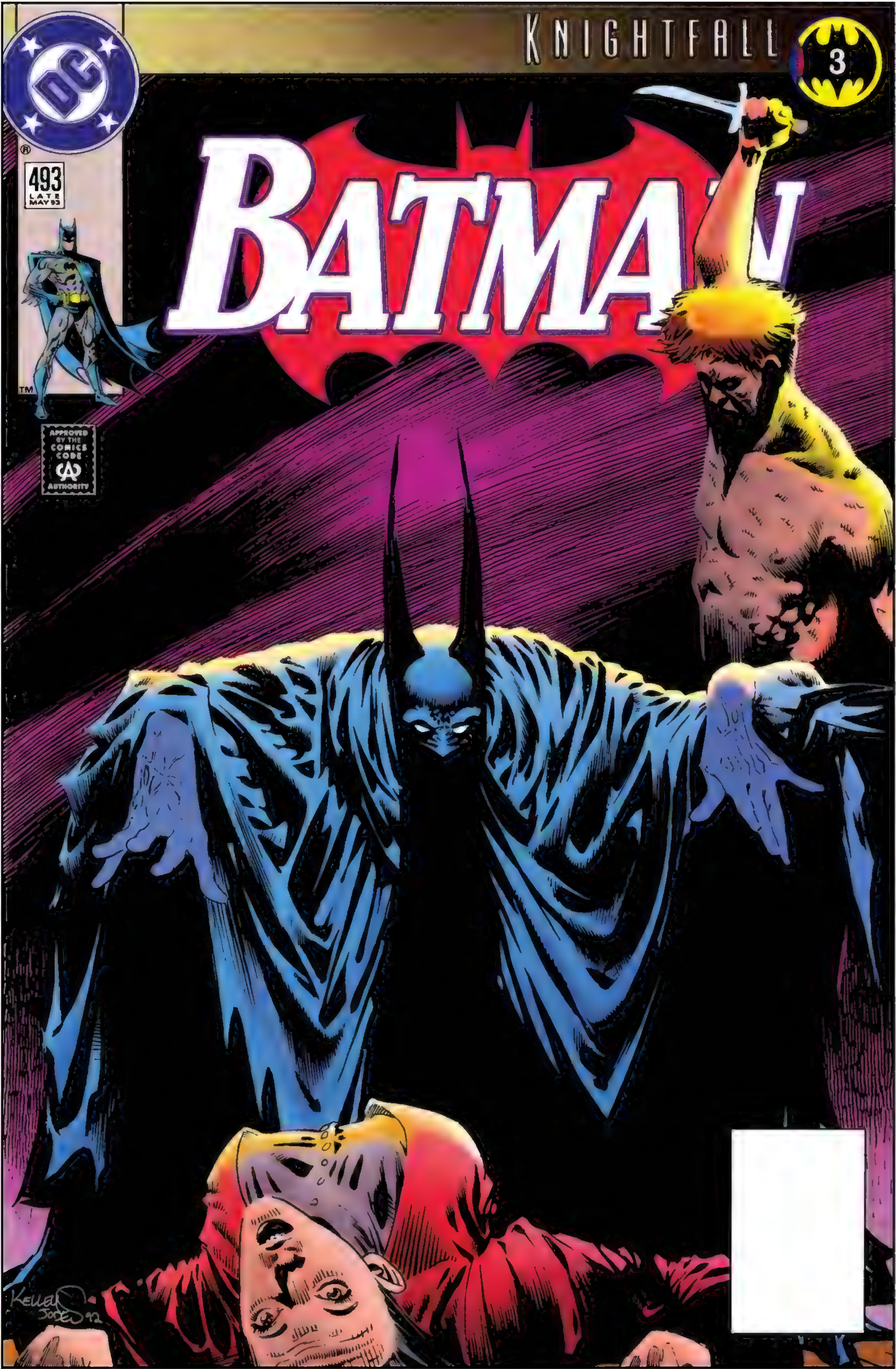














RACING FOR MY GRAVE,
ALREADY DEAD.

BUT I CAN'T REST, NOT AFTER
THE ARKHAM BREAKOUT--
THIRTY-ODD MURDERS
ALREADY, AND ALL THE WORK
OF MINOR MADMEN.

OF THE FOUR MAJOR ONES TO MAKE A
MOVE, THE MAD HATTER AND AMYGDALA
HAVE BEEN CAPTURED, THE VENTRILOQUIST
IS STILL AT LARGE, AND THE FILM FREAK
HIMSELF HAS BEEN MURDERED.

IT'S BARELY BEGUN,
BUT THE GRAVE IS
RUSHING CLOSER,
AND NOW...

SKSS ZSASZ, SERIAL KILLER
RECENTLY ESCAPED FROM ARKHAM SKSS
HOLED UP IN THE BATES SCHOOL FOR
WOMEN SKSS HOSTAGES SKSS SEND
TACTICAL SQUADS AT ONCE SKSS

NO REST, NOT FOR
THE WICKED... NOR
THOSE WHO DARE
DEAL WITH THEM.

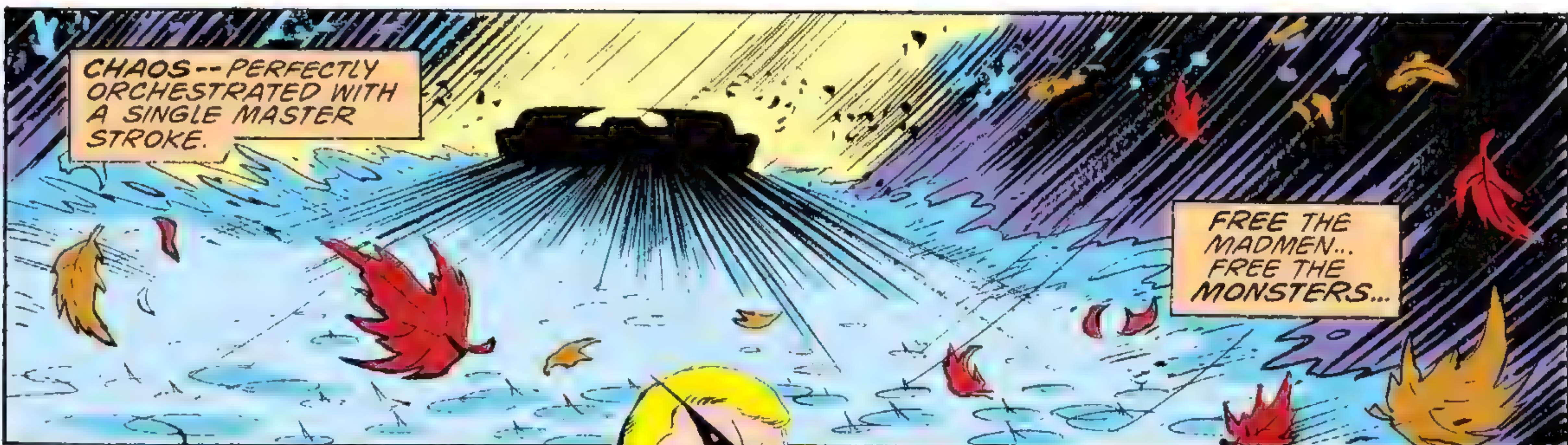
BEEP SLASH

DOUG MOENCH-WRITER / NORM BREYFOBLE-ARTIST / ADRIENNE ROY-COLORIST / TIM HARKINS-LETTERER
JORDAN B. GORFINKEL-ASST. EDITOR / DENNIS O'NEIL-EDITOR / BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE



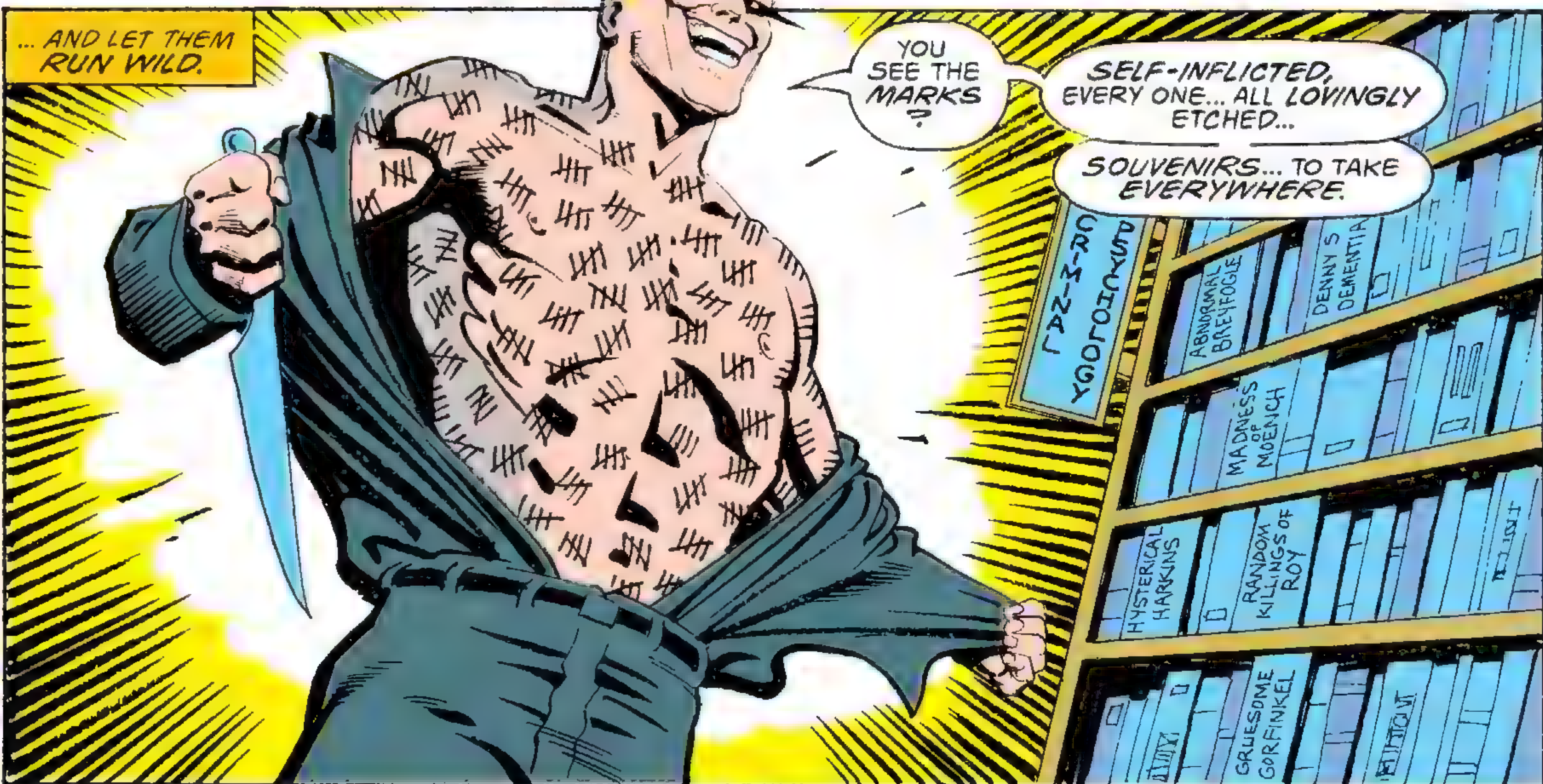
SHOULD BE GOING AFTER THE ONE
BEHIND IT ALL, THE STONE-COLD
CENTER AROUND WHICH ALL THE
REST RAGES... BANE.

BUT TO REACH HIM...
GOT TO FIGHT THROUGH
THE STORM ITSELF.



CHAOS--- PERFECTLY
ORCHESTRATED WITH
A SINGLE MASTER
STROKE.

FREE THE
MADMEN...
FREE THE
MONSTERS...



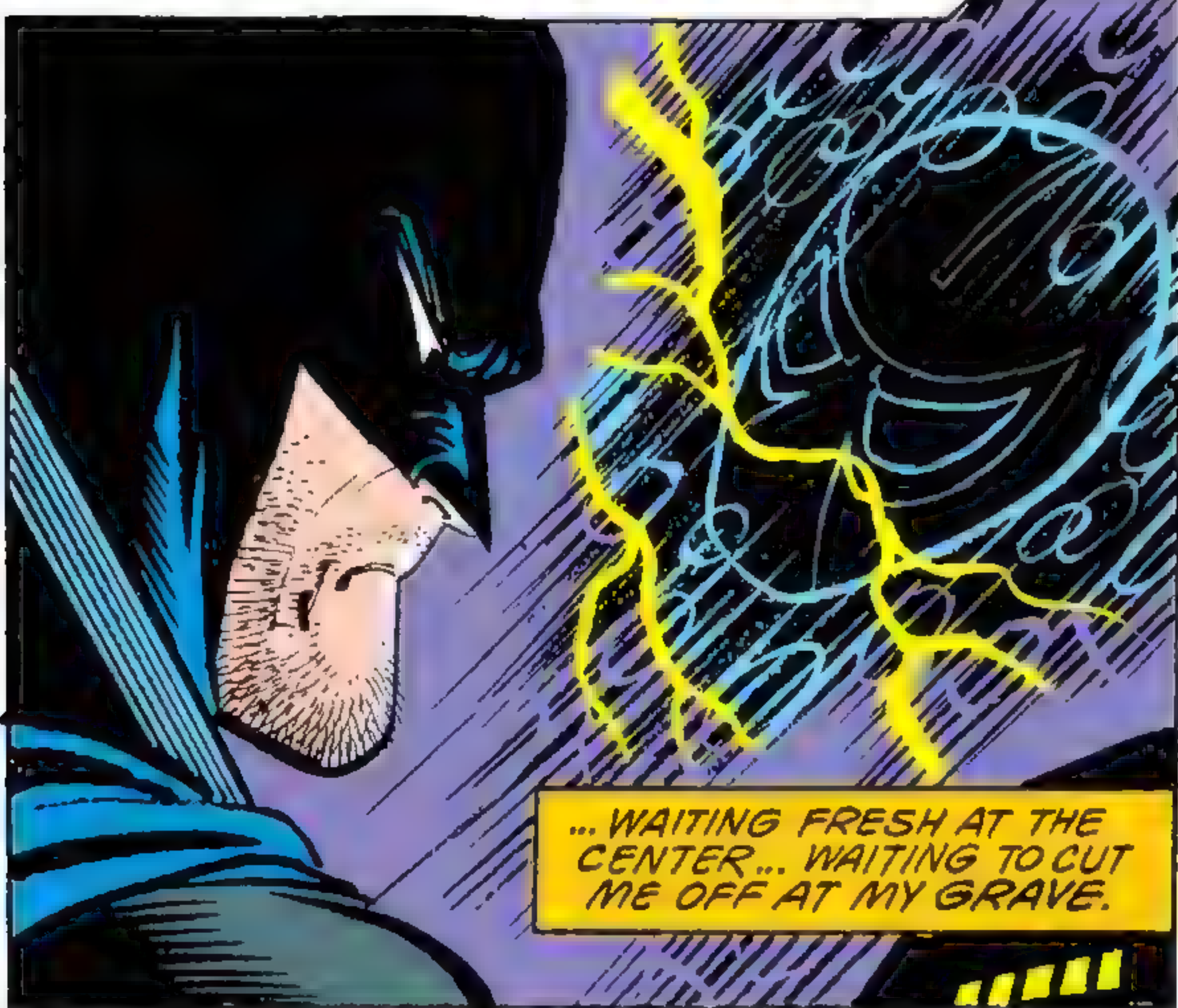
... AND LET THEM
RUN WILD.

YOU
SEE THE
MARKS
?

SELF-INFLICTED,
EVERY ONE... ALL LOVINGLY
ETCHED...

SOUVENIRS... TO TAKE
EVERYWHERE.

AND WHILE I'M CHASING THE THUNDER, PUTTING OUT
ALL THE FIRES, BURNING MYSELF OUT, BANE IS
RESTING, ENJOYING THE SPECTACLE...

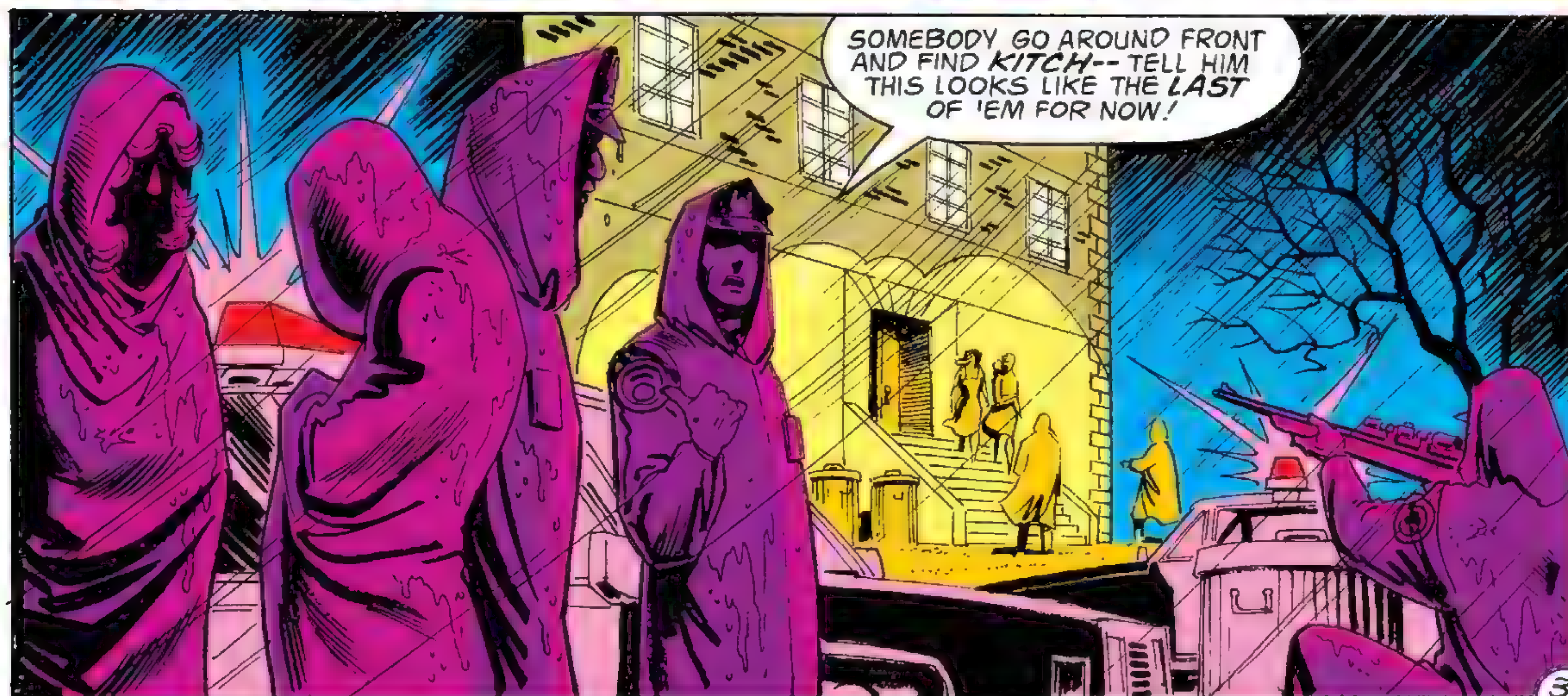
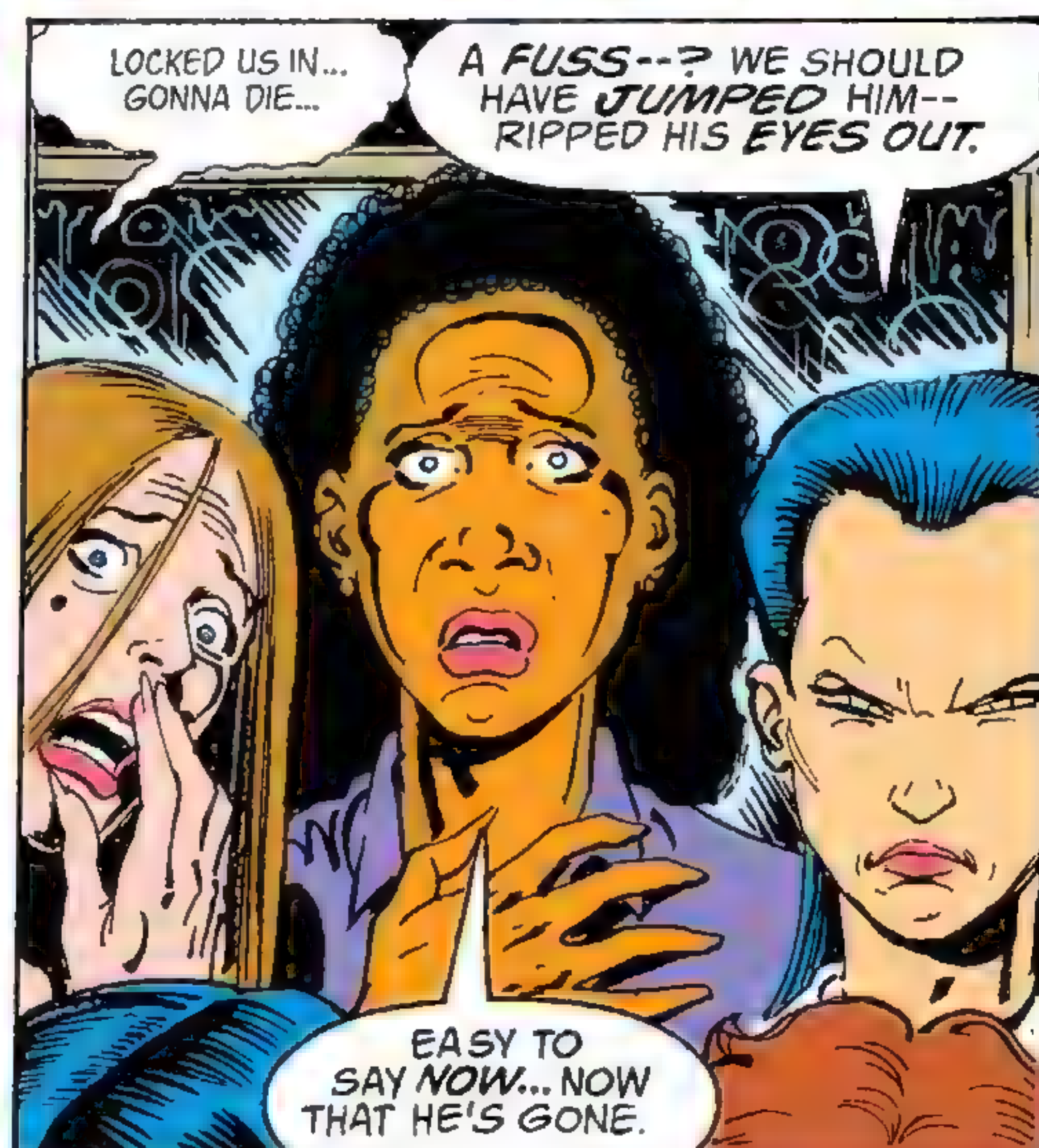
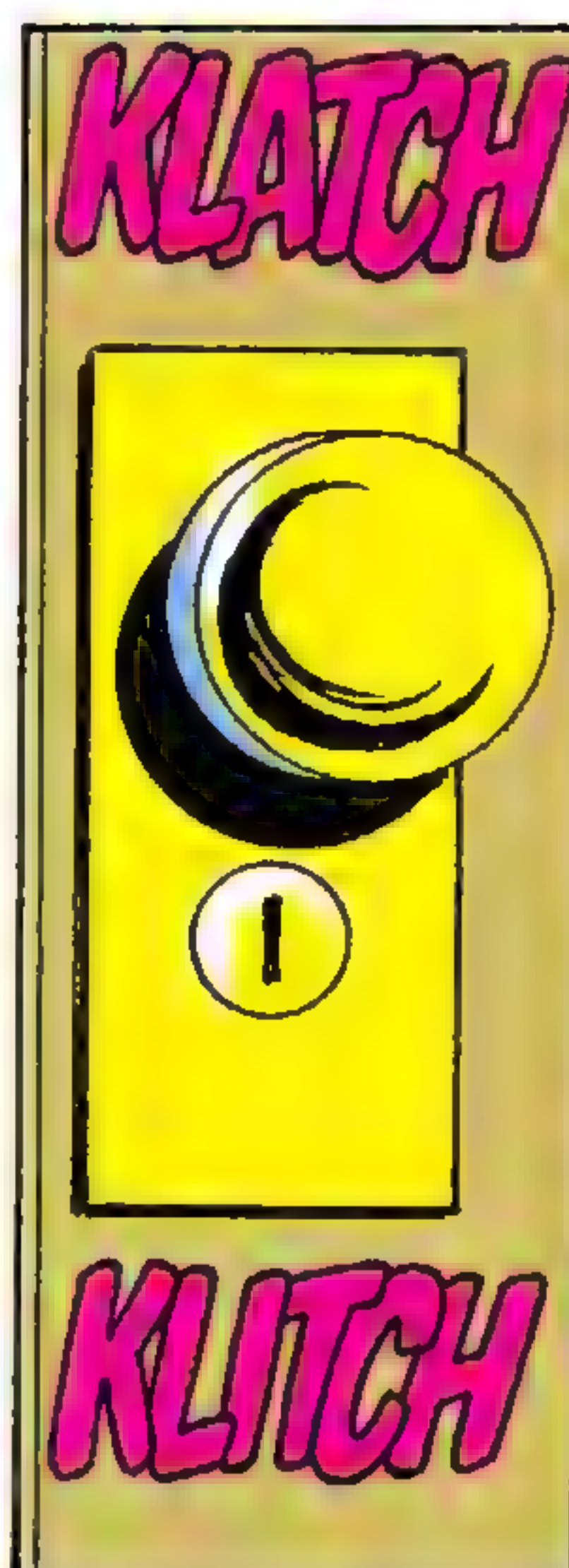
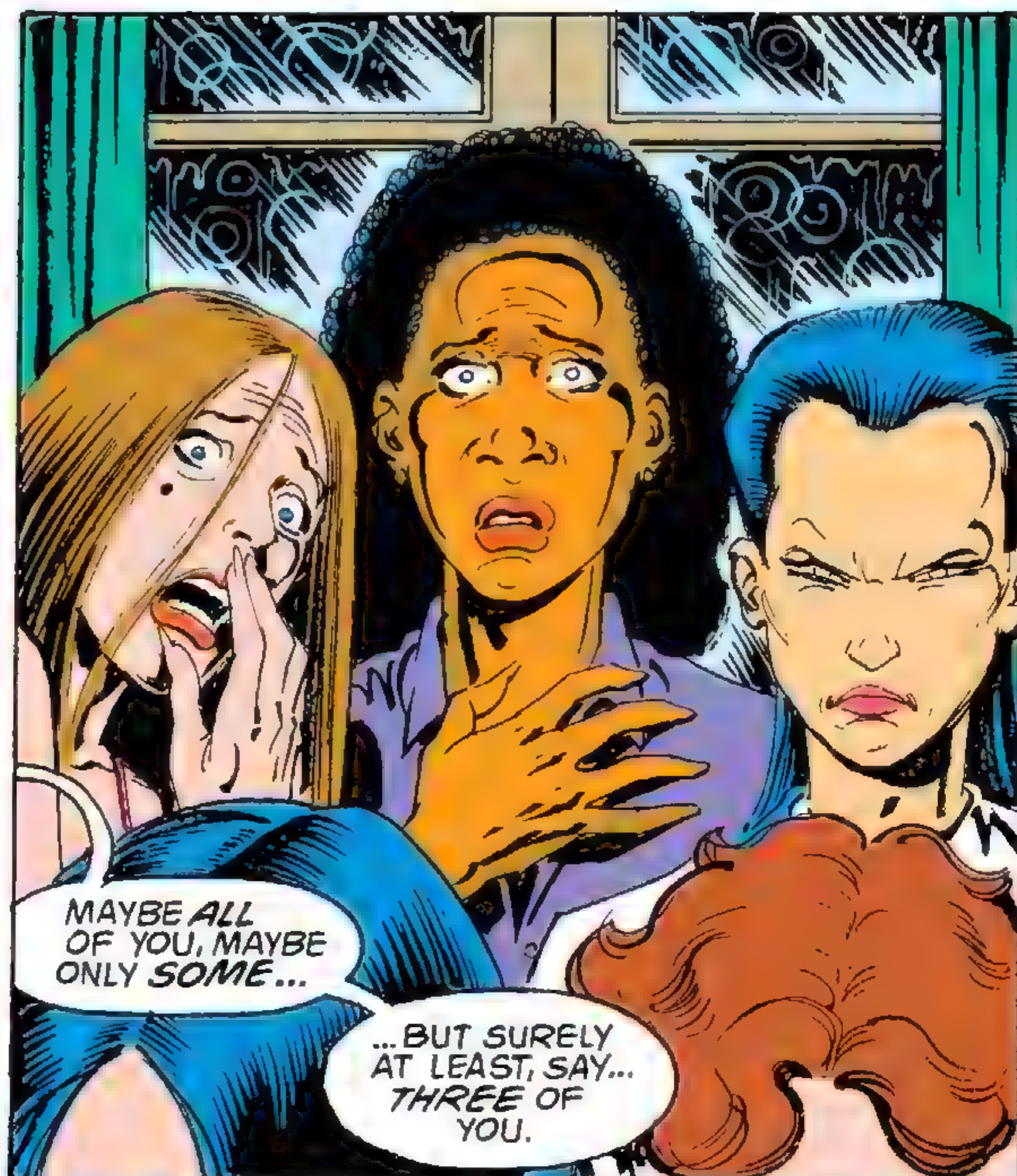


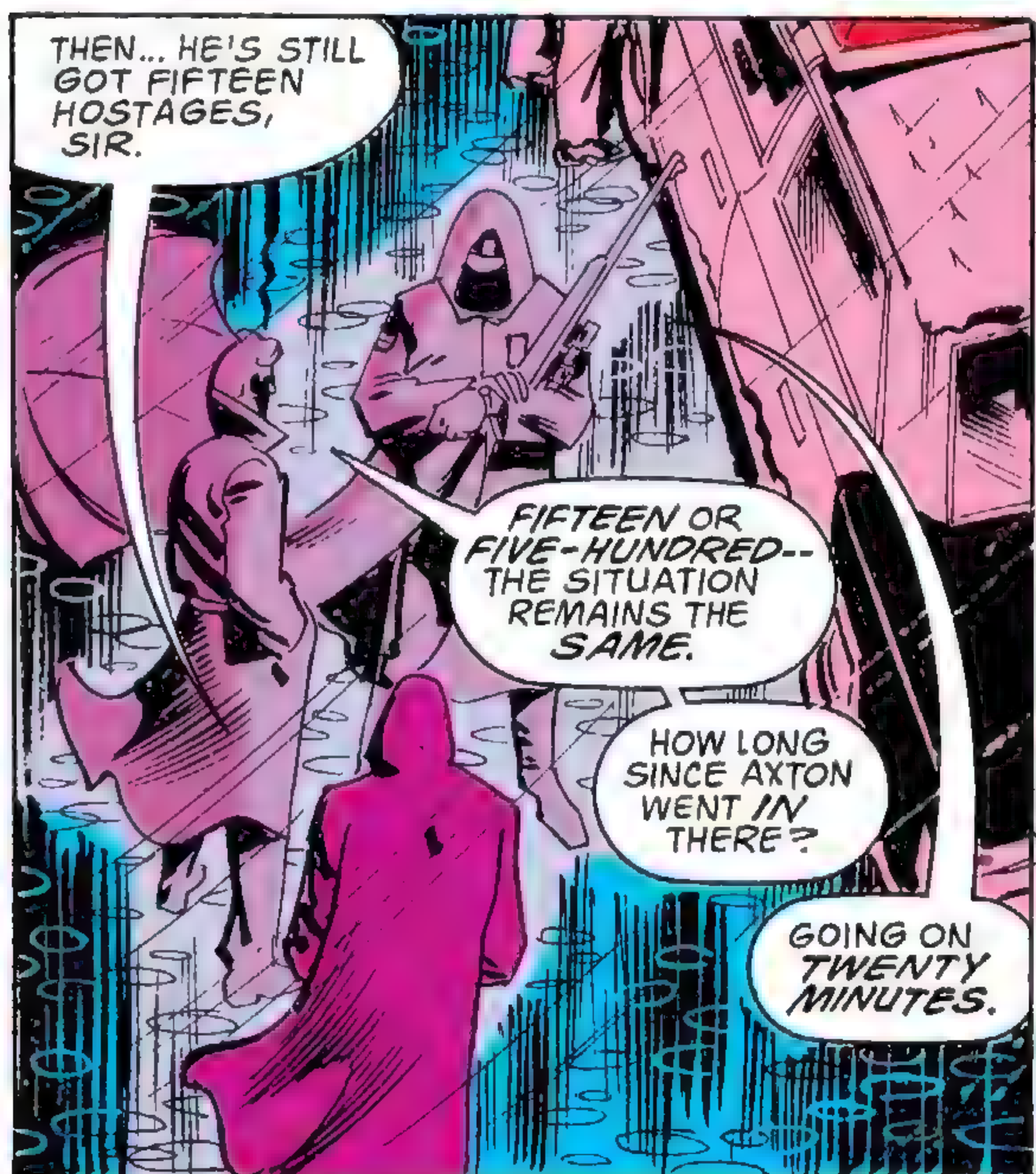
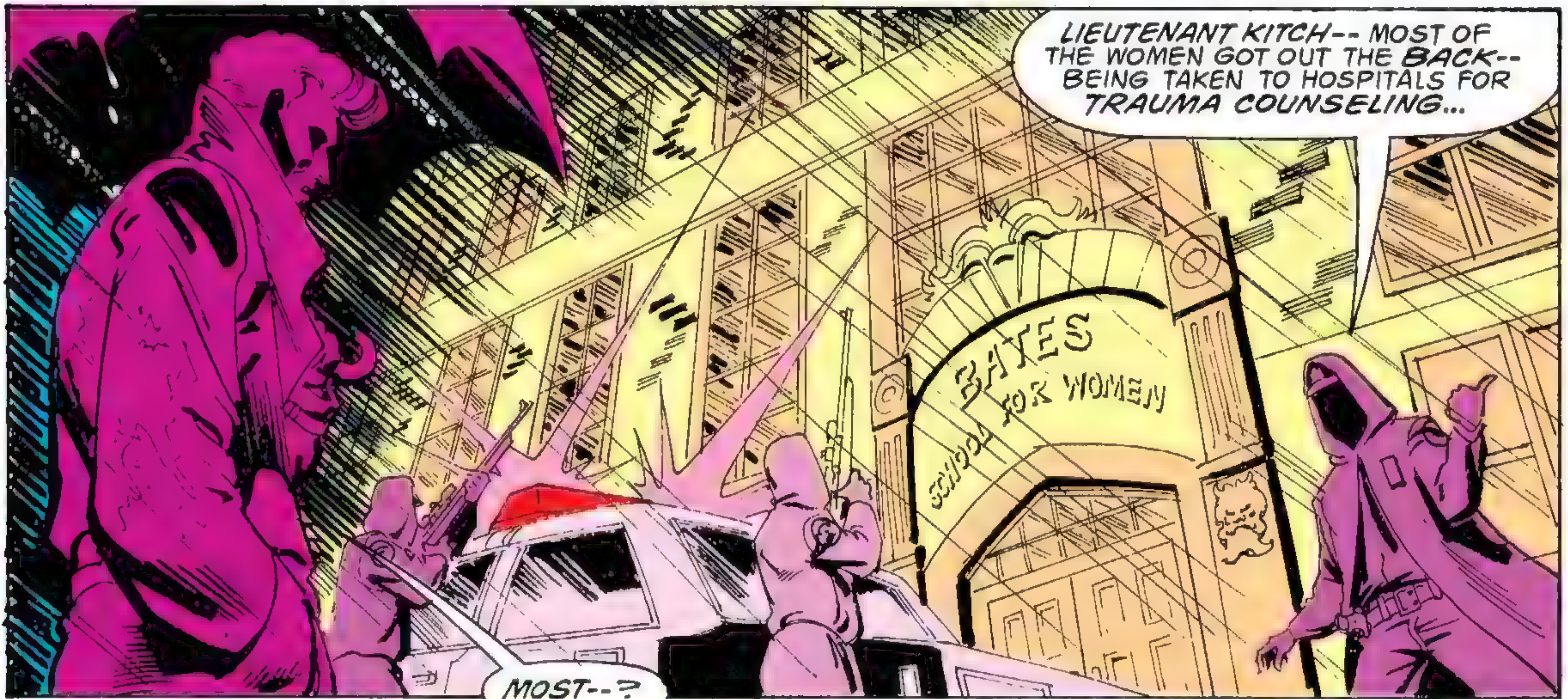
... WAITING FRESH AT THE
CENTER... WAITING TO CUT
ME OFF AT MY GRAVE.

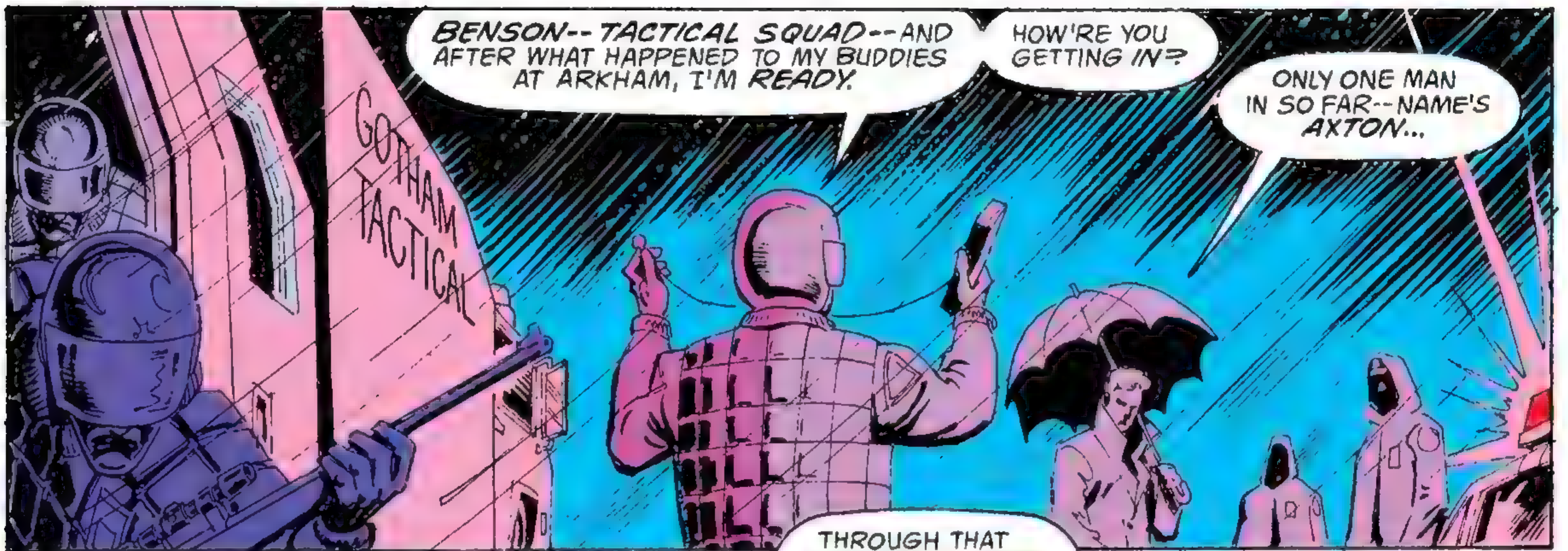


A MAP OF
HARDENED
BLOOD CHARTING
MY EVERY SIN,
ALL MY GLORY...
ONE LITTLE SLASH
FOR EVERY
BIG ONE...

... EACH SCAR
A KILL... EACH
SCORE... A SCORE
OF LIVES.





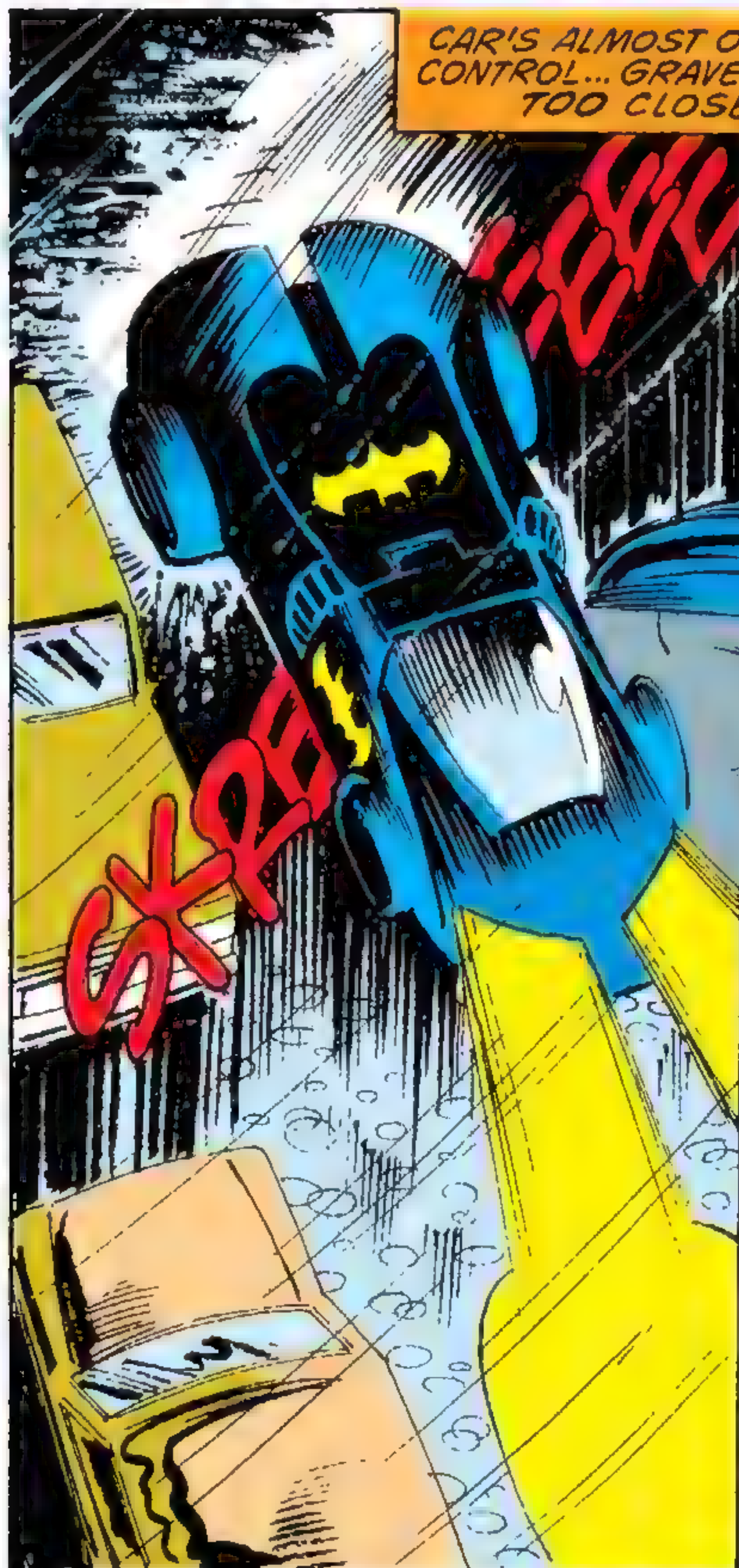
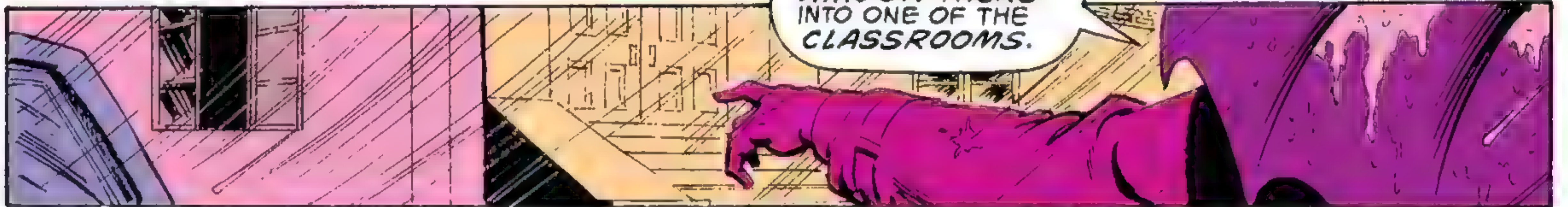


BENSON-- TACTICAL SQUAD-- AND AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO MY BUDDIES AT ARKHAM, I'M READY.

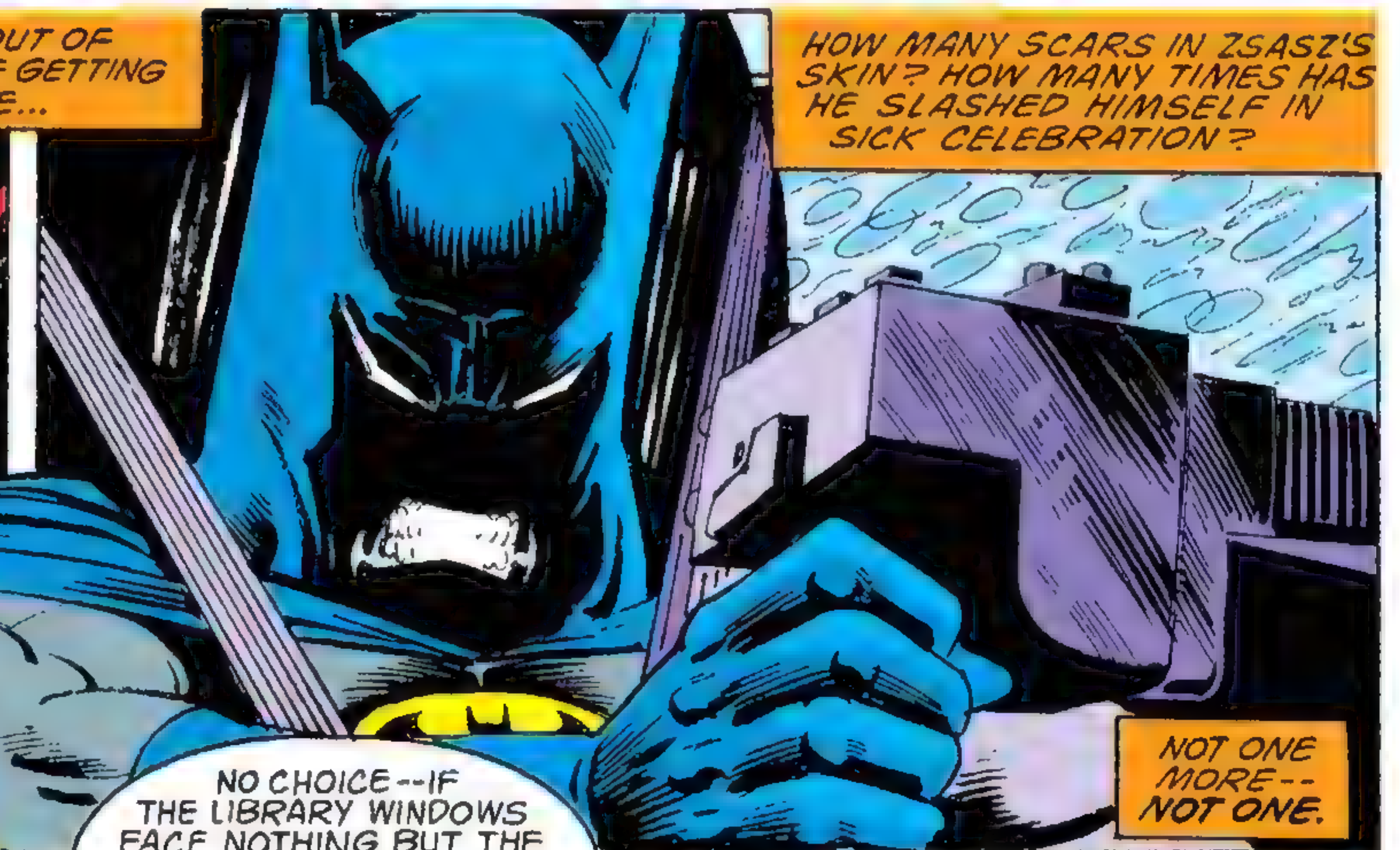
HOW'RE YOU GETTING IN?

ONLY ONE MAN IN SO FAR-- NAME'S AXTON...

THROUGH THAT WINDOW THERE-- INTO ONE OF THE CLASSROOMS.



CAR'S ALMOST OUT OF CONTROL... GRAVE GETTING TOO CLOSE...



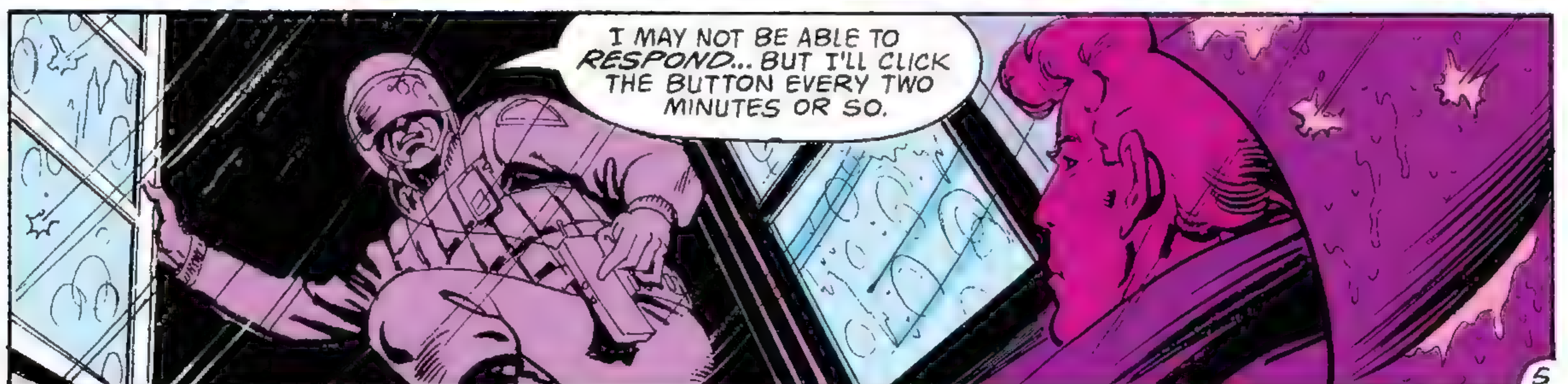
HOW MANY SCARS IN ZSASZ'S SKIN? HOW MANY TIMES HAS HE SLASHED HIMSELF IN SICK CELEBRATION?

NOT ONE MORE-- NOT ONE.

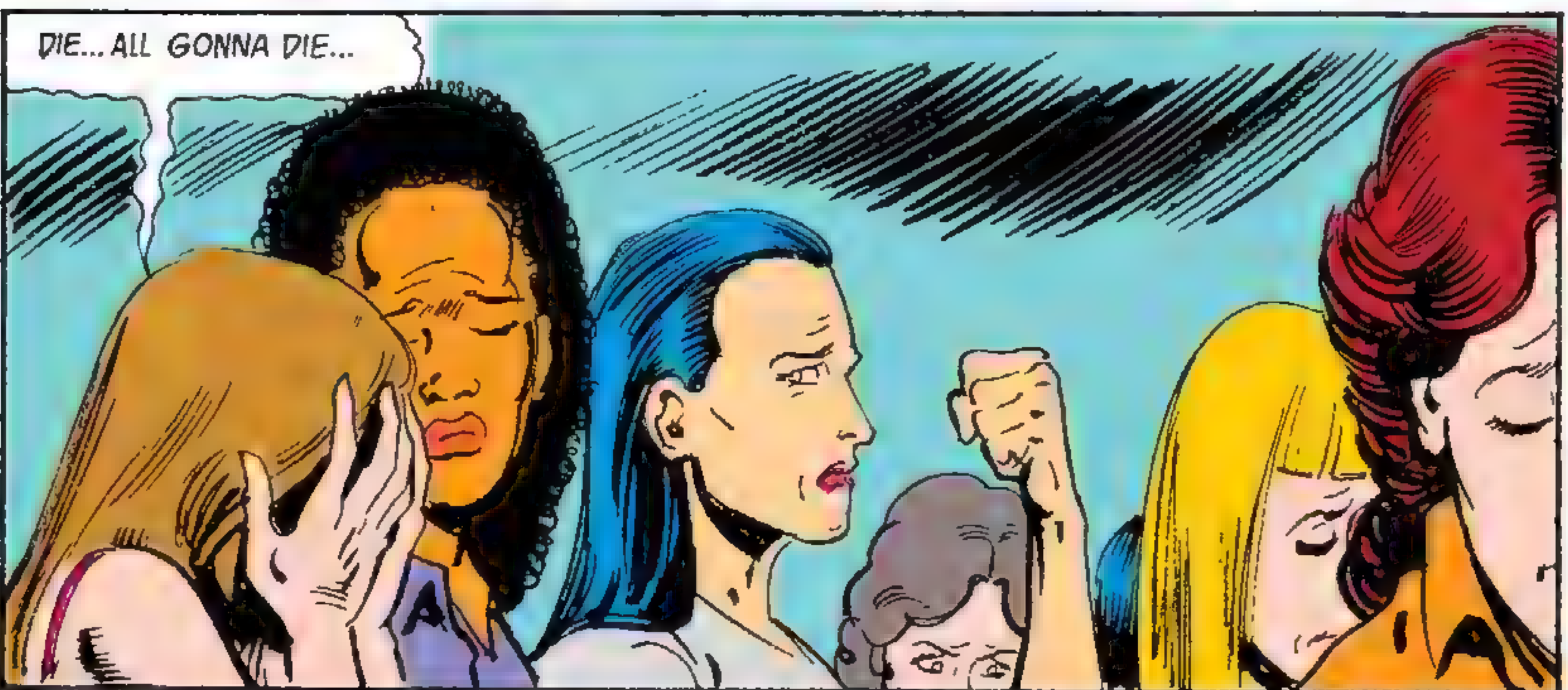
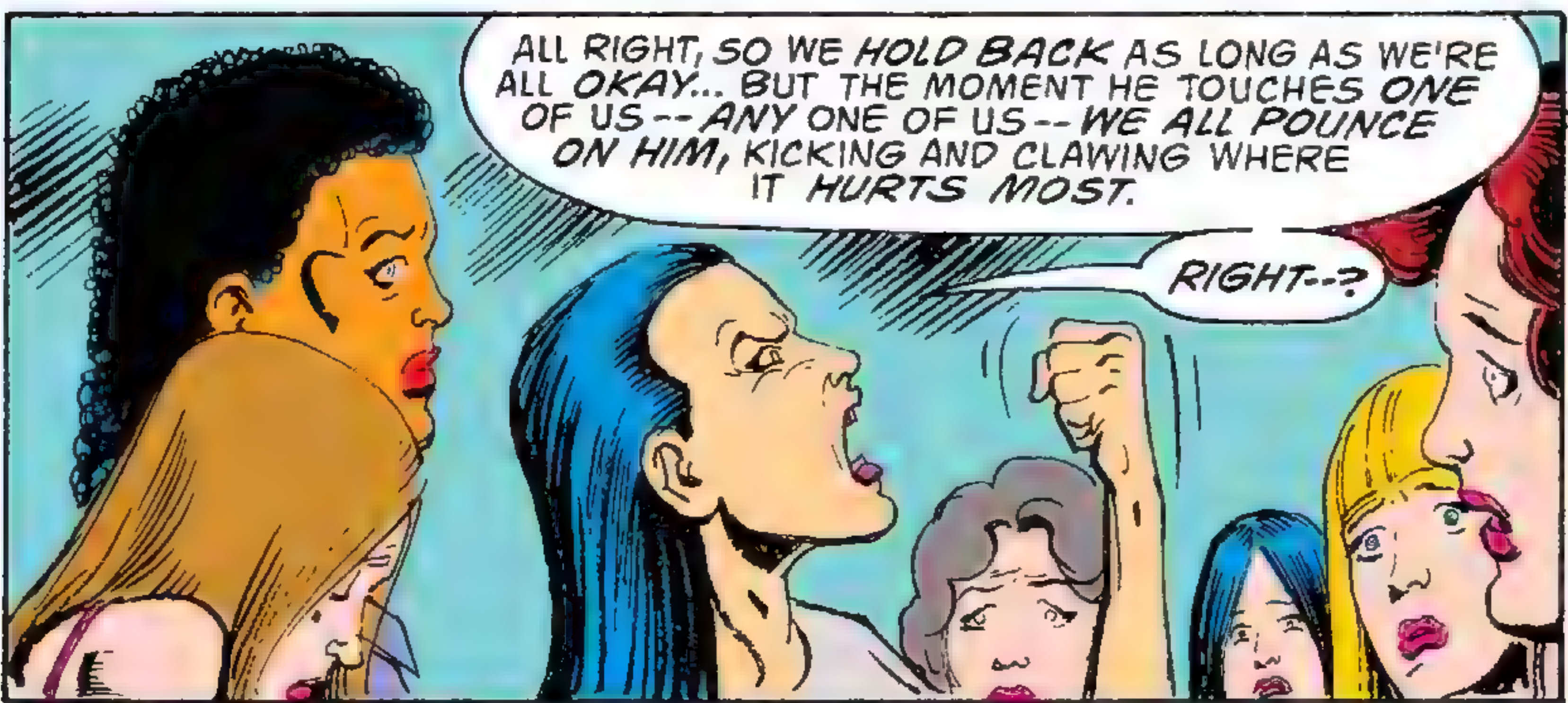
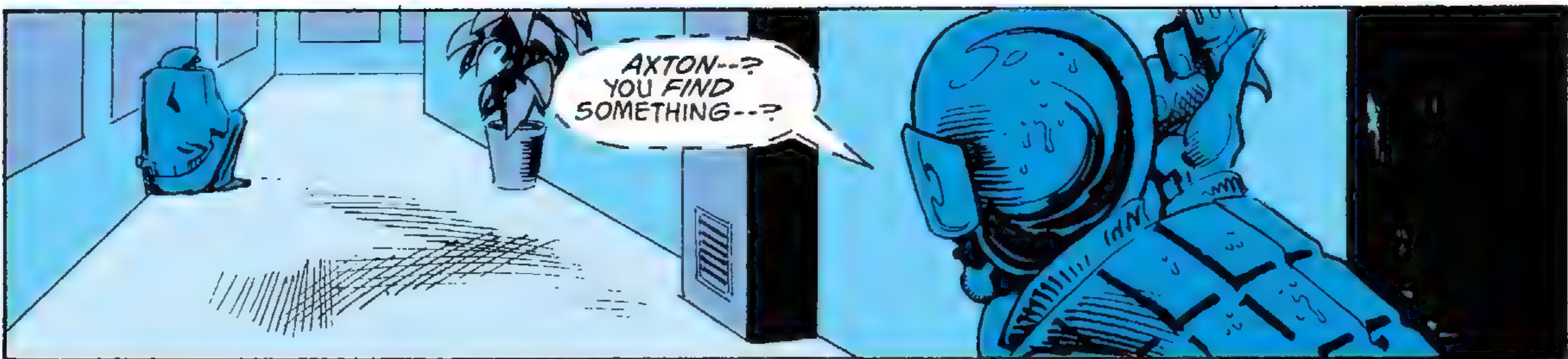
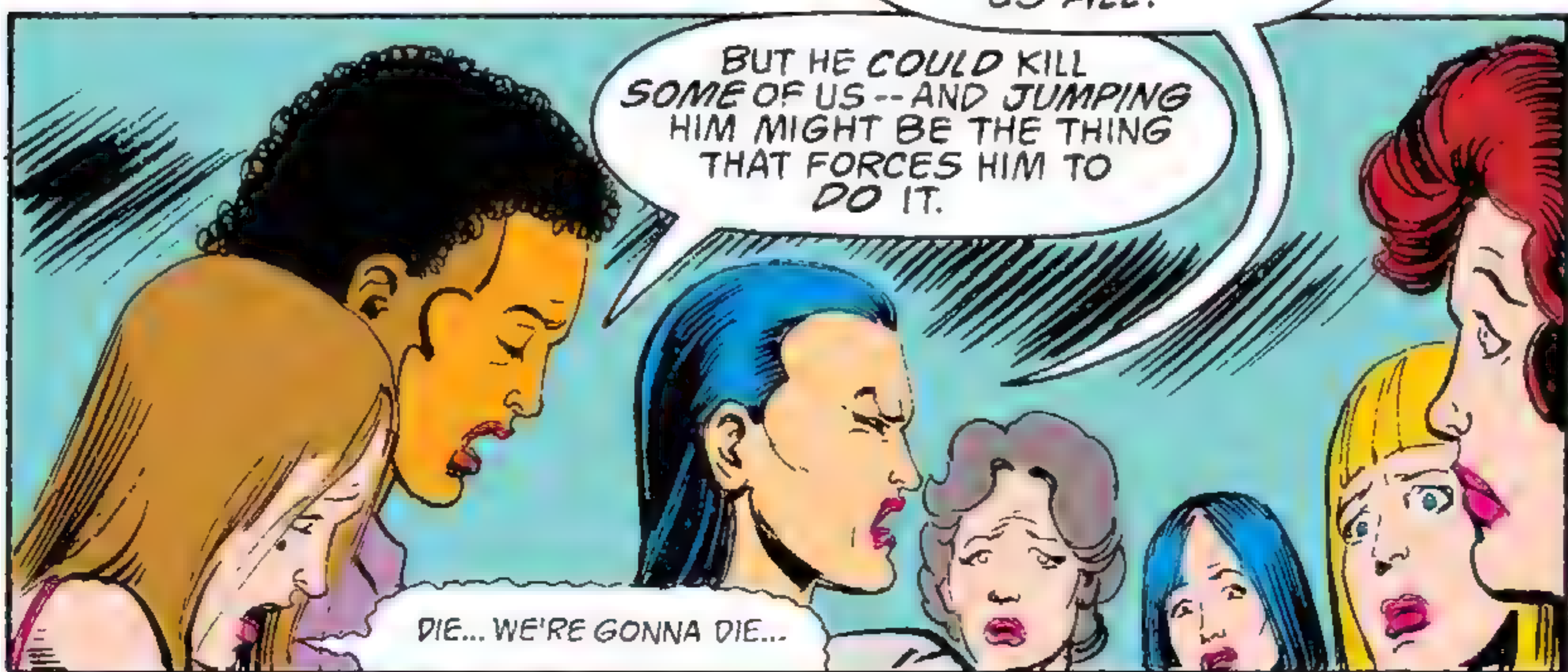
NO CHOICE --IF THE LIBRARY WINDOWS FACE NOTHING BUT THE CENTRAL COURTYARD, THEN I HAVE TO GO IN THE SAME WAY AS AXTON.

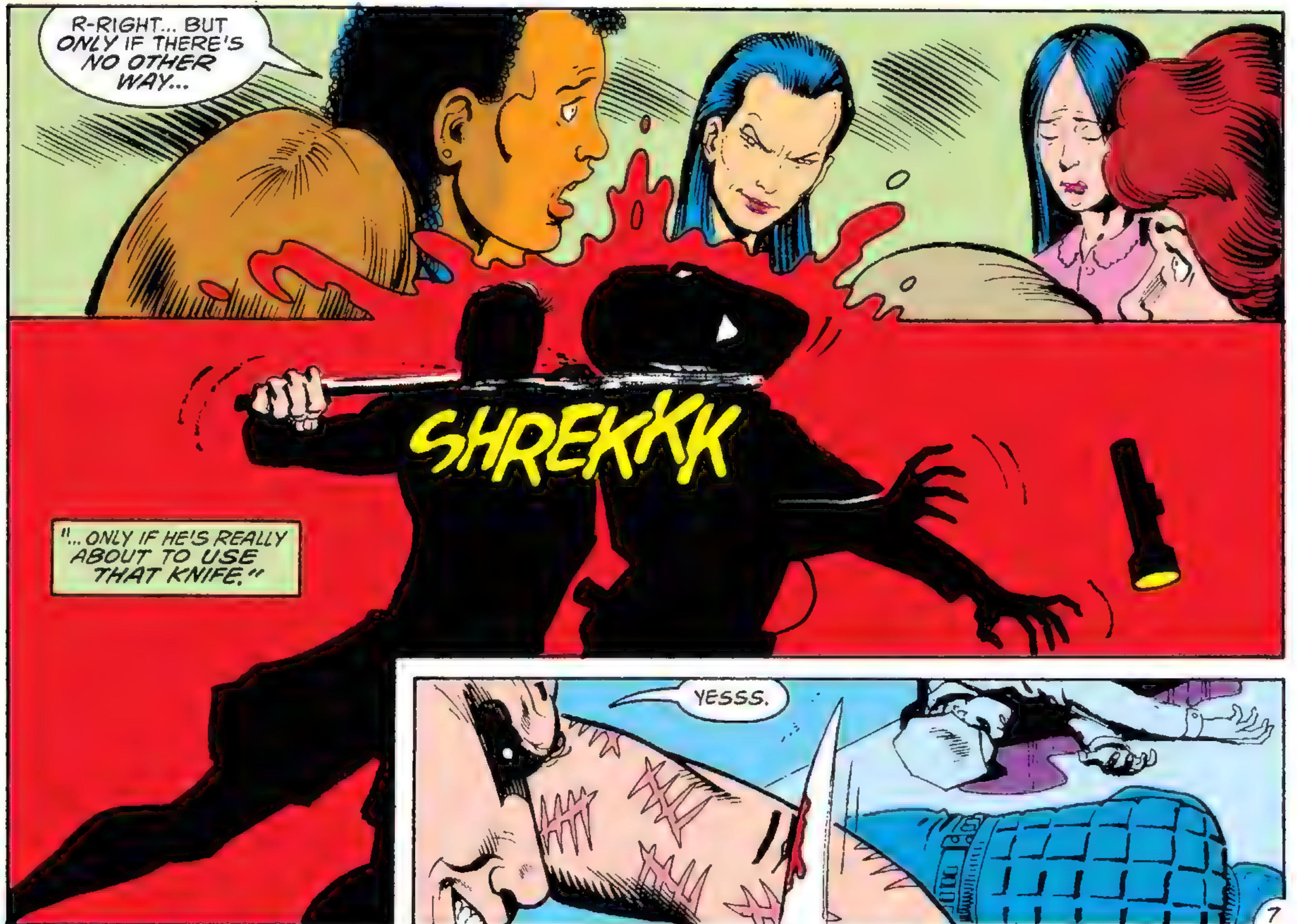


JUST SPEAK SOFTLY, LIEUTENANT KITCH, AND I'LL HEAR EVERYTHING THROUGH THE EARPLUG...



I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RESPOND... BUT I'LL CLICK THE BUTTON EVERY TWO MINUTES OR SO.

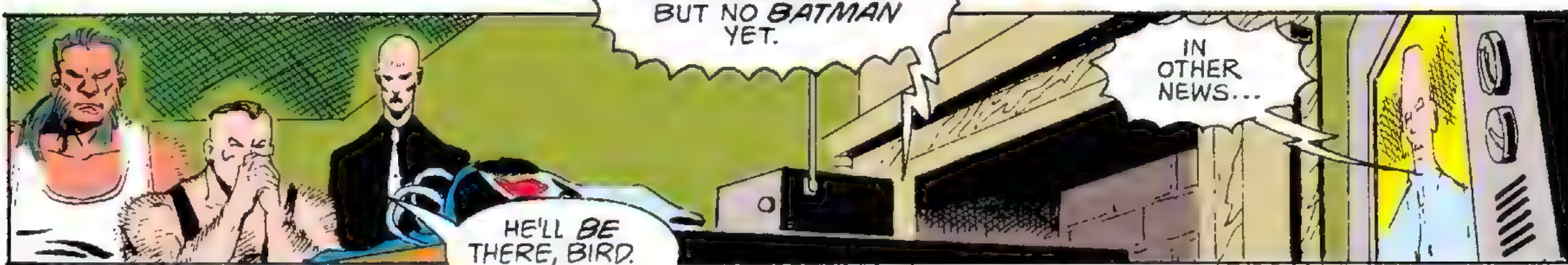






-- TENSE STANDOFF CONTINUES AT GOTHAM'S BATES SCHOOL FOR WOMEN, WHERE POLICE ARE UNABLE TO MOVE WITHOUT RISK TO HOSTAGES' LIVES...

LOTTA COPS, BANE-- BUT NO BATMAN YET.



IN OTHER NEWS...

HE'LL BE THERE, BIRD.



PROBABLY-- BUT I'M BEGINNIN' TO WONDER ABOUT HIM, BANE-- ESPECIALLY AFTER RUNNIN' INTO HIS LITTLE PARTNER.

THE KID'S GOOD, BUT ANY MAN WHO RELIES ON A KID MAY BE OVERRATED...



I THINK MAYBE THE BATMAN'S RIPE FOR HIS FALL RIGHT NOW.

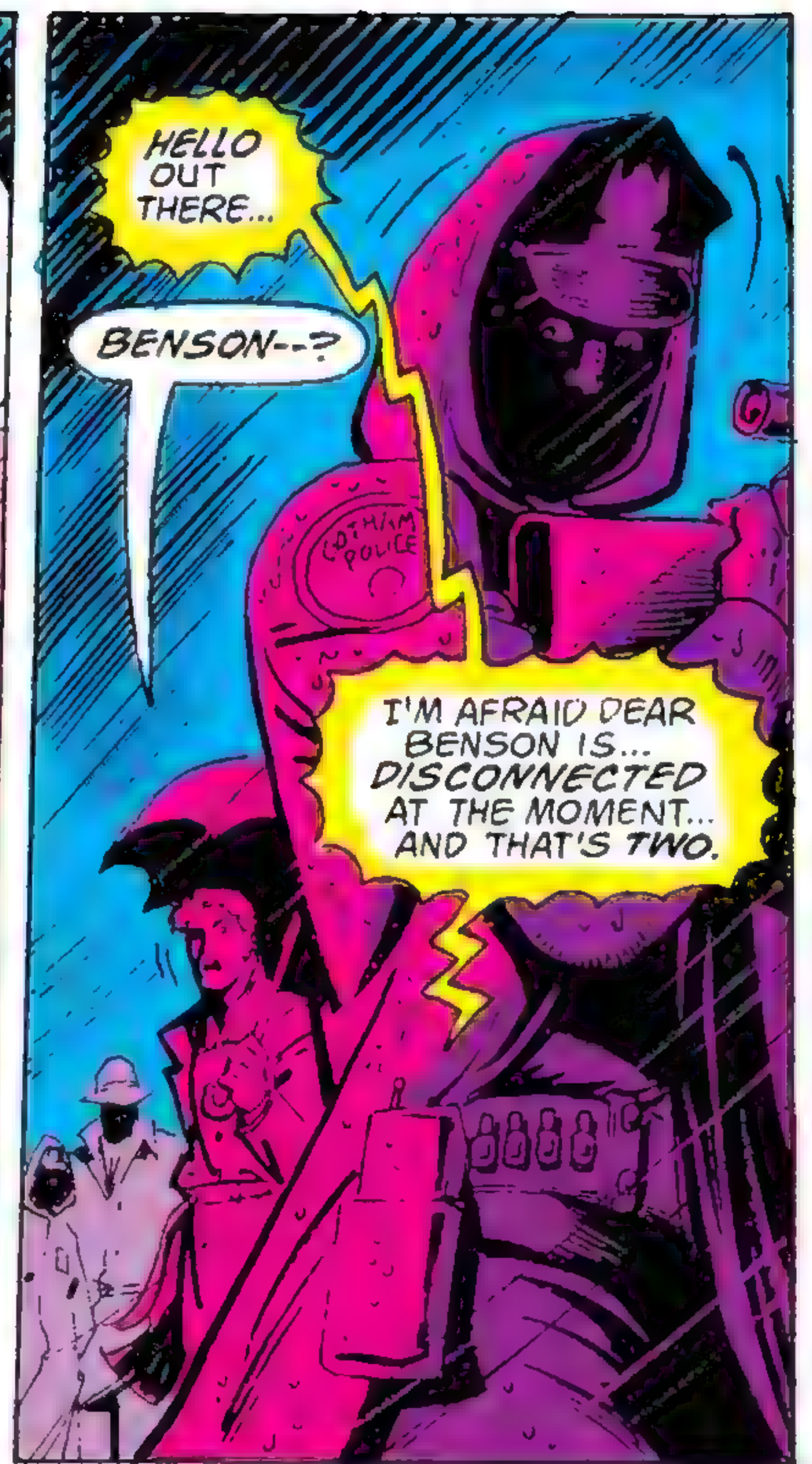
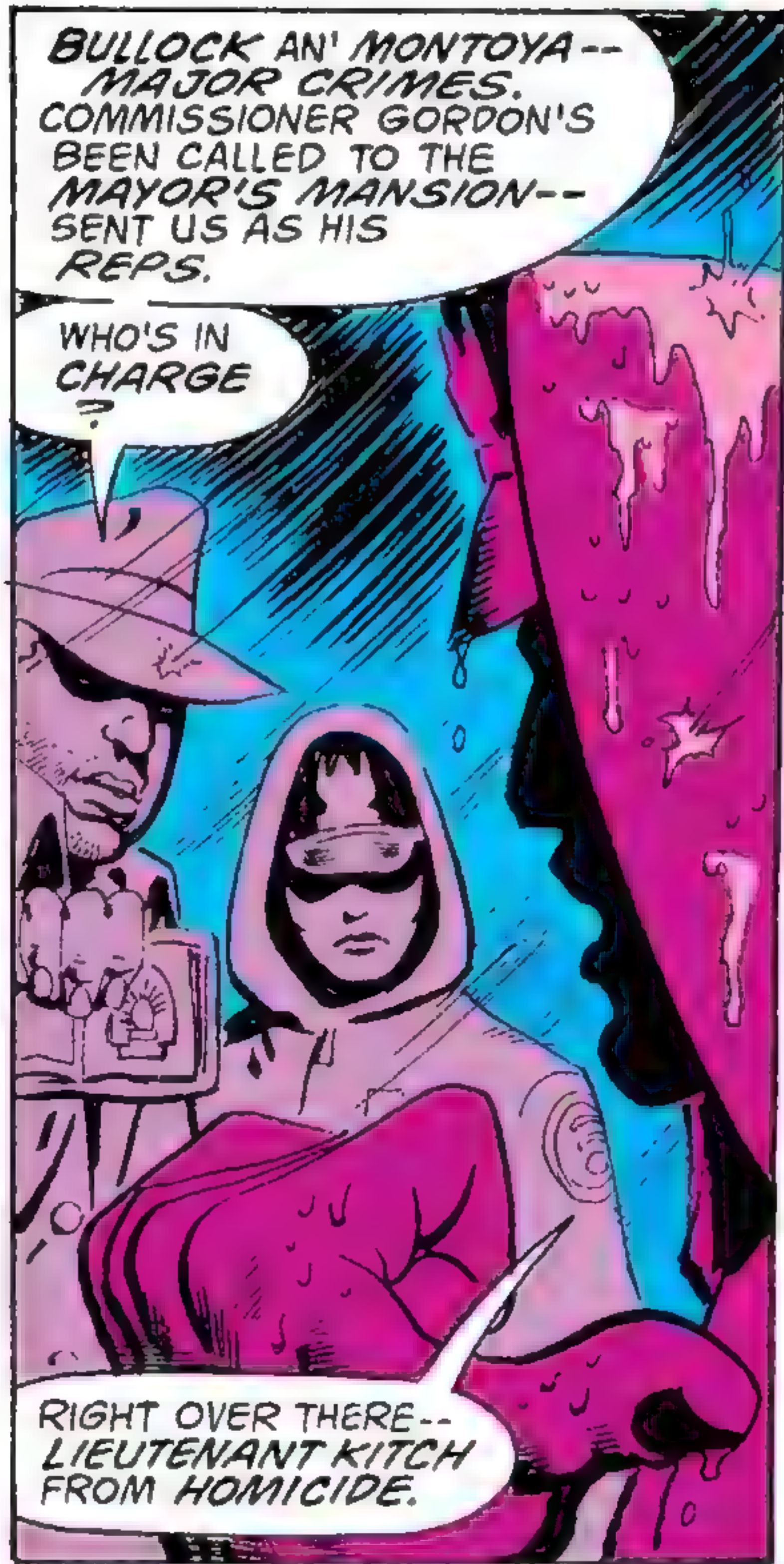
NO. HE'S PHYSICALLY WEAKENED-- AND DEPLETED MORE WITH EACH NEW EXPLOSION OF MADNESS-- BUT HIS MIND IS STILL STRONG...

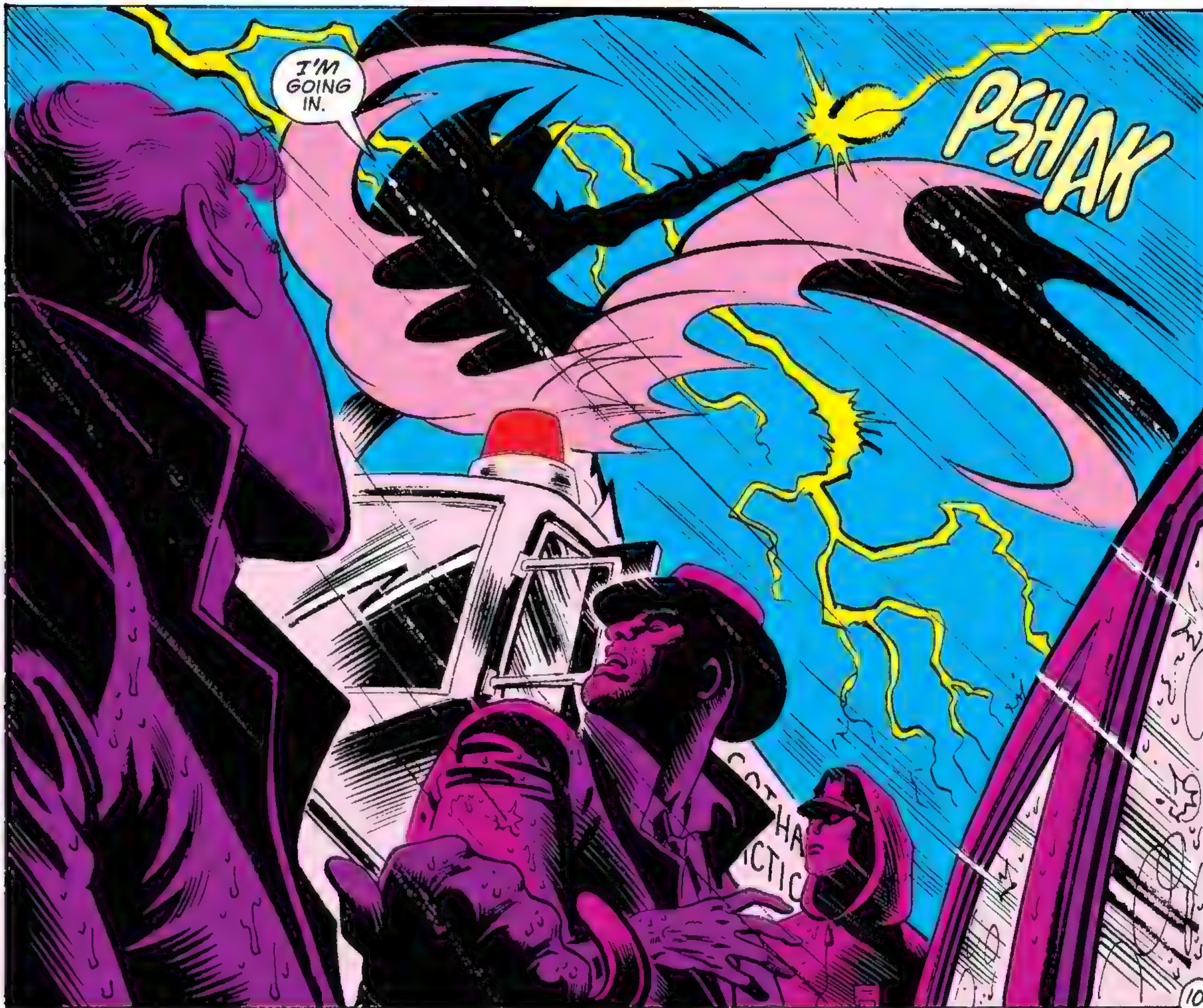
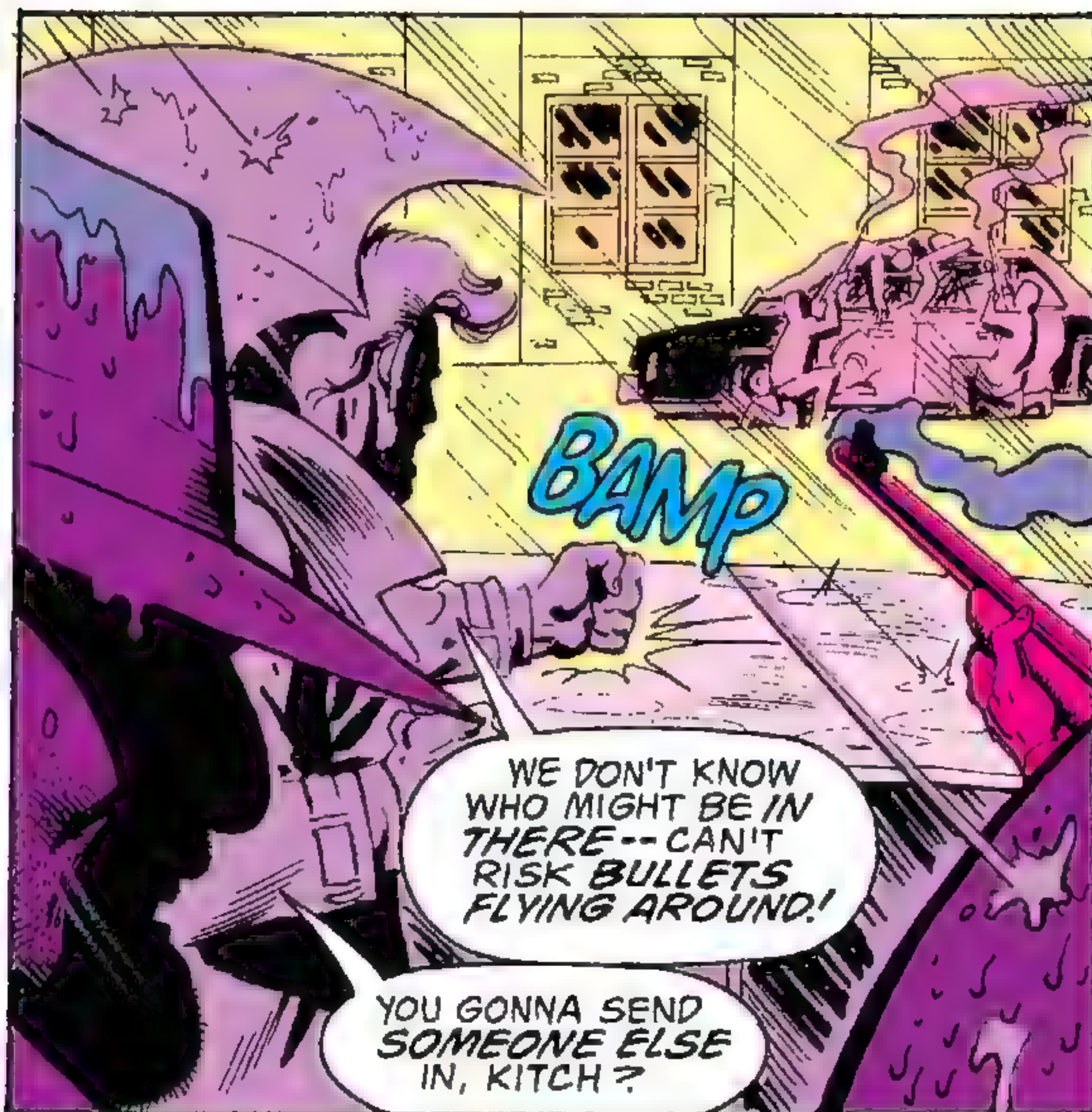
HE IS NOT READY TO BE BROKEN... NOT QUITE YET.

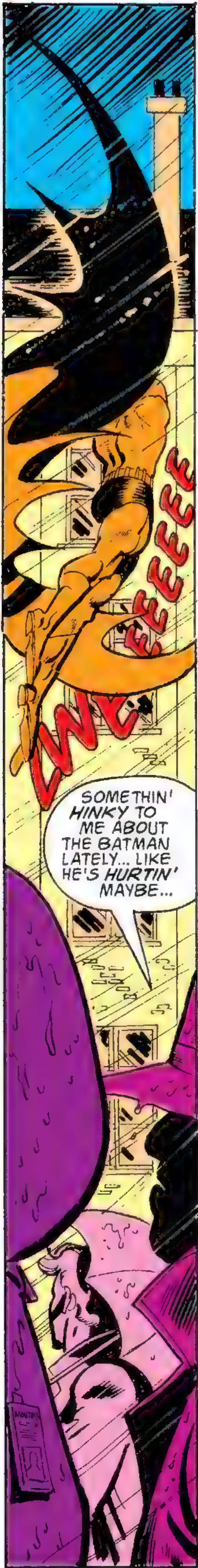
KRIK



WHEN HE IS, I WILL KNOW IT... AND THEN, THE PIECES WILL STAY BROKEN.



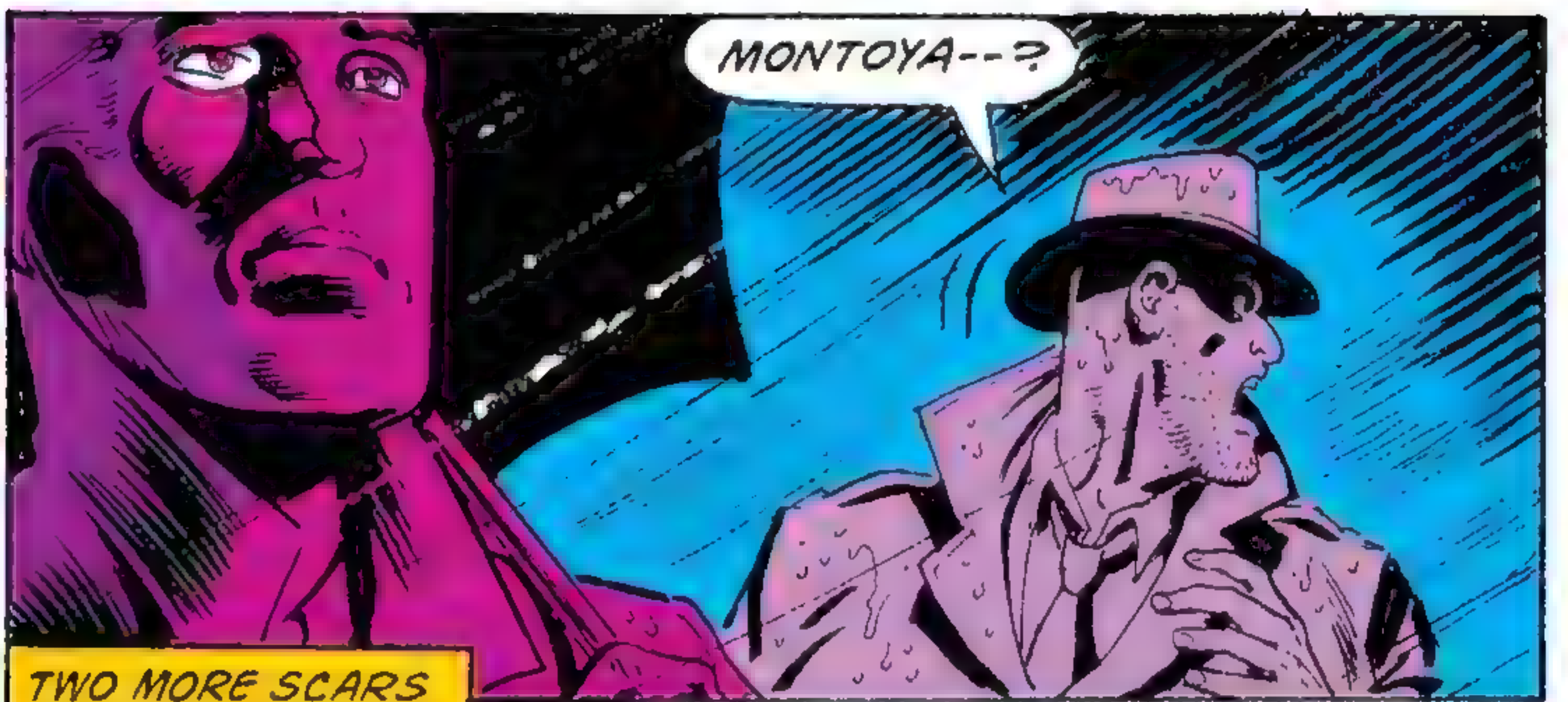




SOMETHIN' HINKY TO ME ABOUT THE BATMAN LATELY... LIKE HE'S HURTIN' MAYBE...

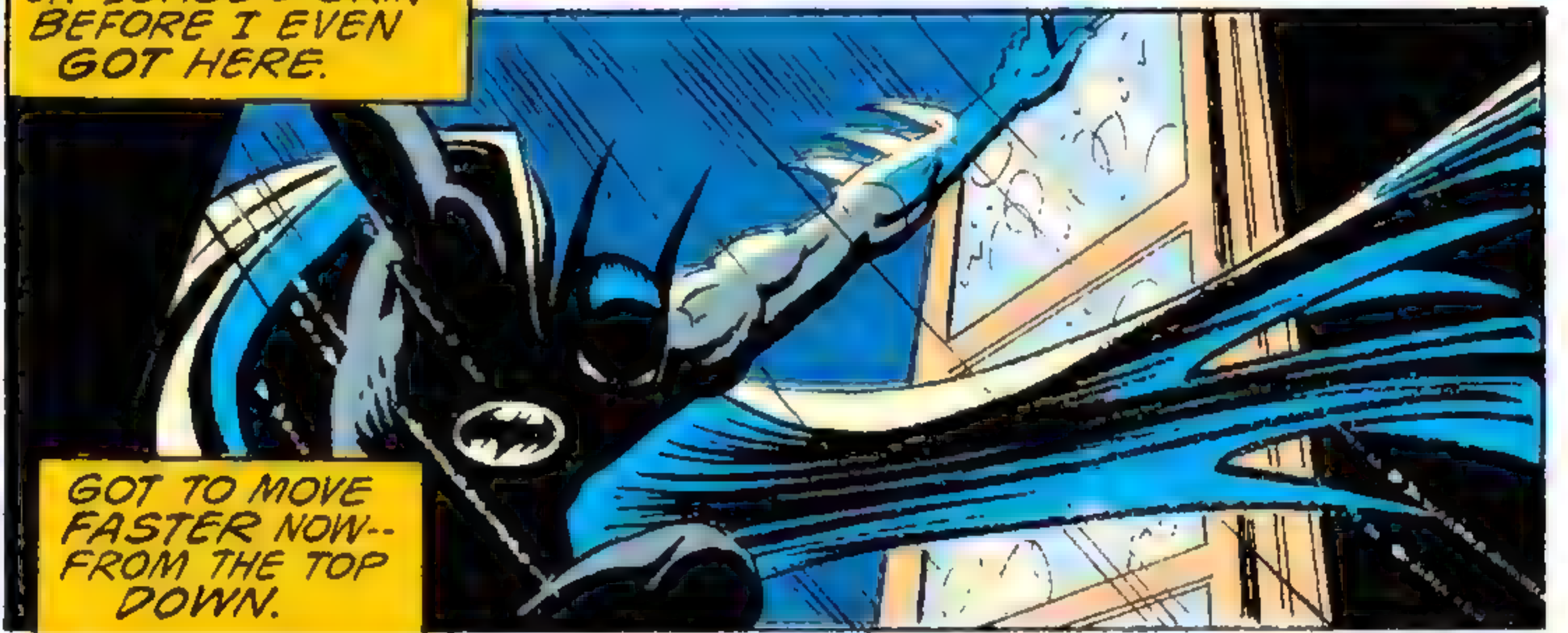


SOMETHIN' HINKY ABOUT HIM TO YOU, MONTOYA?



MONTOYA--?

TWO MORE SCARS ON ZSASZ'S SKIN-- BEFORE I EVEN GOT HERE.

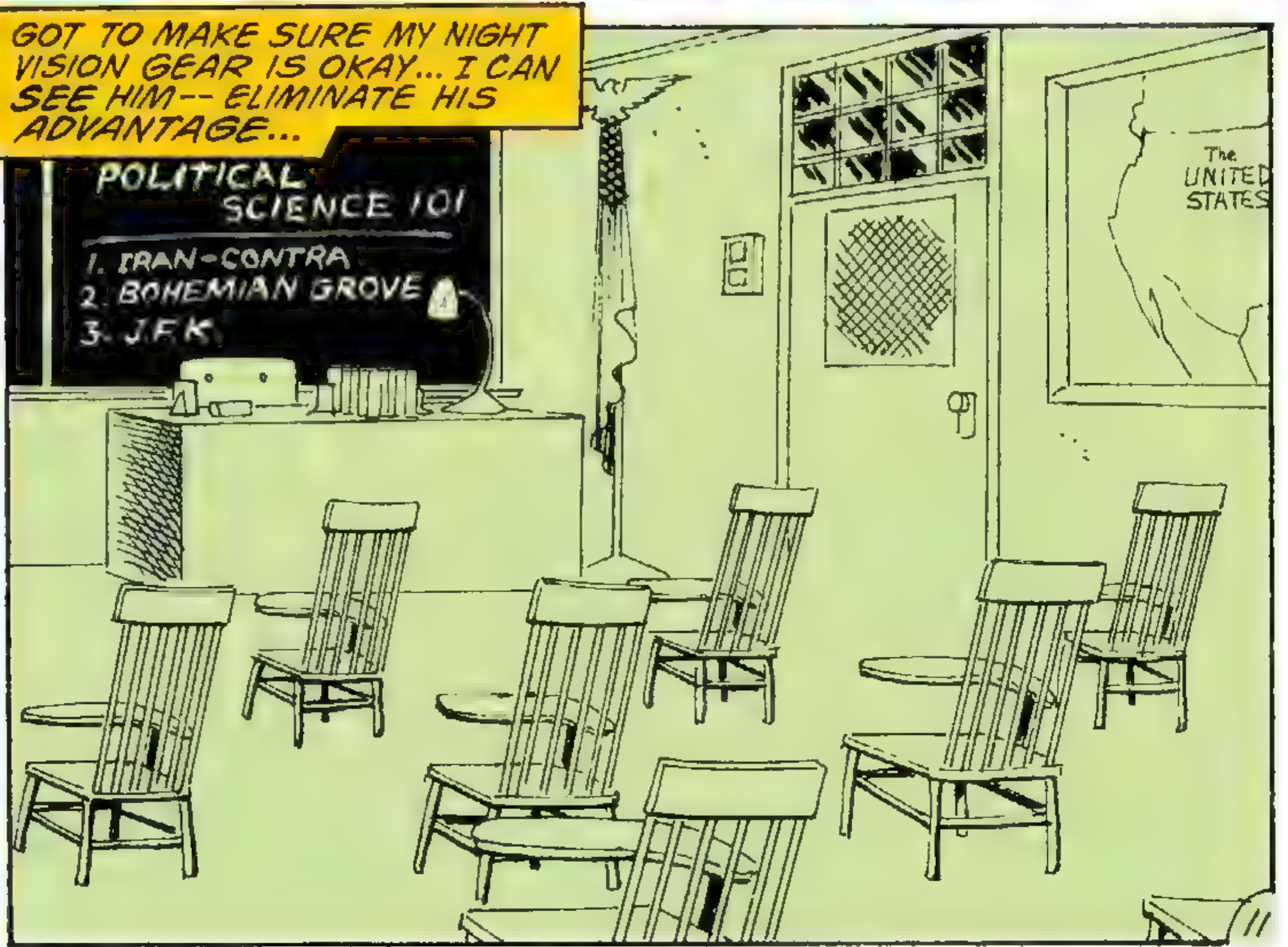


GOT TO MOVE FASTER NOW-- FROM THE TOP DOWN.



HE LIKES THE DARK-- FEELS SAFE IN STRIKING FROM IT...

TK



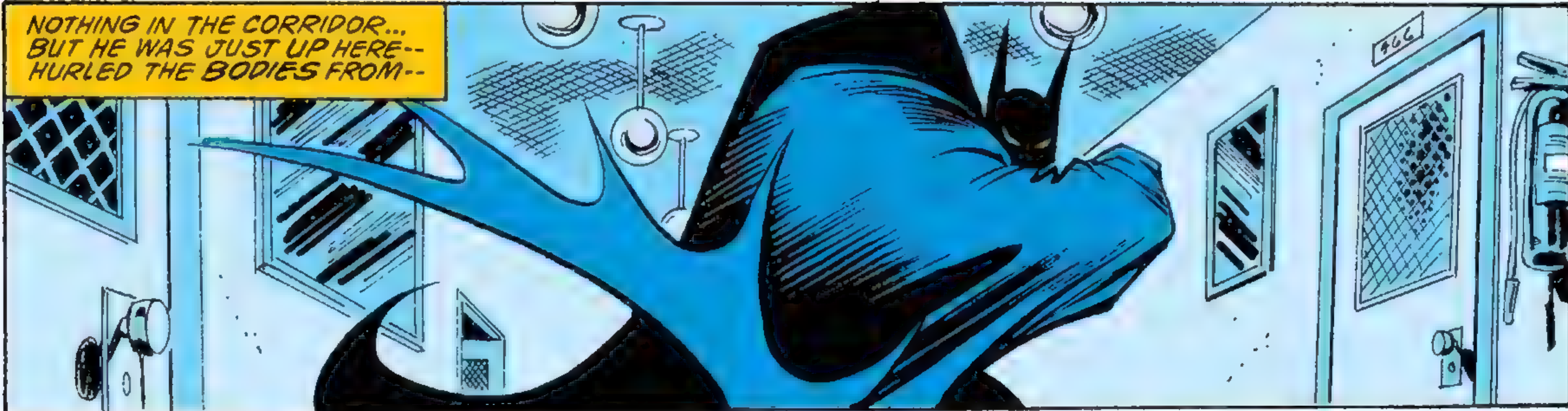
GOT TO MAKE SURE MY NIGHT VISION GEAR IS OKAY... I CAN SEE HIM-- ELIMINATE HIS ADVANTAGE...

POLITICAL SCIENCE 101

1. IRAN-CONTRA
2. BOHEMIAN GROVE
3. JFK

The UNITED STATES

NOTHING IN THE CORRIDOR...
BUT HE WAS JUST UP HERE--
HURLED THE BODIES FROM--



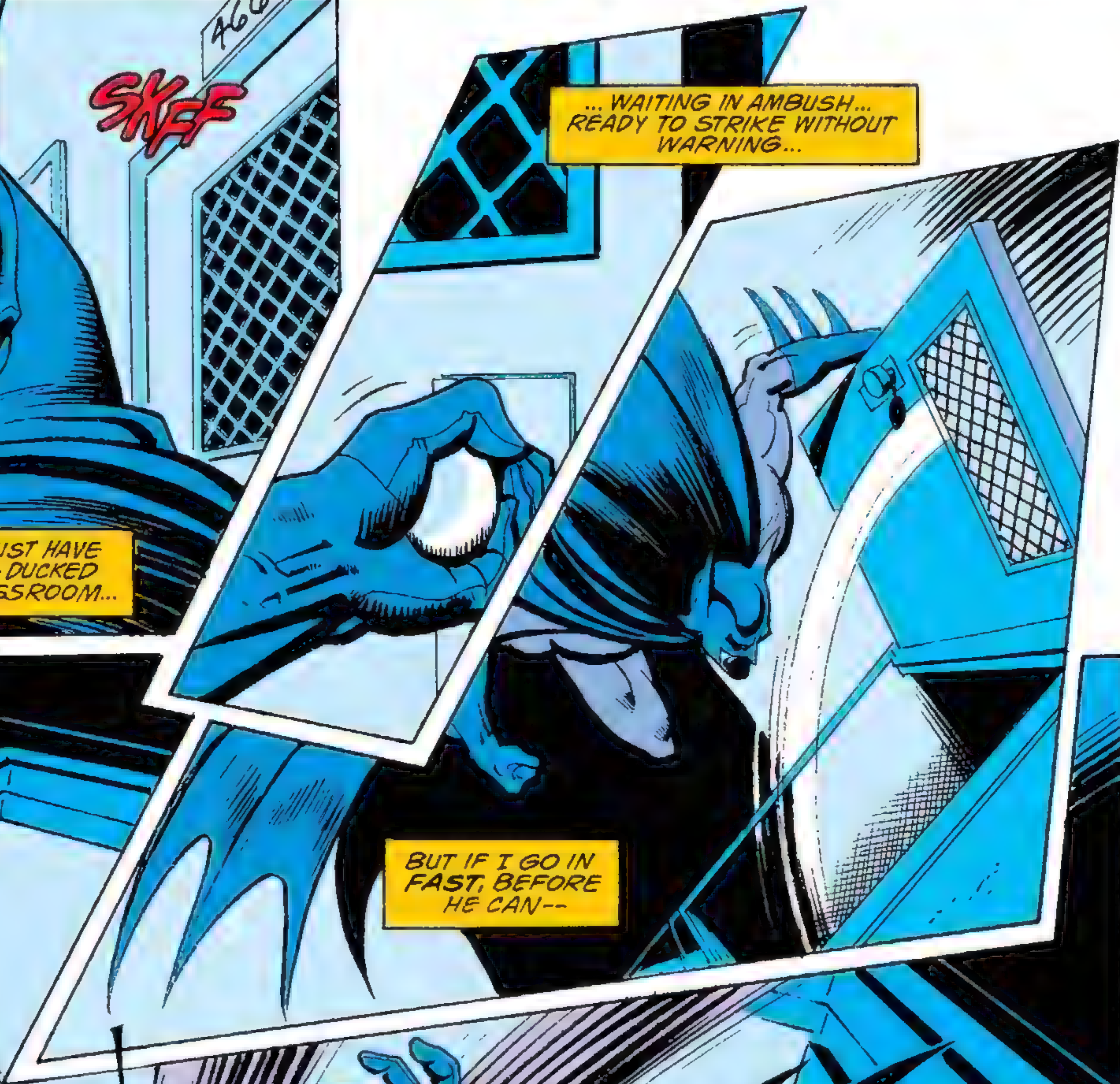
SKEEF

IN THERE--ZSASZ MUST HAVE
HEARD OR SEEN ME-- DUCKED
INTO THIS OTHER CLASSROOM...



... WAITING IN AMBUSH...
READY TO STRIKE WITHOUT
WARNING...

BUT IF I GO IN
FAST, BEFORE
HE CAN--





IT'S...
YOU?!



NOT THAT WE'VE
BEEN *BEST AMIGOS*
LATELY... *KOFF!*... BUT
I DIDN'T EXPECT US TO
GO AT EACH OTHER'S
THROATS LIKE--

NO TIME
FOR THIS--
AND I WANT
YOU TO
LEAVE.

NOW.

HEY, AT LEAST LET ME TELL
YOU THE *NEWS* I--



WE'D ONLY
GET IN EACH
OTHER'S WAY
IN THE DARK--
AND *ZSASZ* IS
A *KILLER*.



LIKE
BANE'S
NOT
?

YOU SAW
BANE?

NO... BUT I *DID*
MEET ONE OF HIS
FAITHFUL
STOOGES
ON--

HOW DO YOU
KNOW?



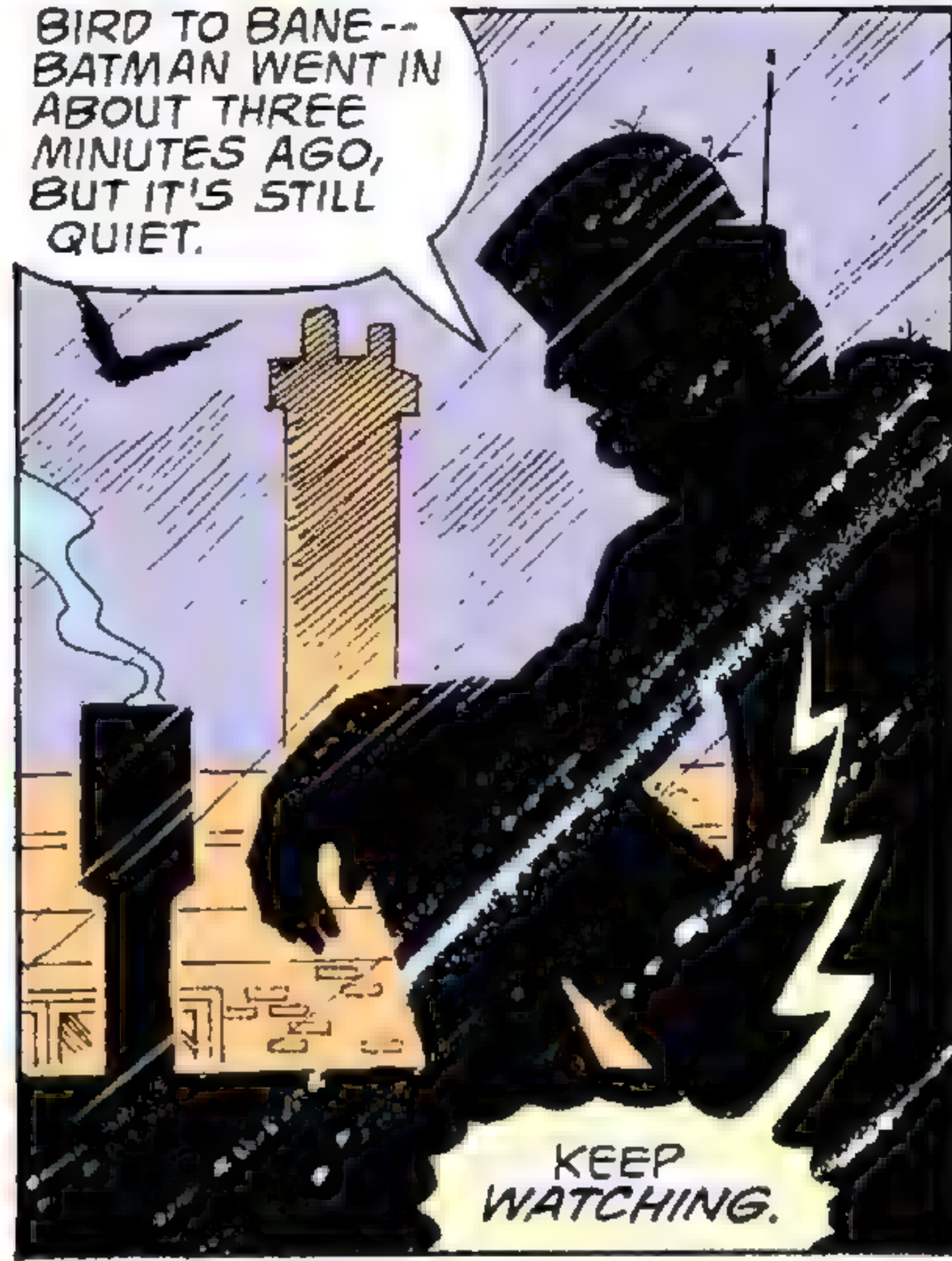
HE MATCHED
YOUR DESCRIPTION
OF ONE OF THOSE
THREE *JAMOKES*
WHO BLASTED THE
RIDDLER, OKAY?--
THE *BIRD-GUY*
WITH HIS *ATTACK-
FALCON*.



AND IF YOU DON'T WANT
ME *HERE*, HOW 'BOUT I
TRY TO *FIND* AND
FOLLOW HIM?

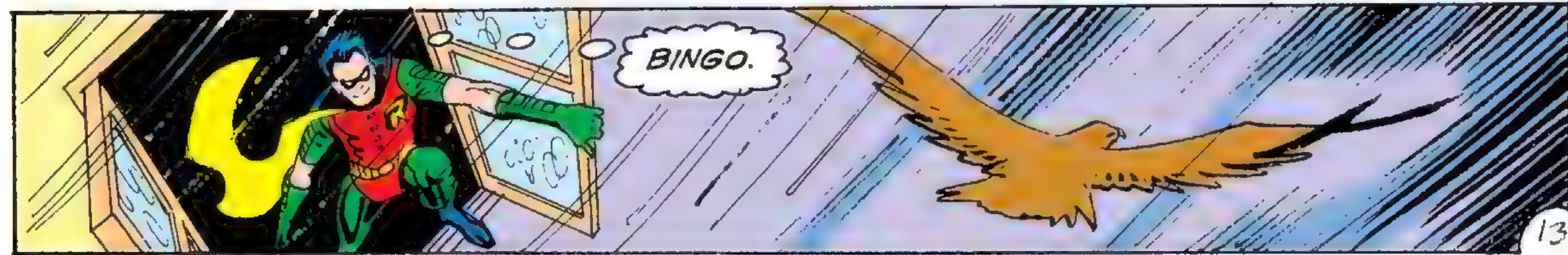
JUST DON'T
CONFRONT
BANE.

LIKE *THAT'S*
ON MY *WISH*
LIST.

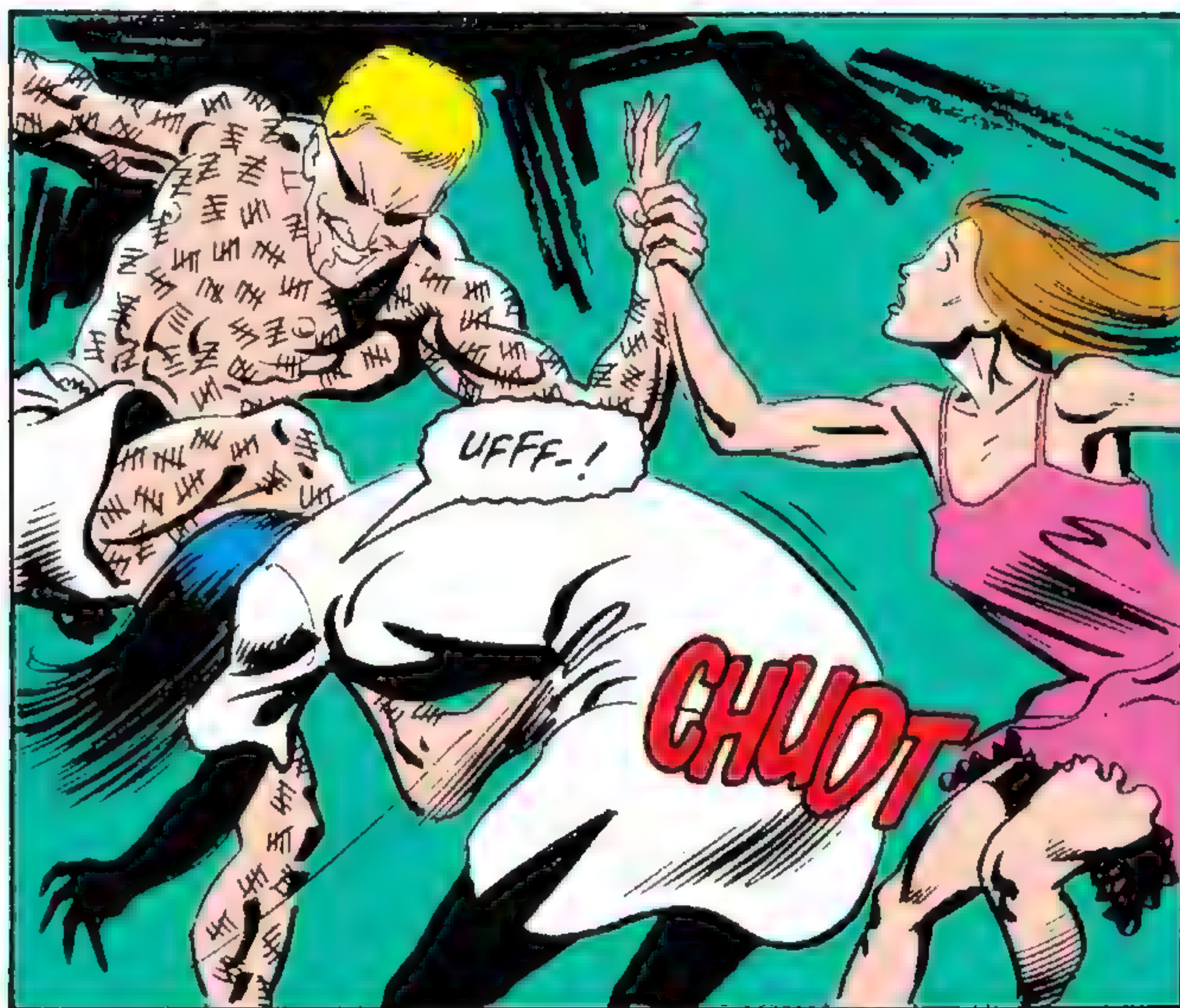
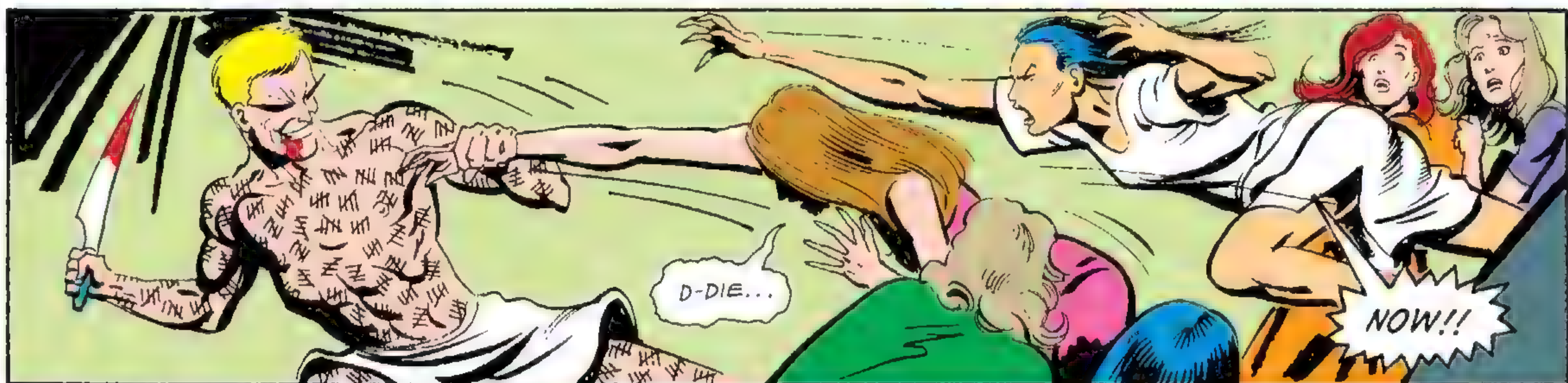
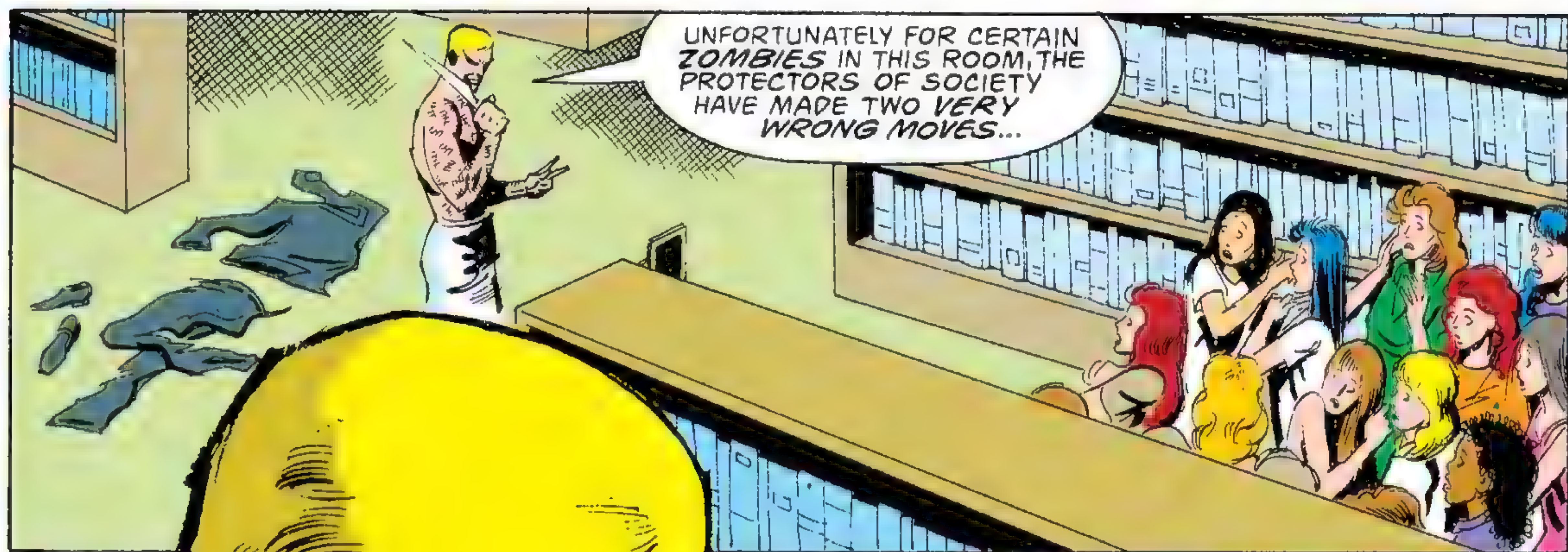


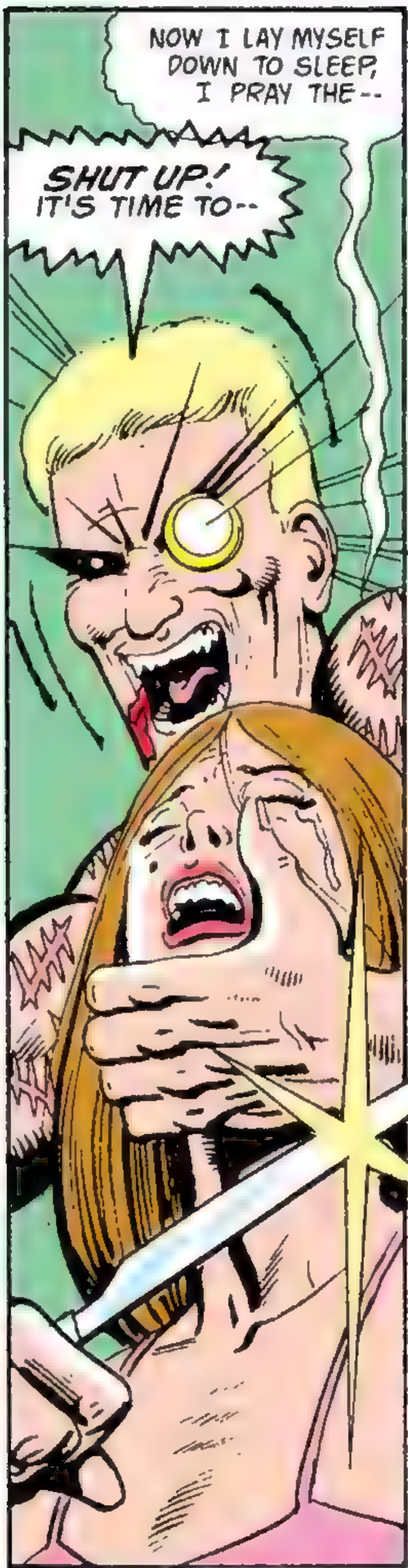
BIRD TO BANE--
BATMAN WENT IN
ABOUT THREE
MINUTES AGO,
BUT IT'S STILL
QUIET.

KEEP
WATCHING.



BINGO.





NOW I LAY MYSELF
DOWN TO SLEEP,
I PRAY THE--

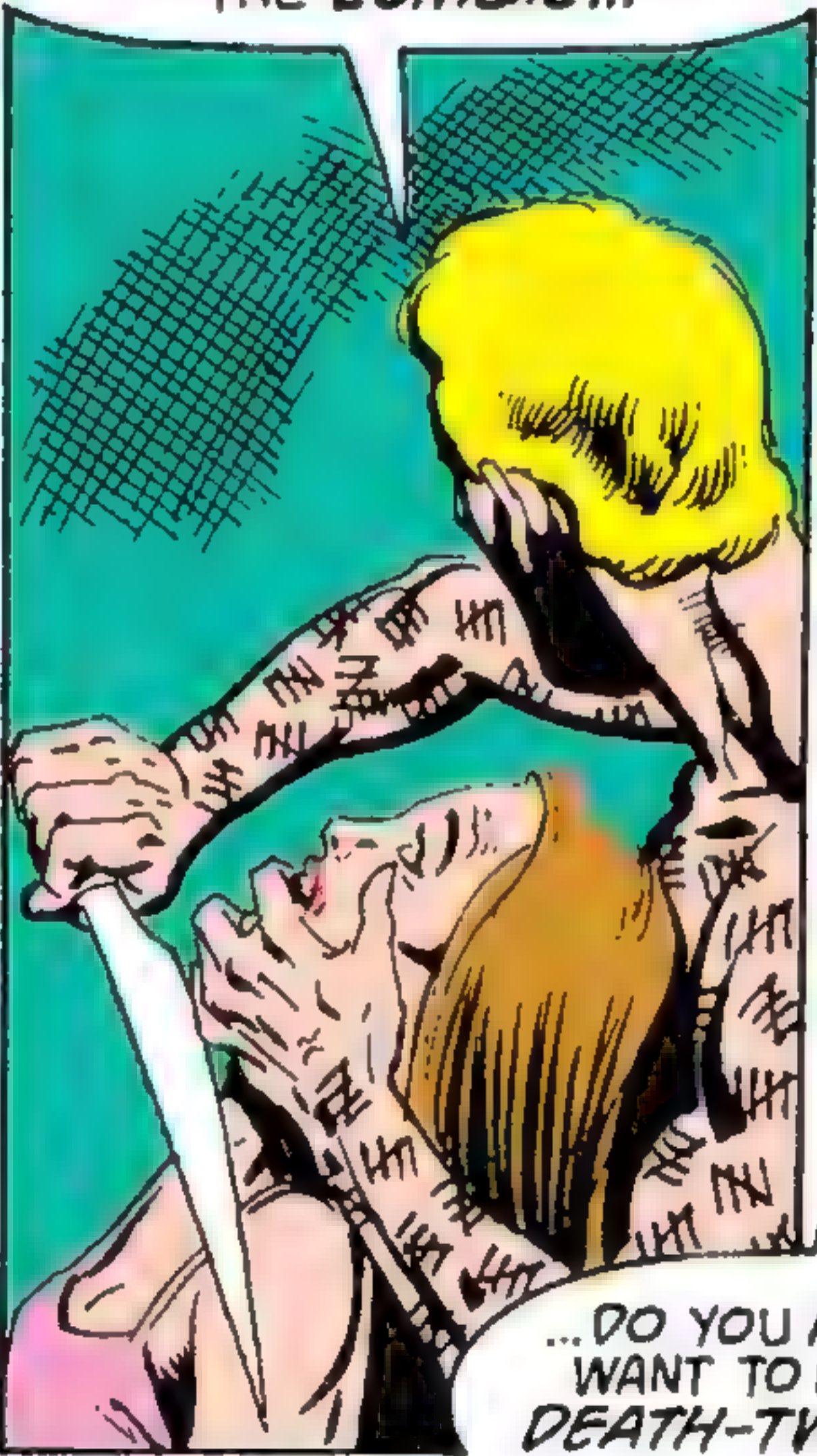
SHUT UP!
IT'S TIME TO--



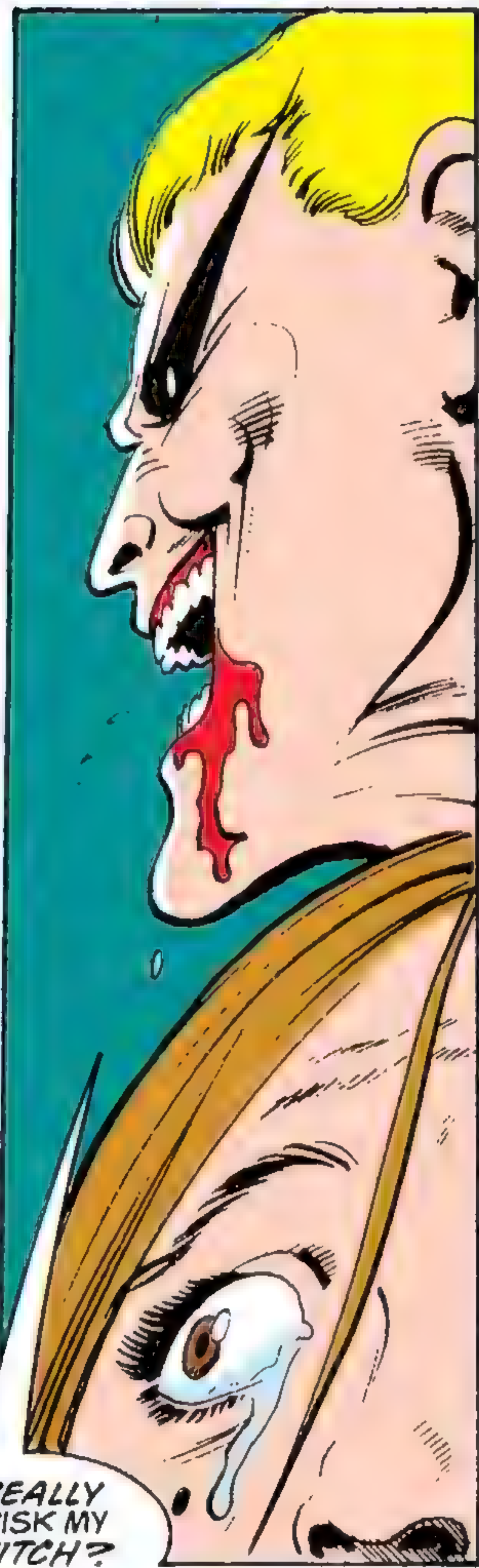
FREEZE!!



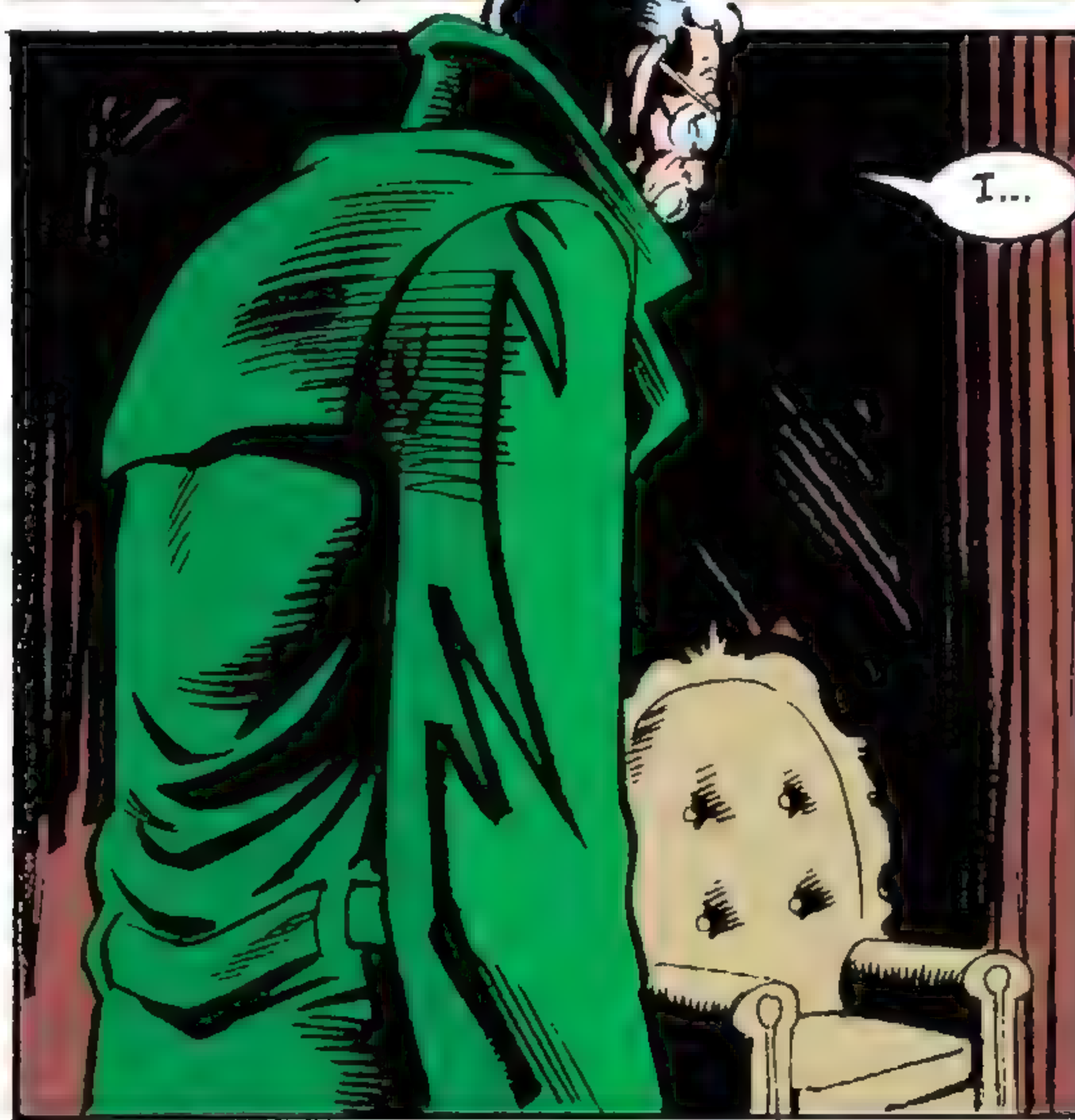
VERY GOOD, PRETTY COP...
BUT EVEN IF YOUR BULLET
BEATS MY BLADE... EVEN
IF IT HITS ME AND NOT
THE ZOMBIE...



...DO YOU REALLY
WANT TO RISK MY
DEATH-TWITCH?



--TOLD YOU YOUR MEN
SHOULD SHOOT TO KILL AT
THE BREAKOUT, GORDON--
BUT YOU REFUSED, AND
NOW LOOK WHAT WE'VE
GOT.

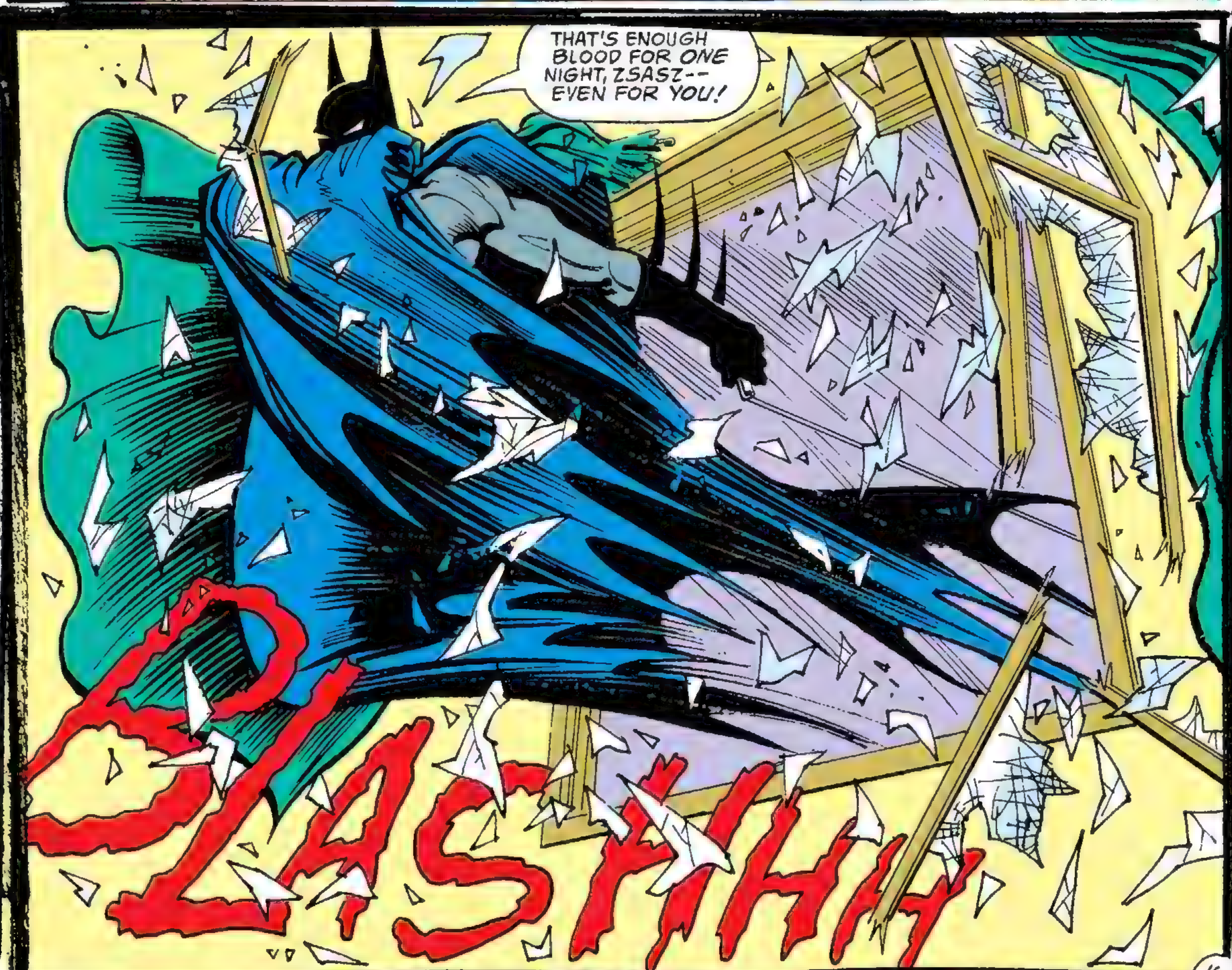
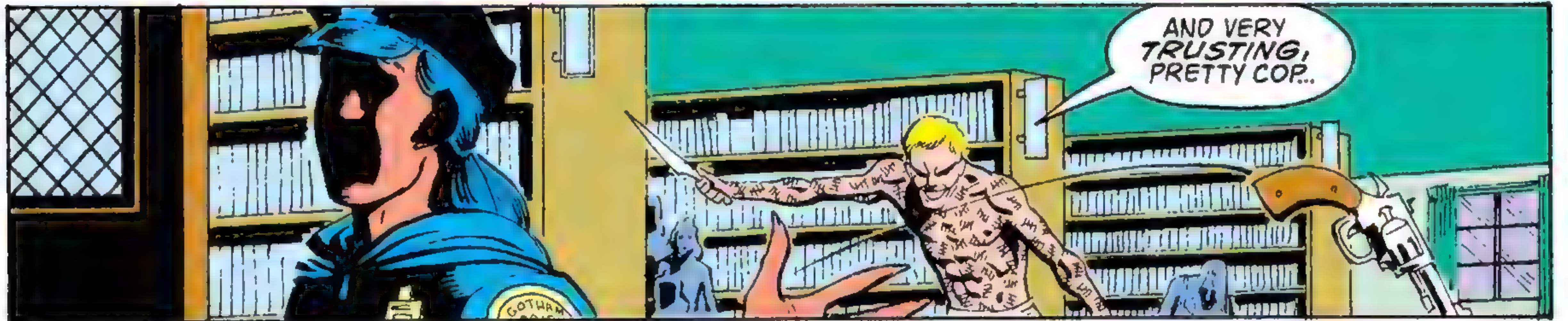


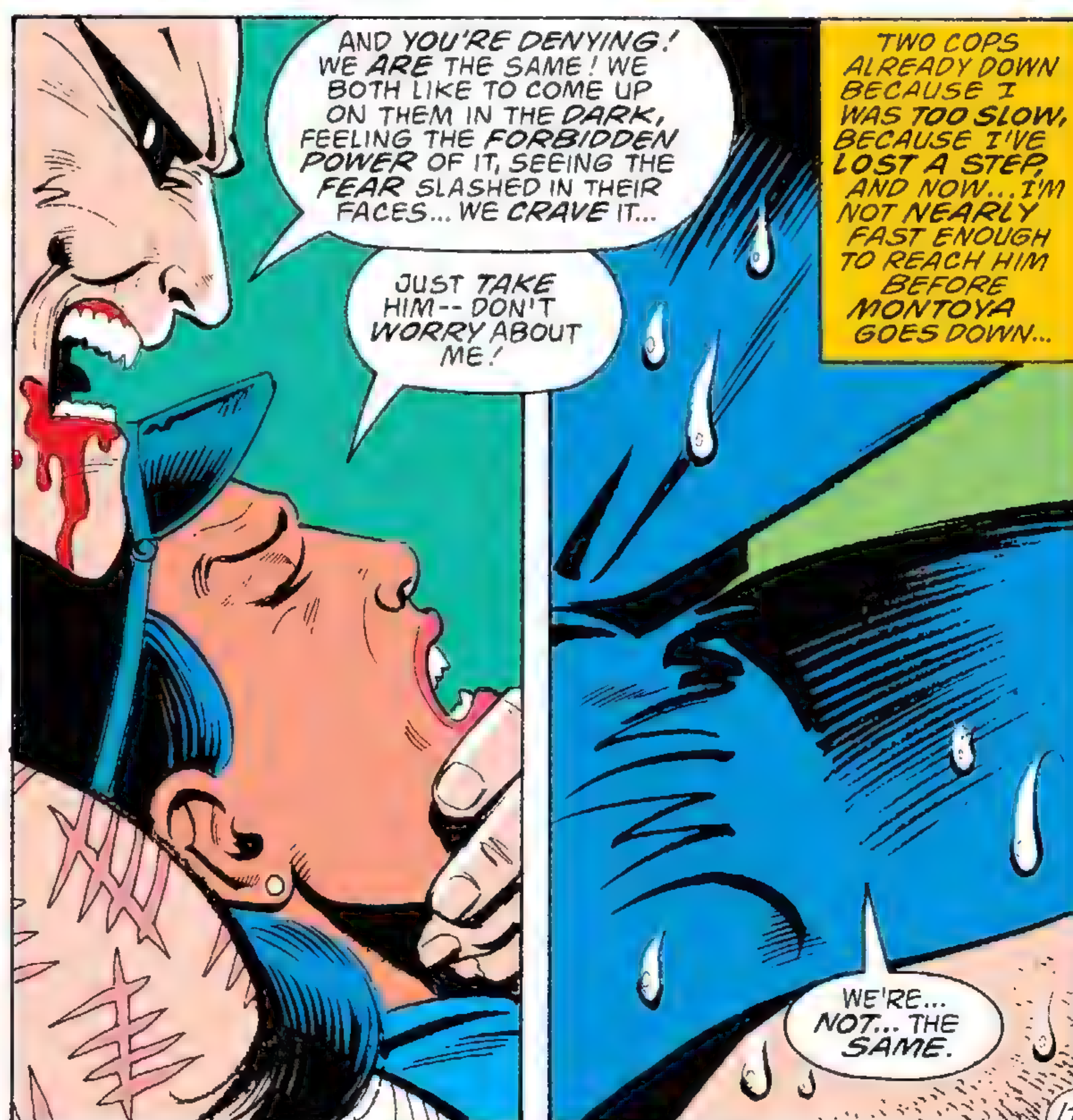
I...

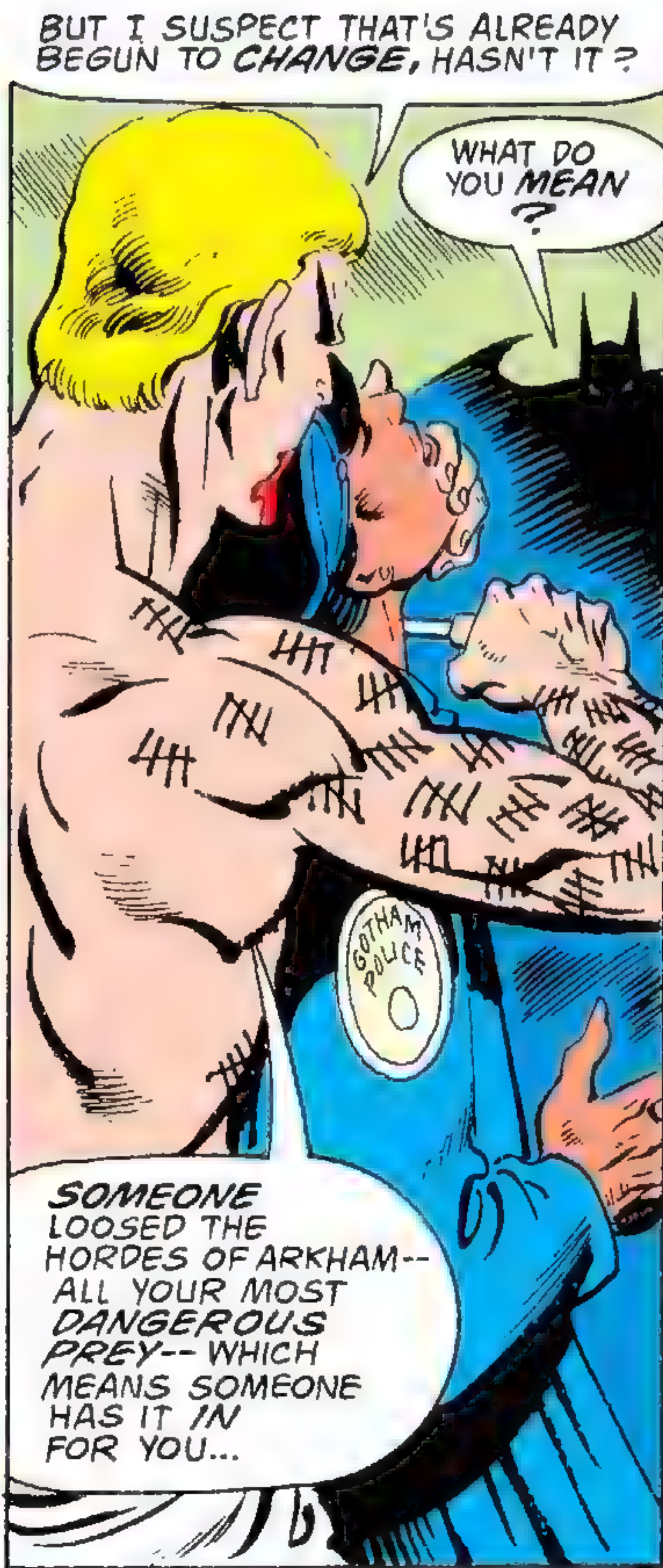


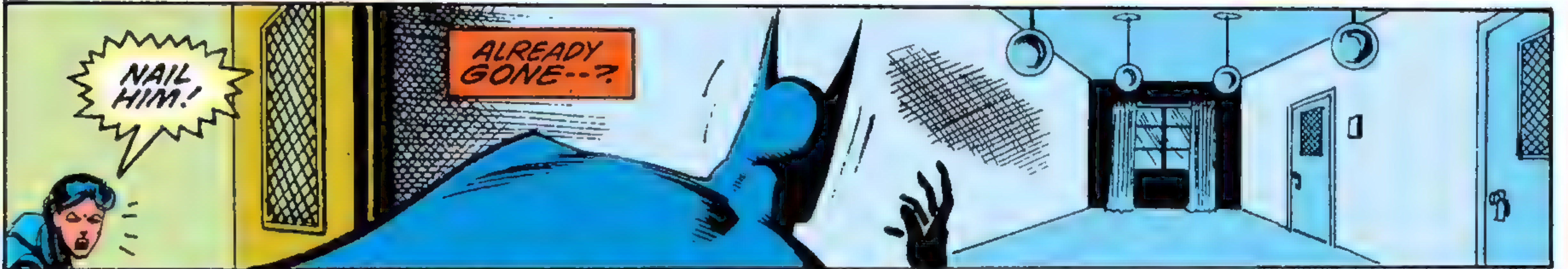
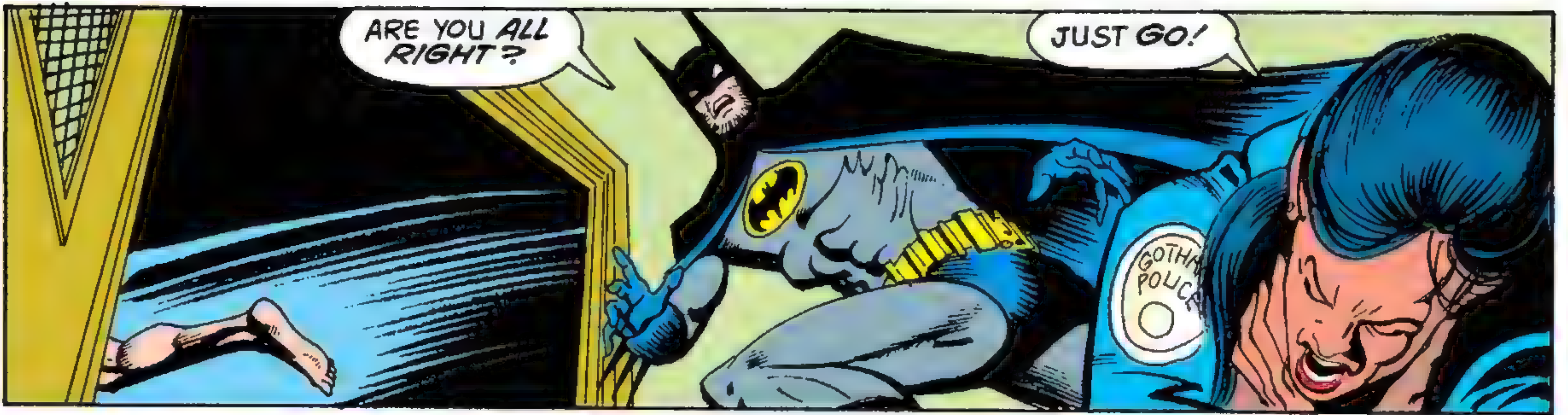
ONE OF MY
FRIENDS HAS
A DAUGHTER IN
THAT SCHOOL, AND
I'M HOLDING YOU
PERSONALLY
RESPONSIBLE.

EVEN IF SHE
DOESN'T GET HURT,
GORDON... I THINK IT
MAY WELL BE TIME FOR
A NEW COMMISSIONER
OF POLICE.

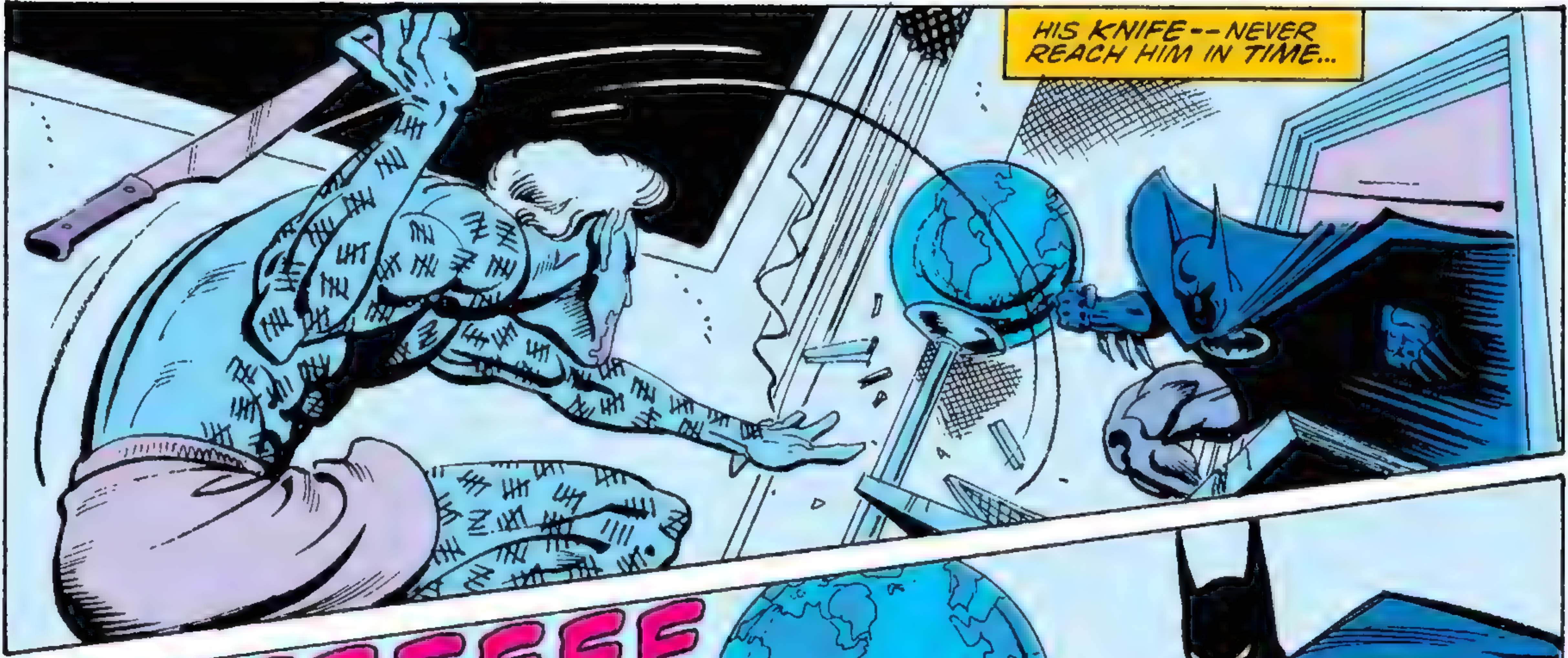








HIS KNIFE-- NEVER REACH HIM IN TIME...



SWFFFFFFFFF

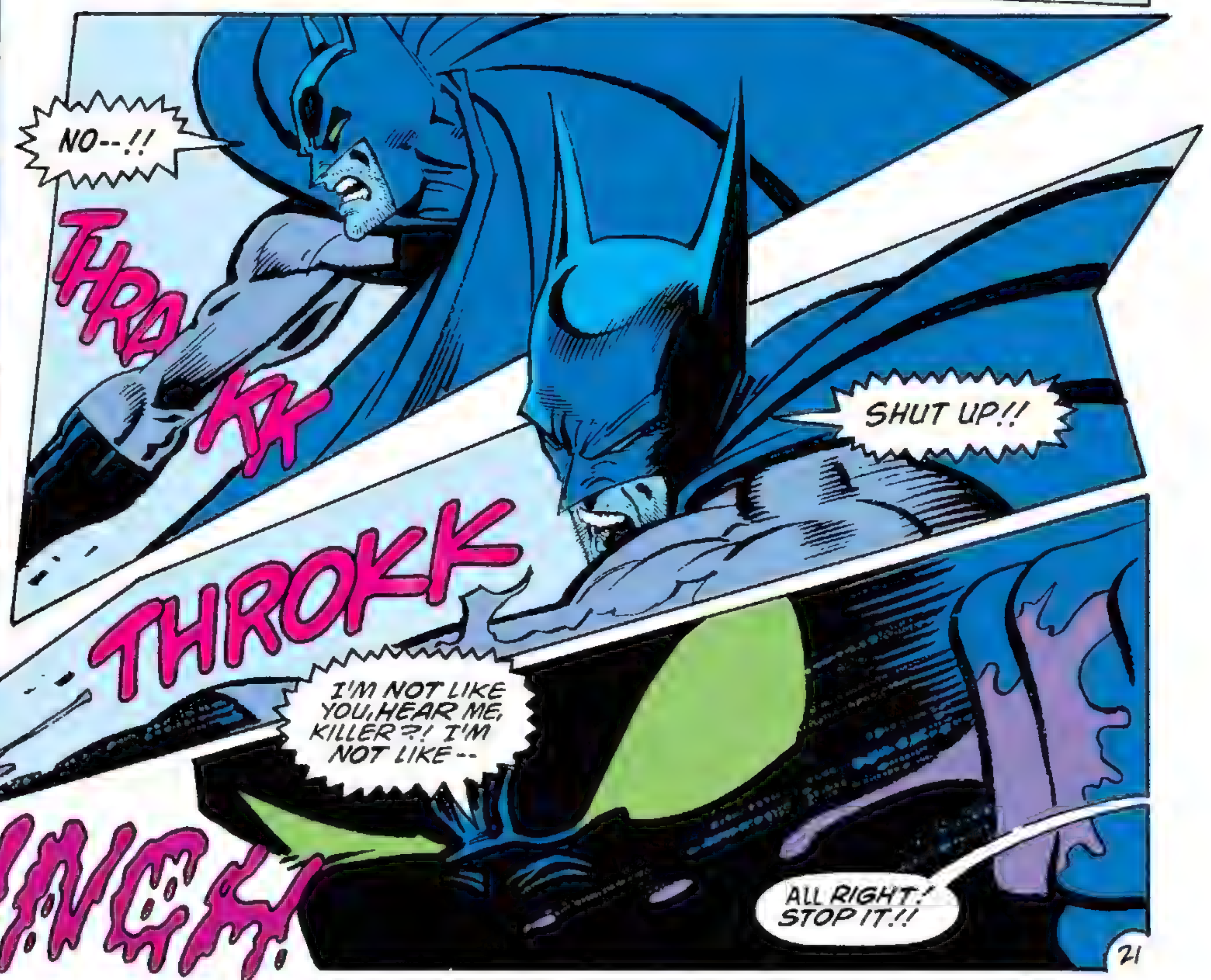
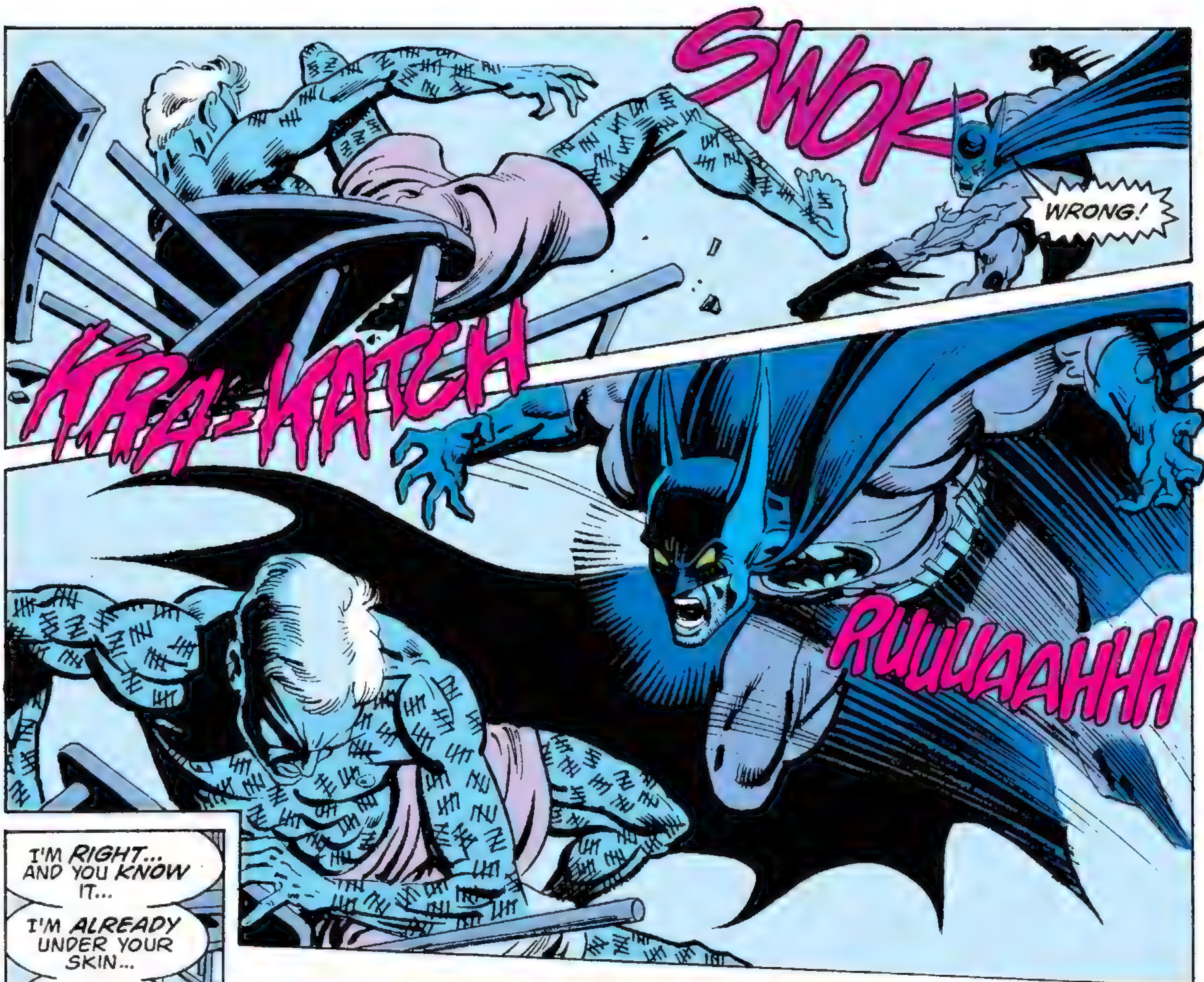


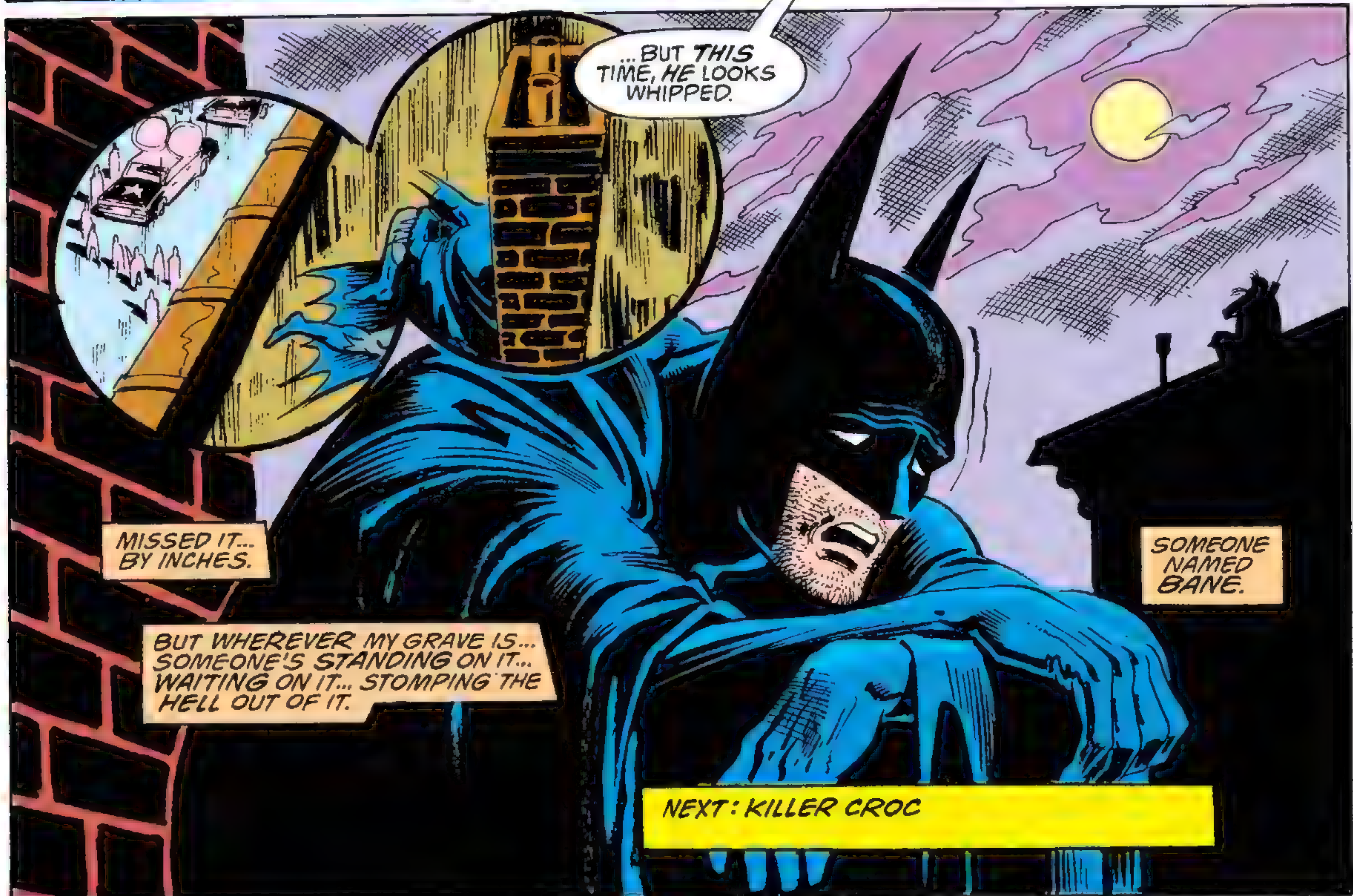
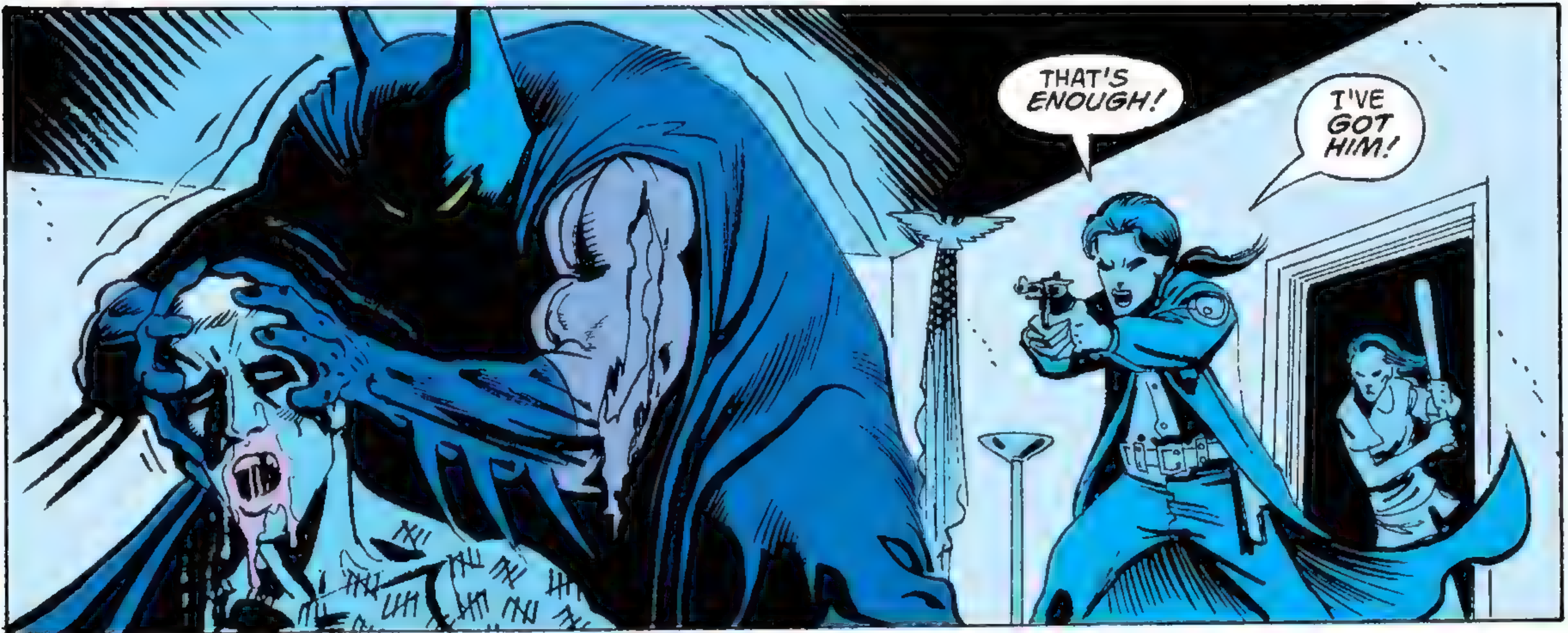
TCHOK

SWUMP

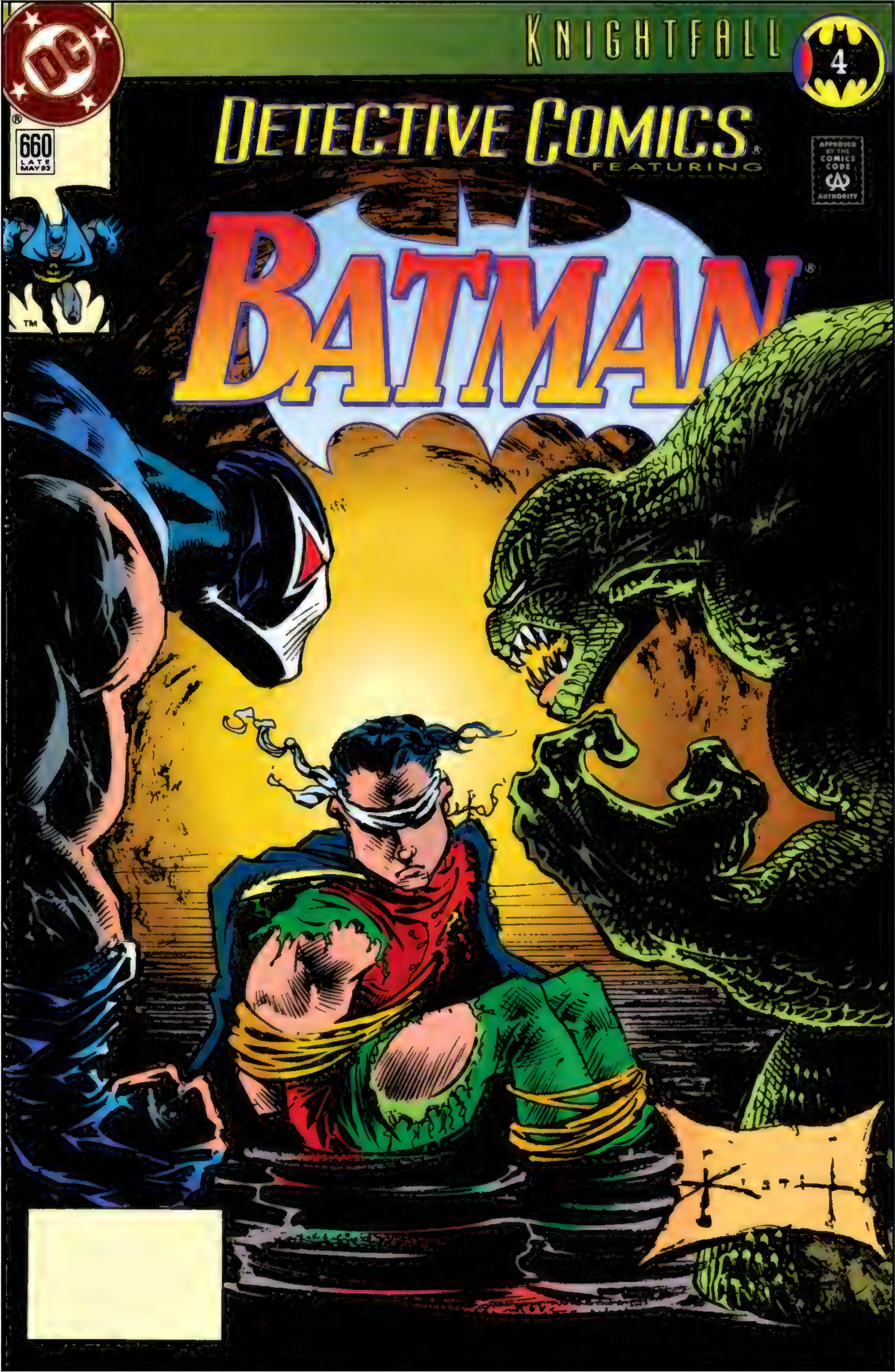
TUO







Cover art by SAM KIETH



CROCODILE TEARS



THE EYELIDS OF
MORNING.

THAT'S THE NAME GIVEN TO
THE CROCODILE BY THE TRIBES
THAT LIVE ALONG THE ZAMBEZI.

IT COMES FROM THE TRANSLUCENT
MEMBRANE THAT COVERS THE
CROCODILIAN'S EYES AND THE
SHEEN THAT FLASHES
ACROSS THEM...

CHUCK DIXON - writer
JIM BALENT - quest penciller
SCOTT HANNA - inker
ADRIENNE ROY - colorist
JOHN COSTANZA - letterer
SCOTT PETERSON & DENNIS O'NEIL - editors

BATMAN created by BOB KANE

...AS HE STRIKES!



REEEEEE

MORE REPTILE THAN MAN,
A MIND SURRENDERED TO
RAW INSTINCT AND ANIMAL
DRIVE.

YESSSSSS,
SO HUNGRY...

YOU'LL GO DOWN
EASY... LITTLE
ONE...



REEEEEE

IT WASN'T ALWAYS
THIS WAY.



AND THIS
ONE?

WAYLON JONES.
WE CALL HIM
KILLER CROC.
HE'S IN AND
OUT OF ARKHAM
MORE THAN THE
KITCHEN HELP.

WHAT'S HIS
STORY?



YOU'D NEVER KNOW IT TO LOOK AT HIM BUT HE RAN GOTHAM'S TOP MOB FOR A WHILE. NOW HE'S JUST ANOTHER HOPELESS NUTJOB.

HE BREAK HIS ARMS IN HERE?



NAW, THAT'S THE WAY THE COPS FOUND HIM. SOMEBODY HANDED HIM A REAL BEATING.

JEEZ, I'D HATE TO MEET THAT GUY.



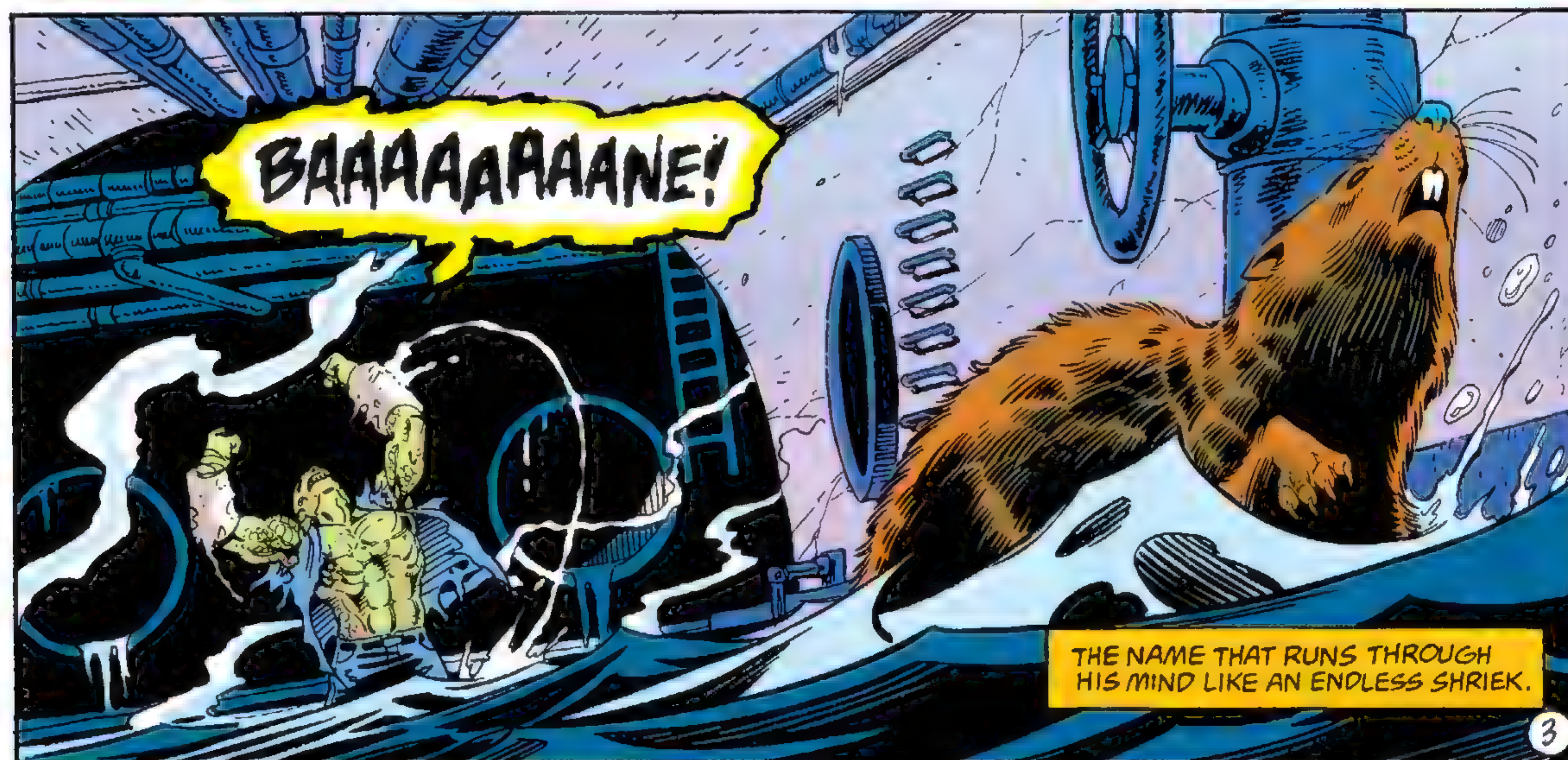
ANY IDEA WHO RACKED HIM UP?

CROC WAS IN NO SHAPE TO TELL US, I DOUBT HE EVEN KNOWS.



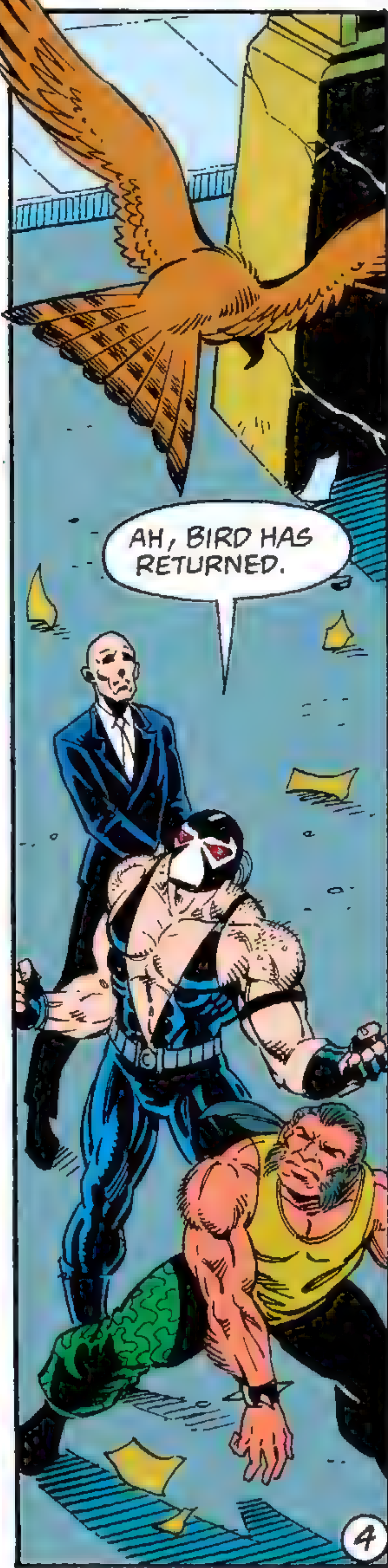
"THAT LUNATIC LOST WHATEVER MIND HE HAD A LONG TIME AGO."

BUT HE KNOWS. HE KNOWS THE NAME OF THE ONE WHO HURT HIM.



BAAAAAANE!

THE NAME THAT RUNS THROUGH HIS MIND LIKE AN ENDLESS SHRIEK.

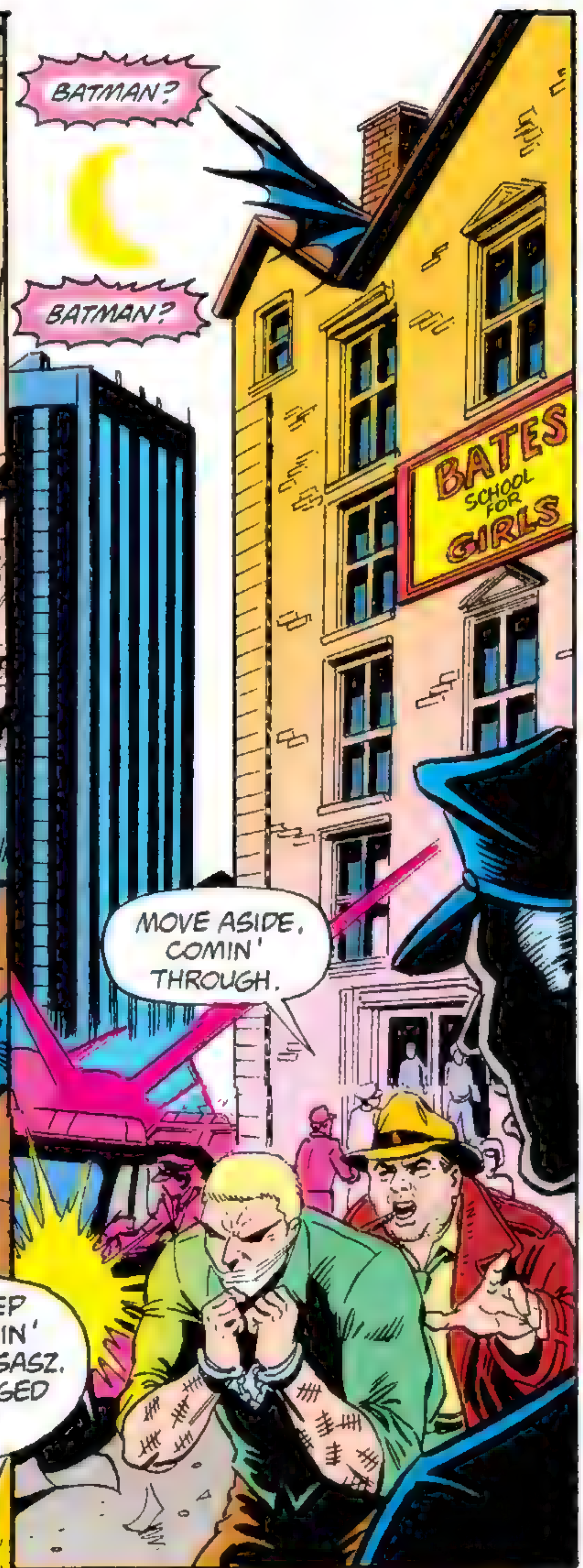






ROBIN TO BATMAN.
ARE YOU OUT
THERE, BATMAN?

BATMAN, YOU'VE GOT
TO COME IN...



BATMAN?

BATMAN?

MOVE ASIDE,
COMIN'
THROUGH.



MMPH.
URGH.

YOU JUST KEEP
RIGHT ON STARIN'
HOLES IN ME, ZSASZ.
I BEEN EYE-BUGGED
BY BETTER THAN
YOU.

WE GOT A
NICE LITTLE
CELL WAITIN'
FOR YOU.



AND YOU BETTER STAY THERE,
PAL. 'CAUSE THE NEXT TIME
YOU GET OUT I'LL MAKE
SURE THERE'S NO OTHER
COPS AROUND.

JUST YOU. AND ME. AND
SMITH AND WESSON.



I'D DO YOU RIGHT HERE
AND NOW BUT I DON'T WANT
TO SPEND THE REST OF MY
TWENTY TALKING TO
INTERNAL AFFAIRS HUMPS.

"BESIDES, I GOT A LOT OF OTHER LOONIES TO LOOK FOR."

MR. DETWEILER...?

MR. DETWEILER, ATTORNEY AT LAW...?

WHUZZ?

WHAH?

WHAT IS THIS? WHO ARE YOU?

YOU CAN CALL ME *SOCKO*, COUNSELOR. AND YOU ALREADY KNOW YOUR VALUED CLIENT, THE VENTRILOQUIST.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

YOU WERE THE LAST TO DEFEND MY PAL AND HIS GUDDY SCARFACE. WE WANT TO KNOW WHERE SCARFACE GOT TO.

THIS IS ALL ABOUT THAT STUPID PUPPET? YOU'RE NUTS. WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU FIND ANYTHING?

'CAUSE GULLETS MAKE NASTY HOLES. "DARNED IF YOU DO, DARNED IF YOU DON'T." THAT'S *SOCK* HUMOR, COUNSELOR.

--AND BACK TO THE HARRY MANN SHOW. OUR GUEST IS DR. SIMPSON FLANDERS. HE'S HERE TO TRY AND MAKE SENSE OF THIS WHOLE ARKHAM SITUATION.



WE'VE GOT A CITY PARALYZED WITH FEAR. THE STREETS ARE FULL OF WACKOS WITH ASSAULT WEAPONS. AND YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT THE SOLUTION?

I DO, HARRY.



YOU SEE, ALL OF THIS PANIC AND STRESS HAS CREATED A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE INMATES.



FEAR FEEDS ON FEAR AND ONLY SERVES TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE.

YOU'RE SAYING THAT BY BEING AFRAID OF AN ARMY OF HOMICIDAL MANIACS LOOSE ON OUR STREETS WE'RE ANTAGONIZING THEM?



EXACTLY. AS DETAILED IN MY BOOK, "I'M SANE AND SO ARE YOU," THE MENTALLY DIVERGENT SHOULD BE MADE TO FEEL AT EASE IN OUR ENVIRONMENT.



A CLIMATE OF MISTRUST AND SUSPICION ONLY TENDS TO MAKE THEM FEEL INSECURE IN THEIR CHOICE OF LIFESTYLES.

WE'VE GOT A BODY COUNT HEADING TOWARD THE TRIPLE DIGITS.



THAT'S A "LIFE-STYLE"?



"YOU'RE DANGEROUS, DOC."

ANYTHING ELSE TO REPORT TO ME, BIRD?

WELL, I THINK YOU SHOULD'VE LET ME WASTE THAT ROBIN BRAT. THAT KID COULD GET TO BE A PAIN.

NO. WE WILL DISPOSE OF THE BOY LATER. IF YOU WANT THE JOB IT IS YOURS.

BUT FOR NOW HE MAY PROVE USEFUL.

MAN...



CAN'T SAY I CARE FOR THIS CONVERSATION.

I WANT YOU ALL TO CONTINUE YOUR SURVEILLANCE.

ALL OF US?



YES, TROGG. EVENTS WILL MOVE SWIFTLY FROM HERE. I WANT COMPLETE COVERAGE OF THE BATMAN'S DECLINE.

I WILL NEED TO DECIDE THE PRECISE MOMENT AT WHICH I SHOULD MAKE MY FINAL MOVE.

REMAIN IN RADIO CONTACT!

SO, WHAT DO I DO NOW?

9



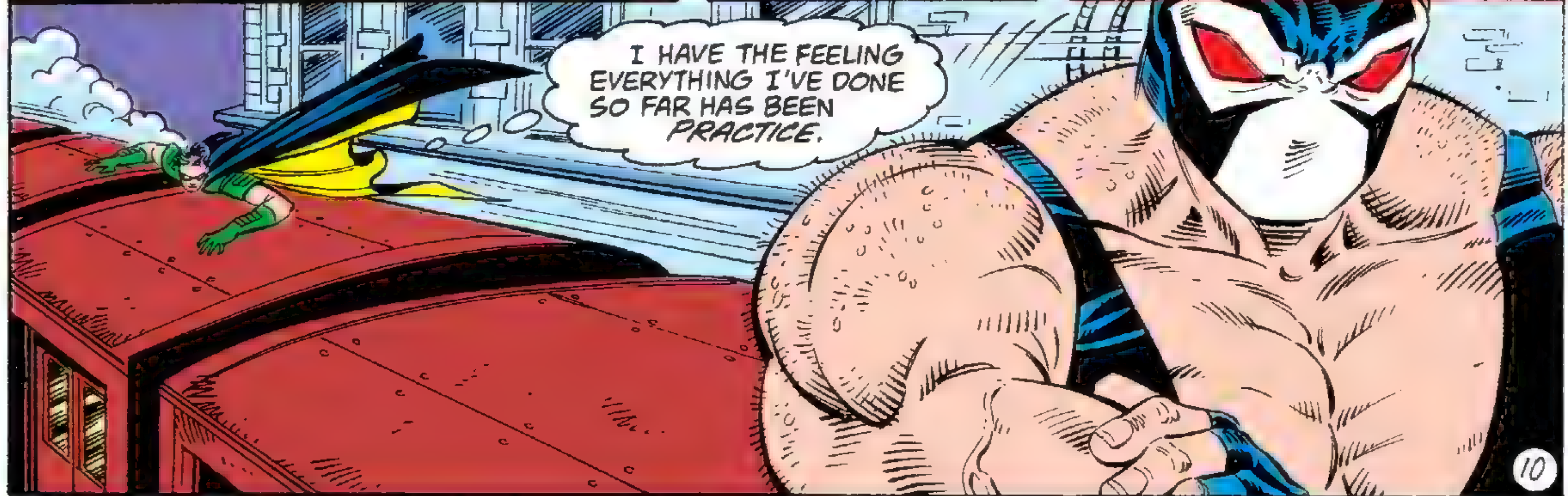
WISH I COULD
GET BATMAN ON
THE RADIO.

I'D BETTER
KEEP UP WITH
THIS GUY UNTIL
I CAN.

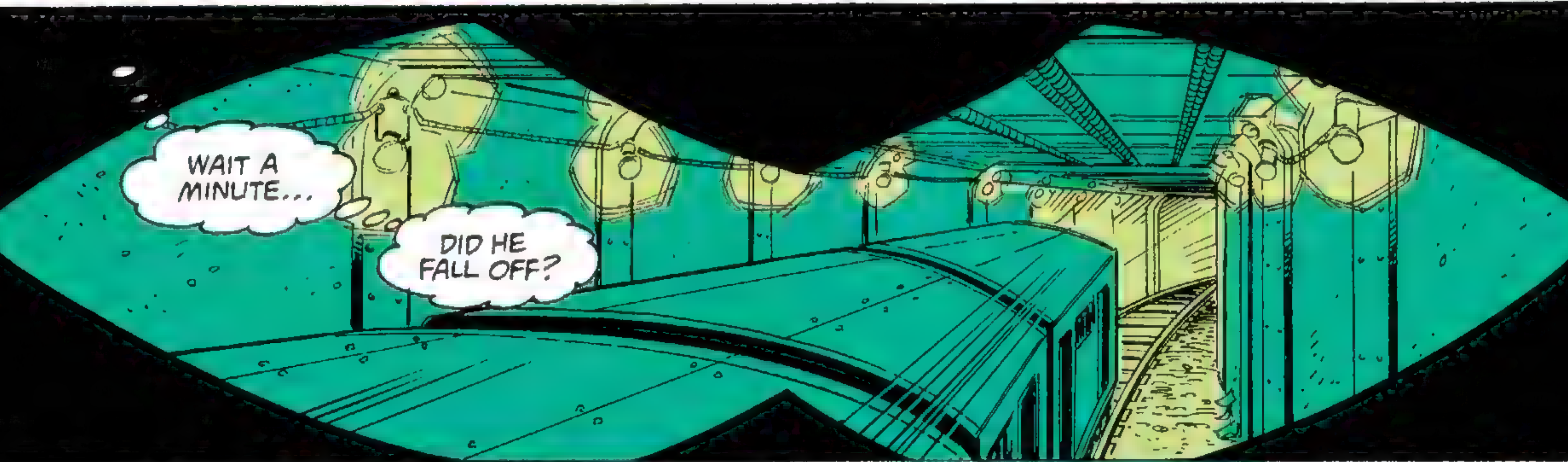
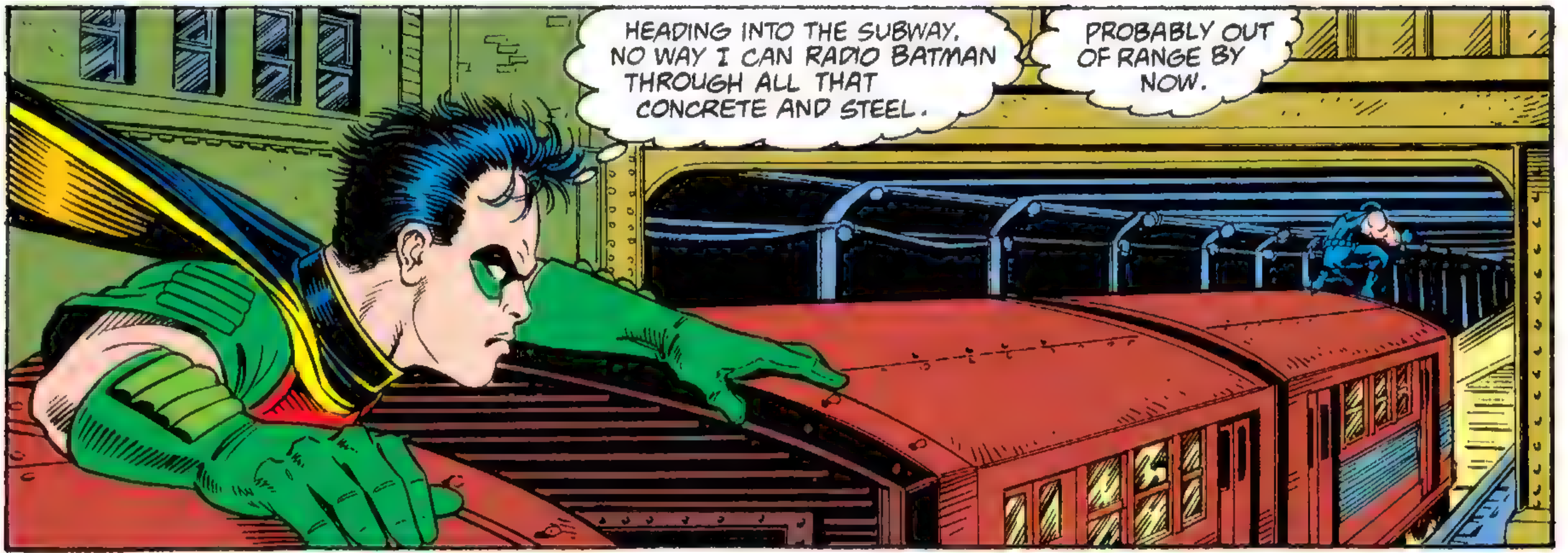


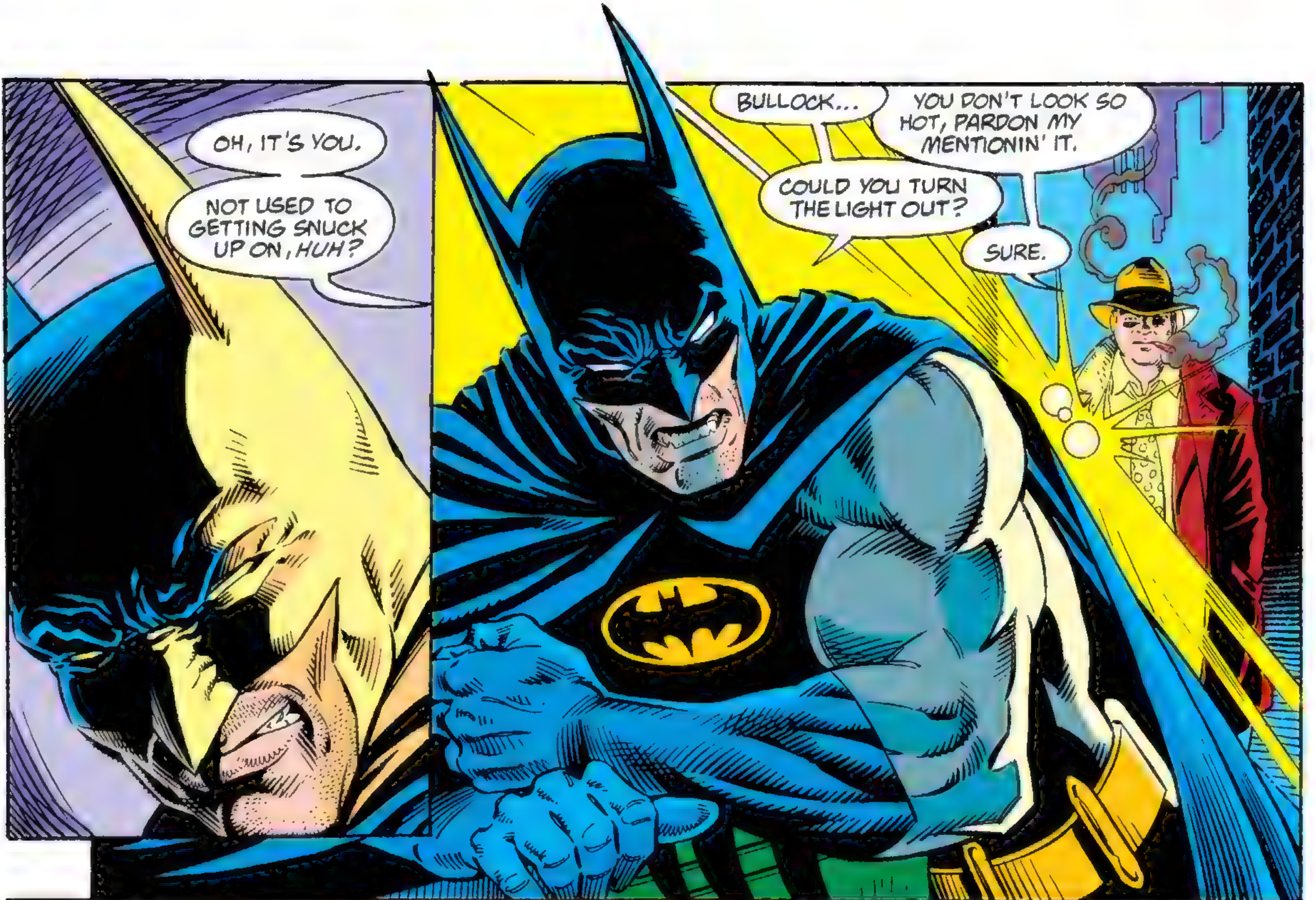
SOUNDS LIKE HIM
AND HIS BUDDIES ARE
THE ONES WHO BUSTED
ARKHAM OPEN.

THIS IS DEFINITELY
ONE TO KEEP AN
EYE ON.



I HAVE THE FEELING
EVERYTHING I'VE DONE
SO FAR HAS BEEN
PRACTICE.





OH, IT'S YOU.

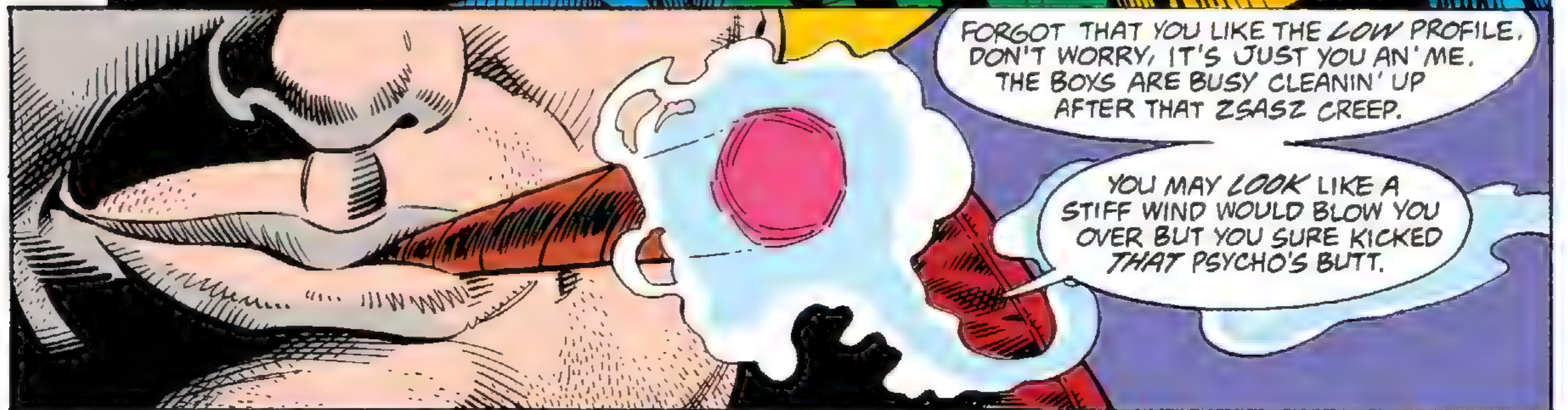
NOT USED TO GETTING SNUCK UP ON, HUH?

BULLOCK...

YOU DON'T LOOK SO HOT, PARDON MY MENTIONIN' IT.

COULD YOU TURN THE LIGHT OUT?

SURE.



FORGOT THAT YOU LIKE THE LOW PROFILE. DON'T WORRY, IT'S JUST YOU AN' ME. THE BOYS ARE BUSY CLEANIN' UP AFTER THAT ZSASZ CREEP.

YOU MAY LOOK LIKE A STIFF WIND WOULD BLOW YOU OVER BUT YOU SURE KICKED THAT PSYCHO'S BUTT.



YEAH... THANKS. LOOK, I HAVE TO BE GOING NOW. CAN'T FIND ROBIN.

I DUNNO. LOOKS LIKE YOU GOT ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT WITH YOURSELF, Y'KNOW?



YOU'D BE BETTER OFF WITH EIGHT HOURS OF SACKTIME.

WHEREVER THE KID IS, I'M SURE HE CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.

"WHICH IS BETTER
ODDS THAN I'D
GIVE YOU RIGHT
NOW."

DON'T
LIKE
THIS.

CAN'T SEE
WHERE I AM.

CAN HEAR WATER
RUSHING. LOTS
OF WATER.

ECHOES. I'M IN A
LARGE, ENCLOSED
SPACE.

BREATHING...
WHO--?

I AM VERY
CURIOUS ABOUT
YOU. YOU AID THE
BATMAN IN HIS
FIGHT AGAINST
CRIME, EH?

AND YET
YOU ARE JUST
A BOY.

I AM JUST BEGINNING
TO UNDERSTAND YOUR
MENTOR. BUT YOU ARE
A WILD CARD TO ME.

WHERE HAVE
I HEARD THAT
BEFORE?

YOUR NAME IS
BANE, ISN'T IT?



AND THE OTHER ONE? THE ONE WHO *PRETENDED* TO BE THE BATMAN?

JUST ANOTHER ONE OF OUR MERRY MEN.

YOU KNOW I WENT TO THE TROUBLE OF BLINDFOLDING YOU.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH EASIER TO SIMPLY *BLIND* YOU.

BUT I *APPRECIATE* YOUTHFUL DEFIANCE. YOU STRUGGLE AGAINST YOUR FEAR. I ADMIRE THAT.

REALLY? MAYBE I'LL CALL YOU IF I EVER NEED A JOB REFERENCE.

THIS GUY IS A WORLD-CLASS SICKY. I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HIM AND FREE MY HANDS.

NO ROOM TO MOVE. WHERE *ARE* WE?

YOU MAY BE USEFUL TO ME YET. I IMAGINE THAT THE BATMAN WOULD COME TO HELP YOU IF HE KNEW YOU WERE IN DANGER.

FORGET IT, BANE.

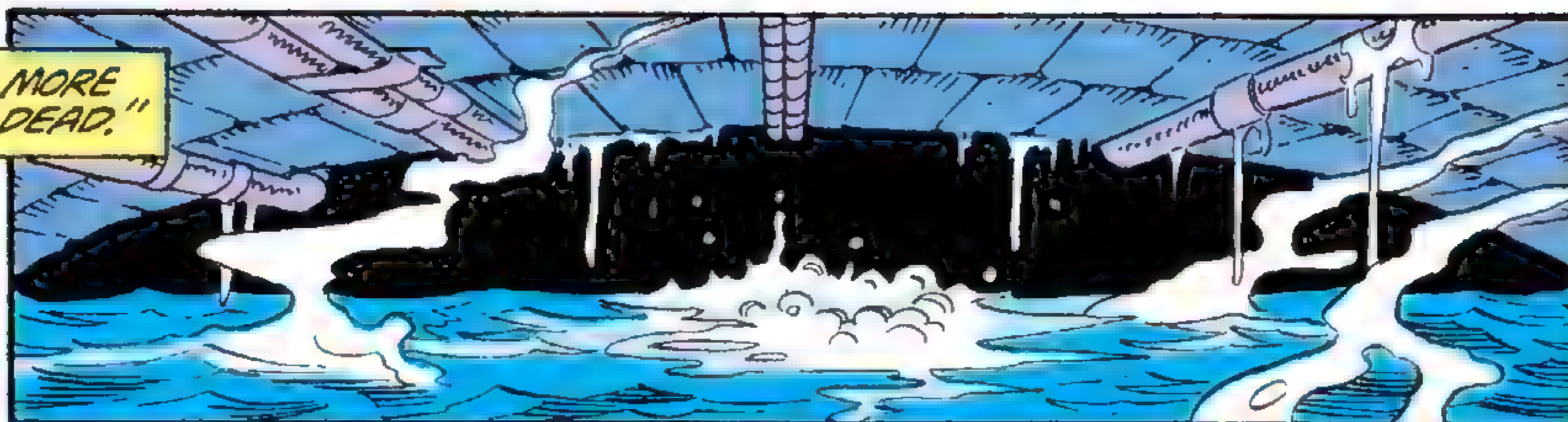
I'M NO HOSTAGE. BATMAN'S NOT GOING TO FALL INTO ANY TRAPS FOR MY SAKE.

SUCH BRAVE WORDS. SUCH CAMARADERIE. BUT YOU MAY BE RIGHT.

"YOU MAY BE MORE
USE TO ME DEAD."

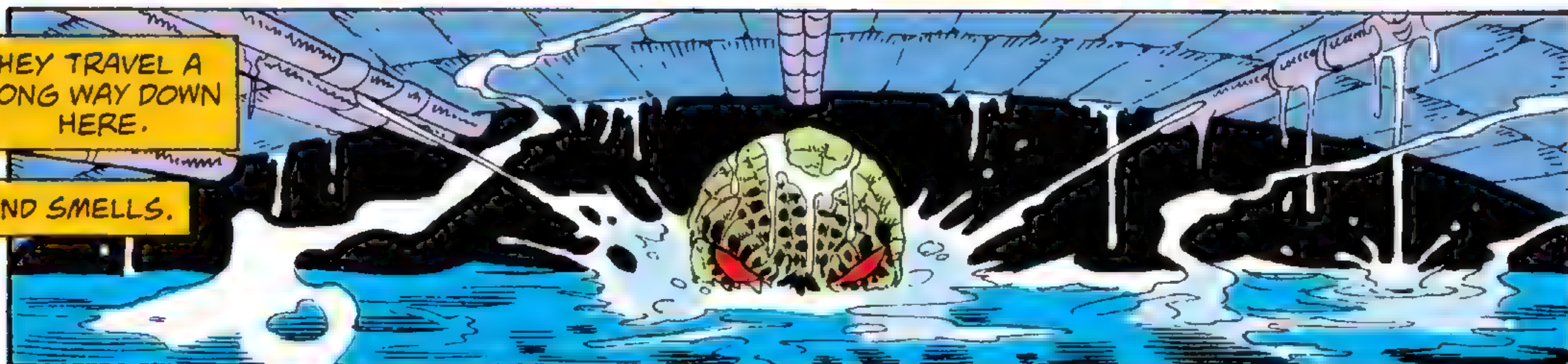
SOUNDS.

VOICES.



THEY TRAVEL A
LONG WAY DOWN
HERE.

AND SMELLS.



A RIOT OF ODORS
AND STENCHES.

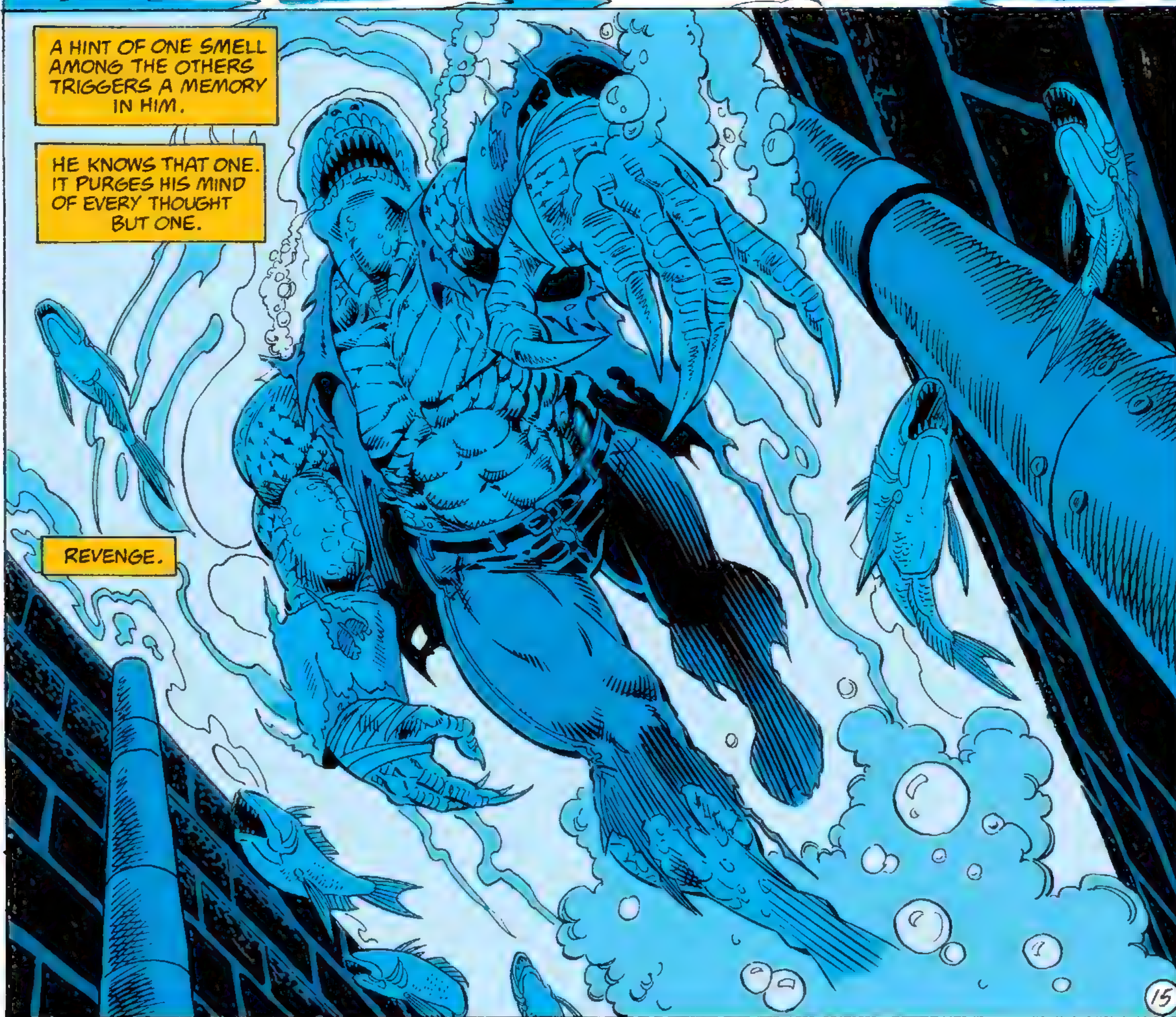
A UNIVERSE OF
FOULNESS AND
STINKS AND
FUMES.



A HINT OF ONE SMELL
AMONG THE OTHERS
TRIGGERS A MEMORY
IN HIM.

HE KNOWS THAT ONE.
IT PURGES HIS MIND
OF EVERY THOUGHT
BUT ONE.

REVENGE.

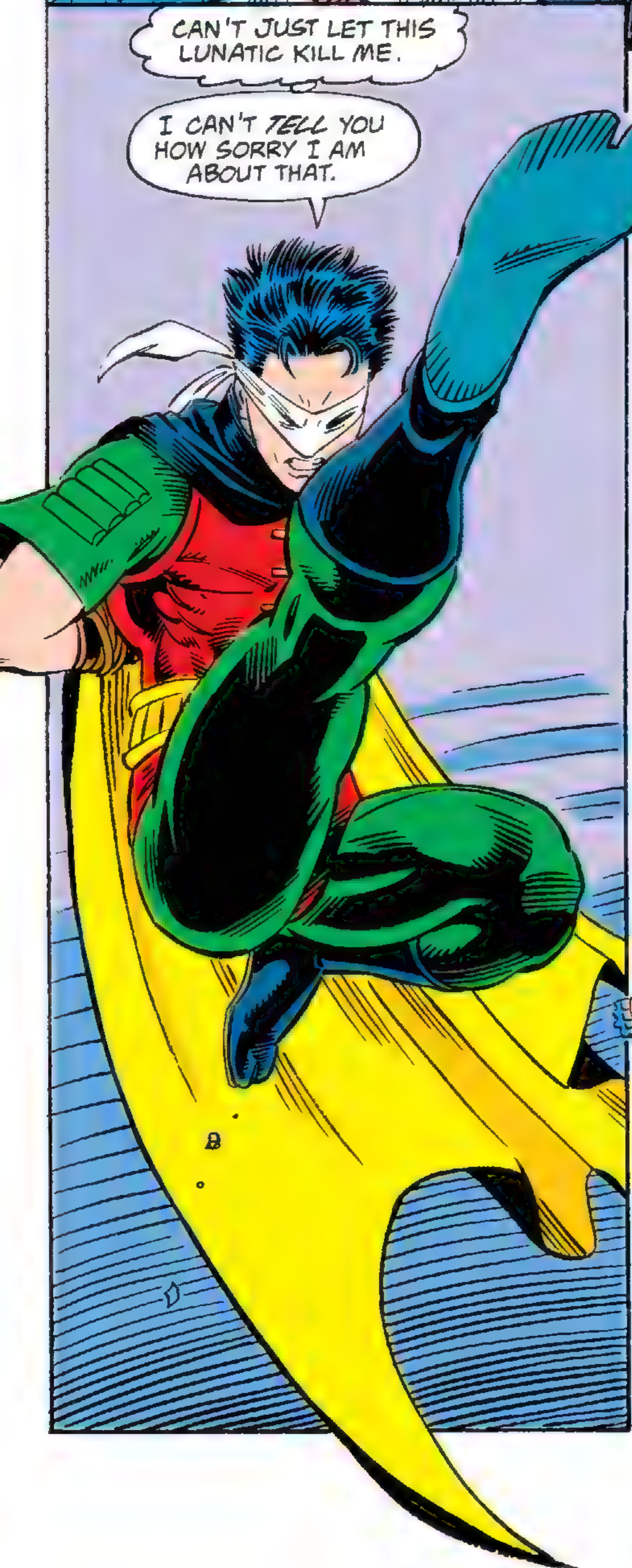




THIS IS HOPELESS. I CAN'T GET A FIX ON HIM WITH ALL THIS NOISE.

I AM GROWING IMPATIENT.

REALLY?



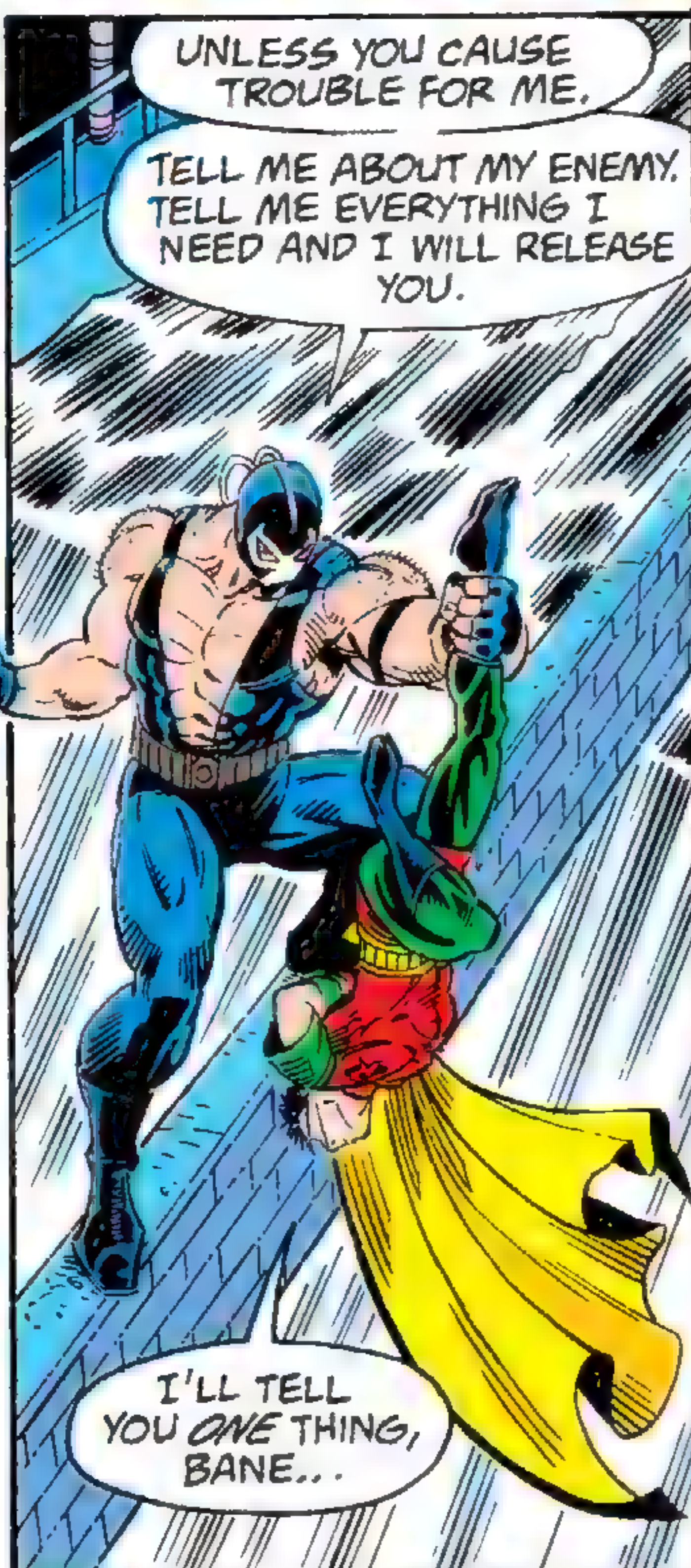
CAN'T JUST LET THIS LUNATIC KILL ME.

I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW SORRY I AM ABOUT THAT.



THIS BEGINS TO BORE ME.

THERE'S SO MUCH YOU COULD TELL ME ABOUT THE BATMAN. I HAVE NO REAL DESIRE TO KILL YOU.



UNLESS YOU CAUSE TROUBLE FOR ME.

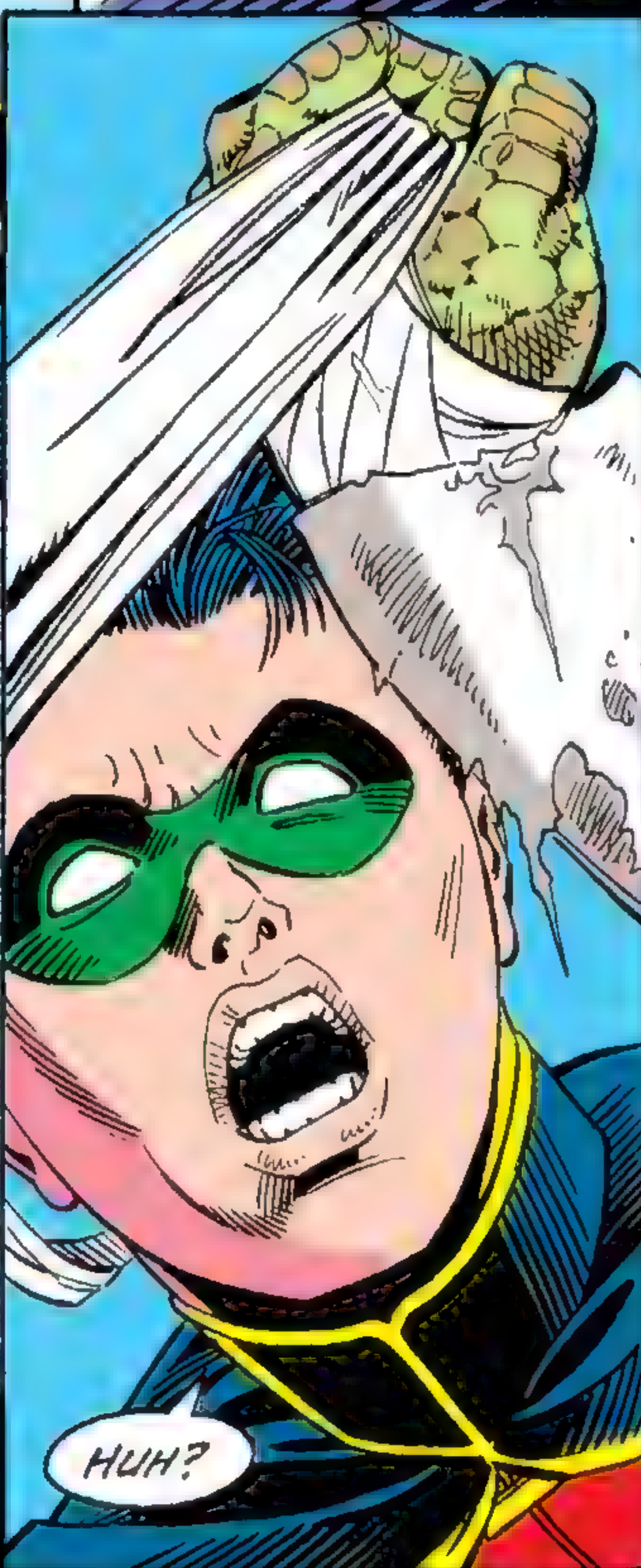
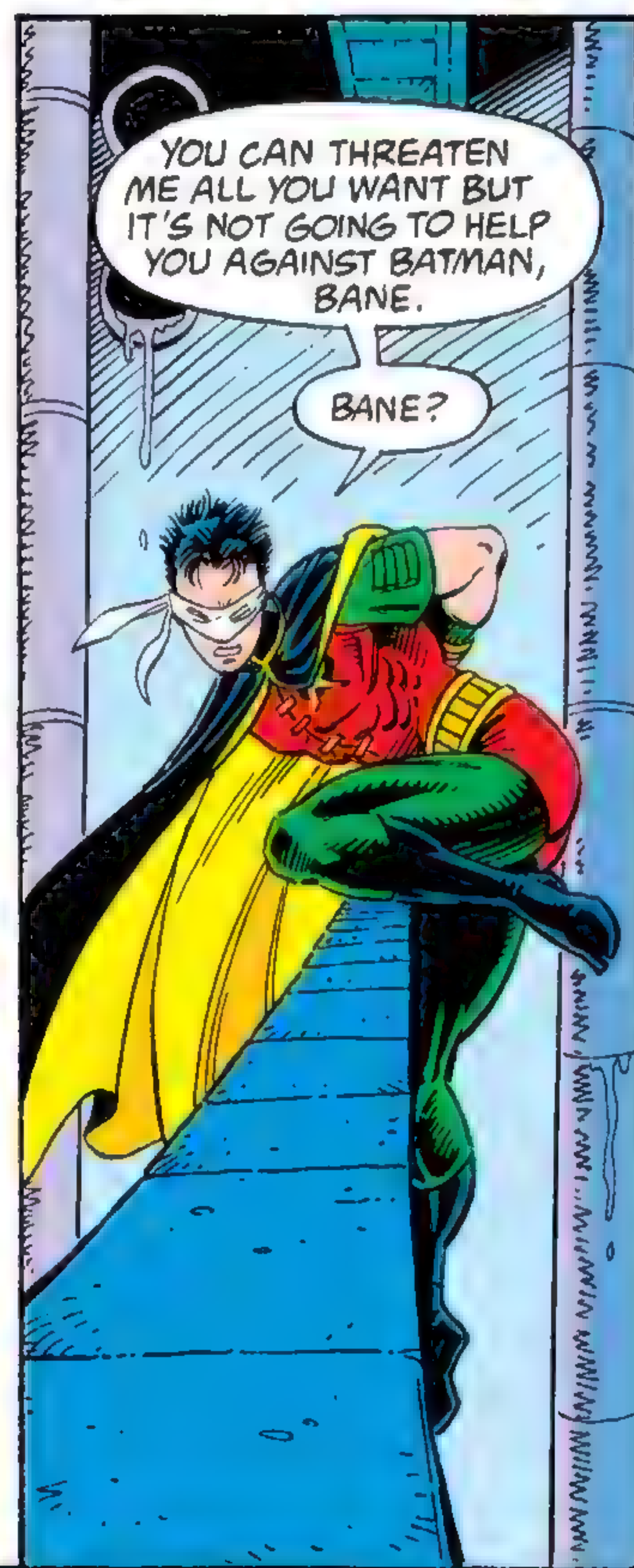
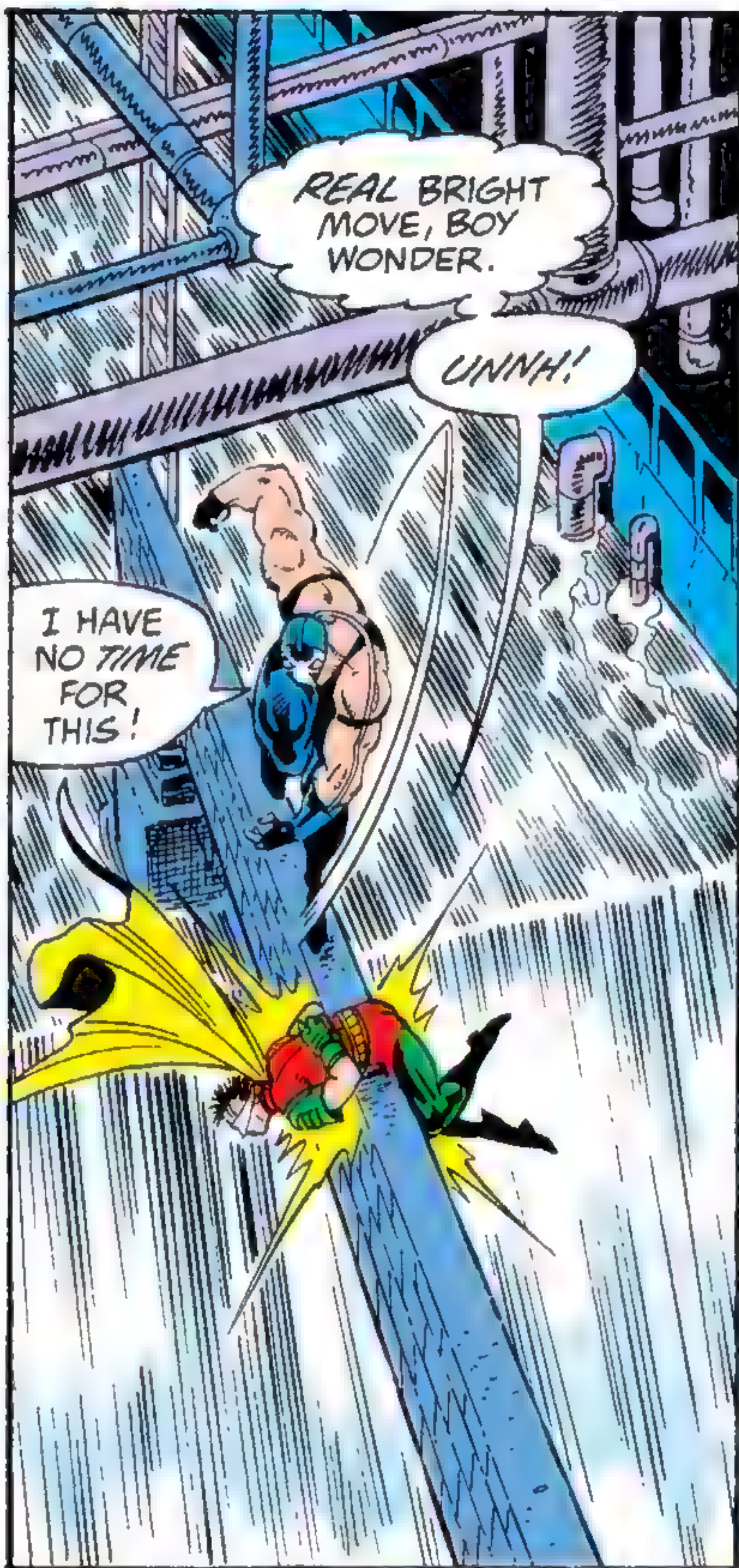
TELL ME ABOUT MY ENEMY. TELL ME EVERYTHING I NEED AND I WILL RELEASE YOU.

I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING, BANE...

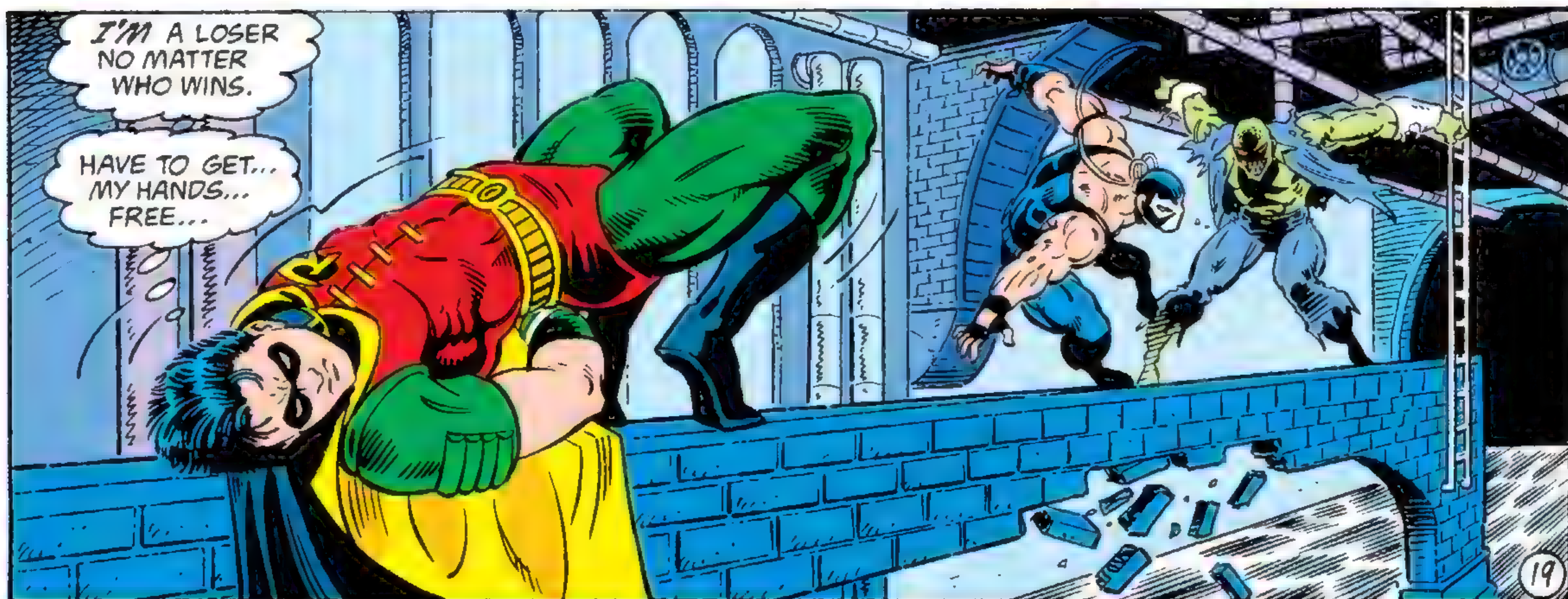
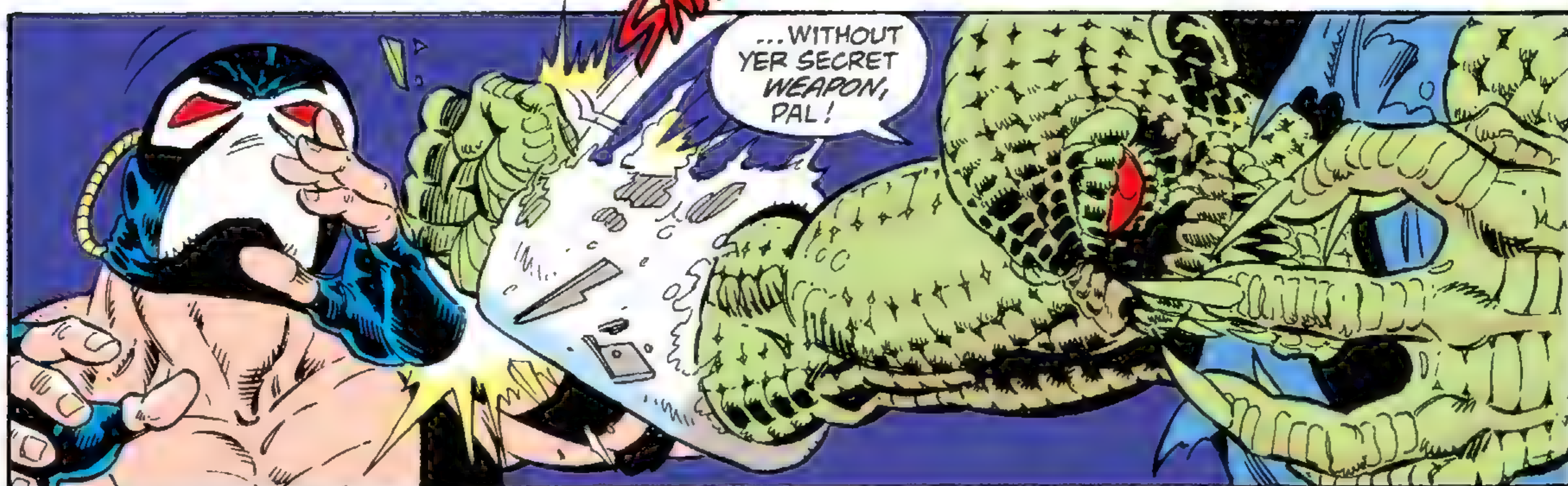
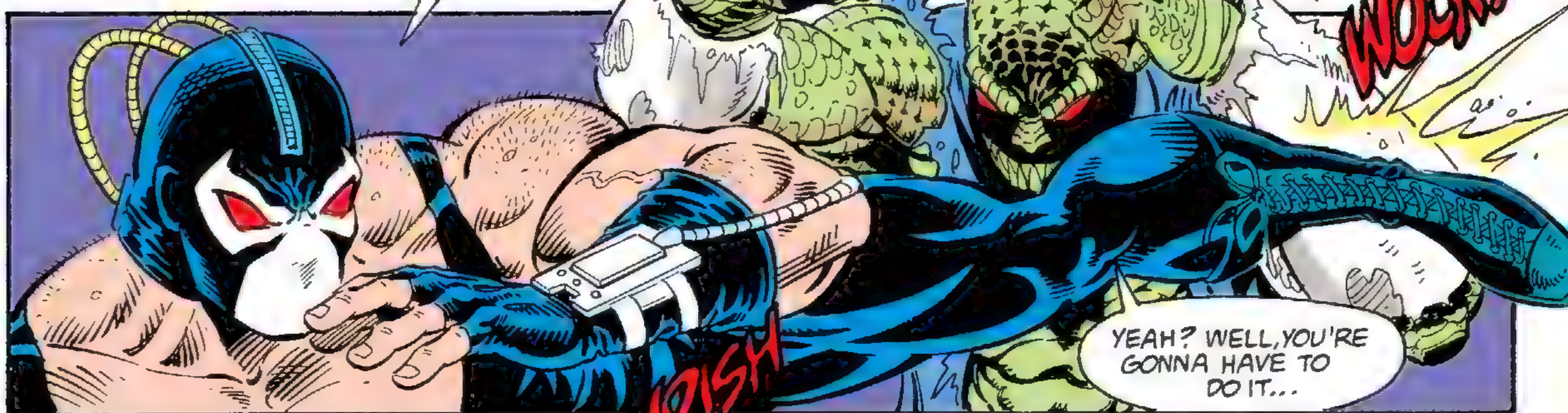
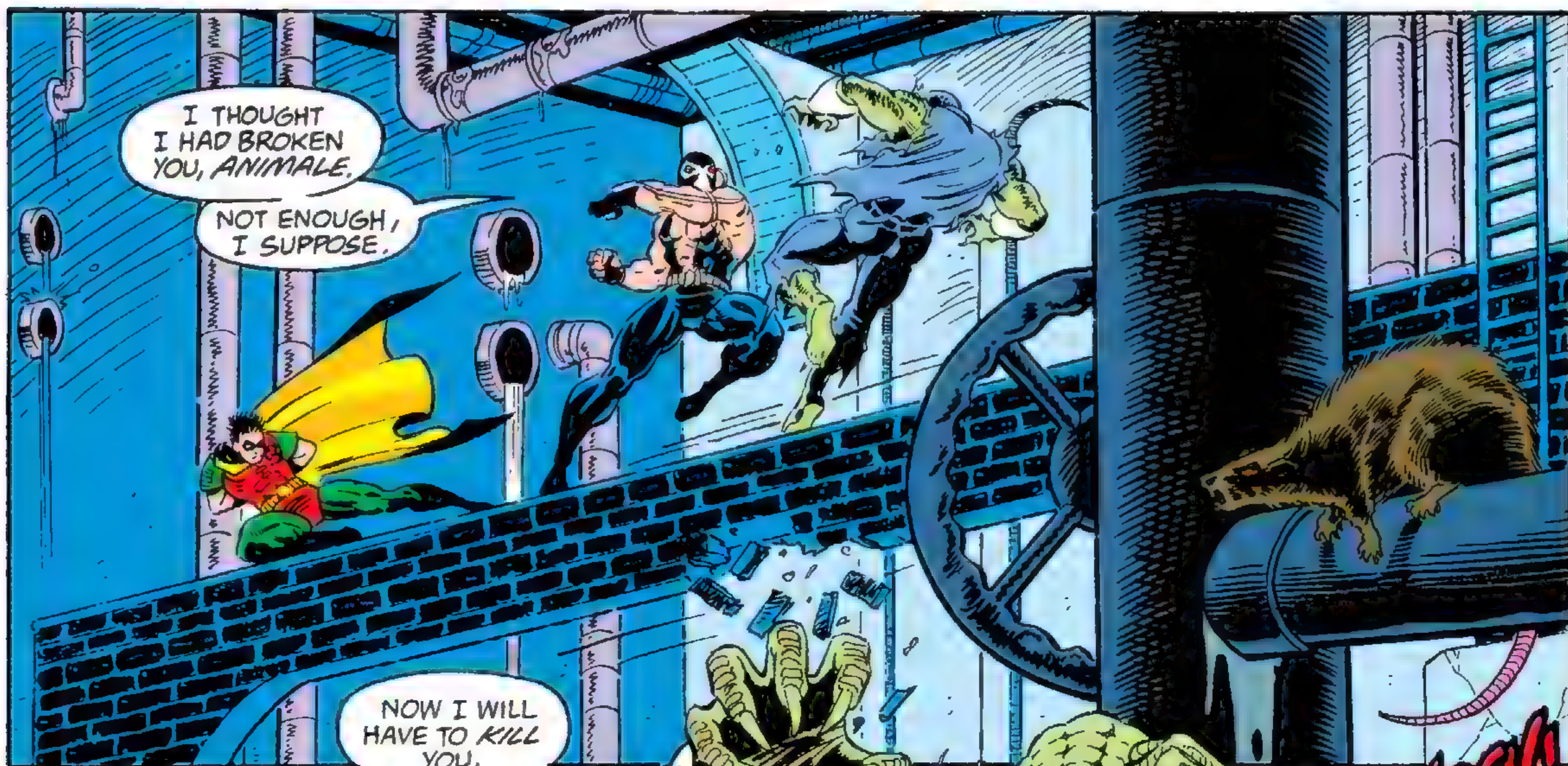


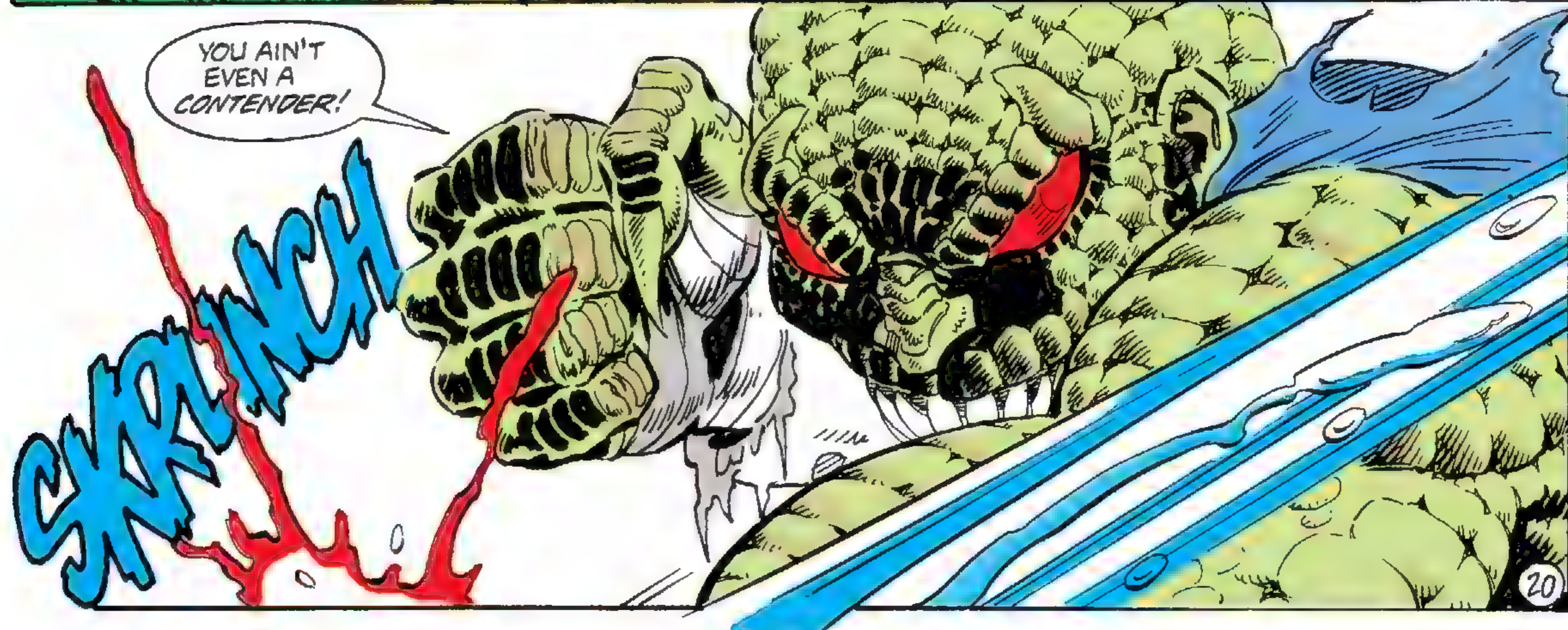
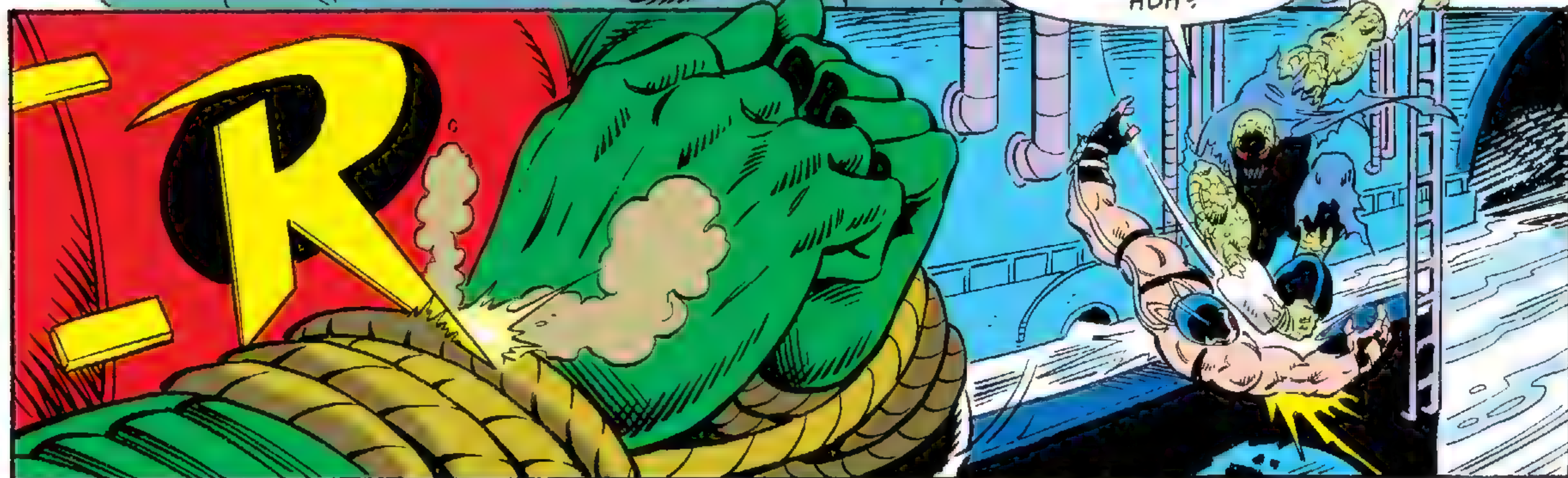
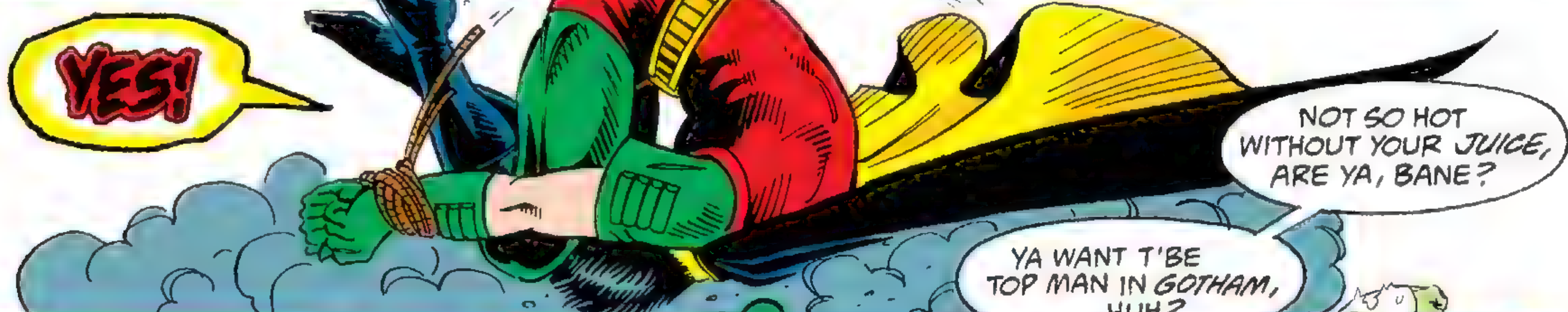
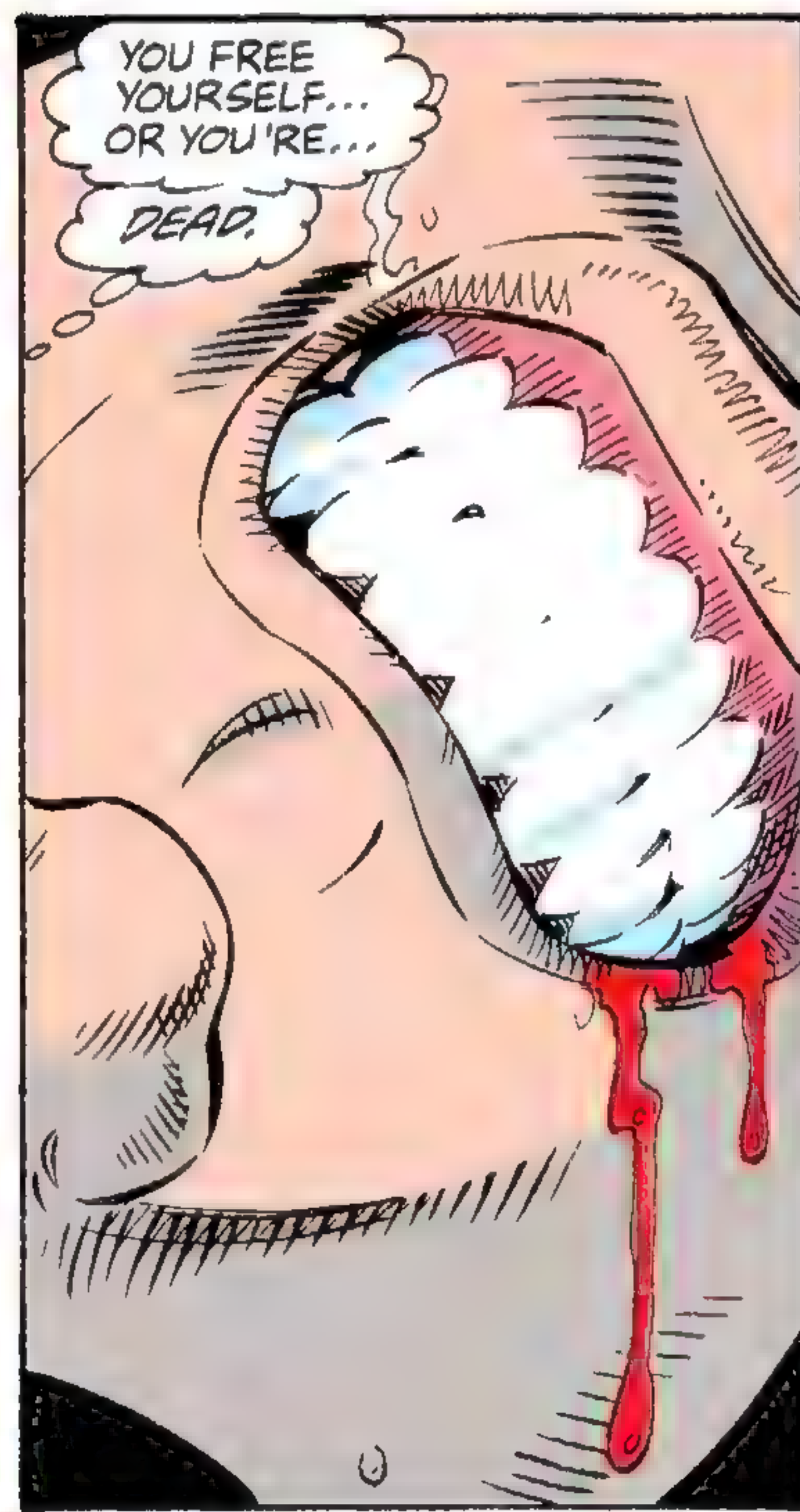
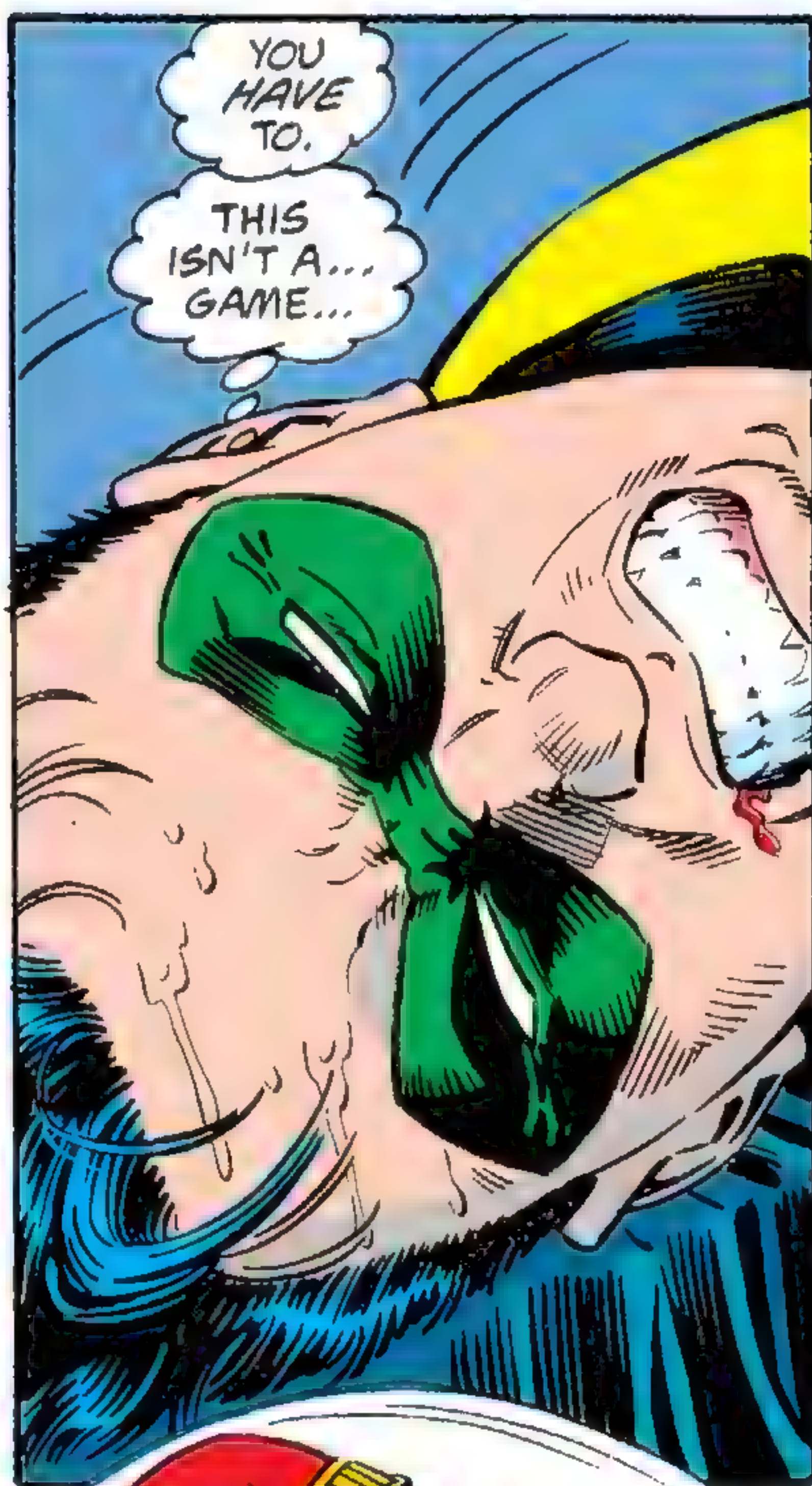
HE'S BEATEN GUYS WHO MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE A GIRL SCOUT.

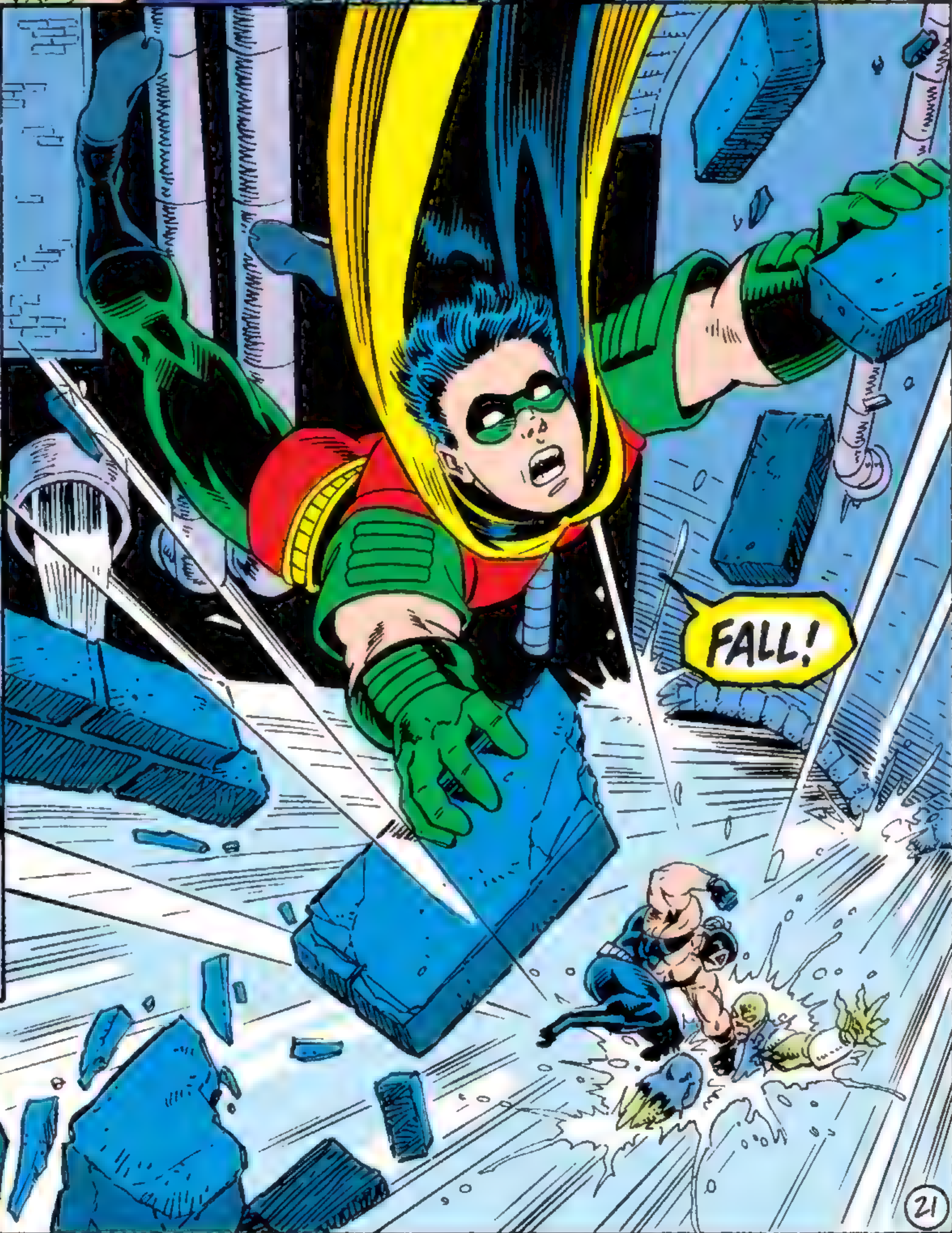
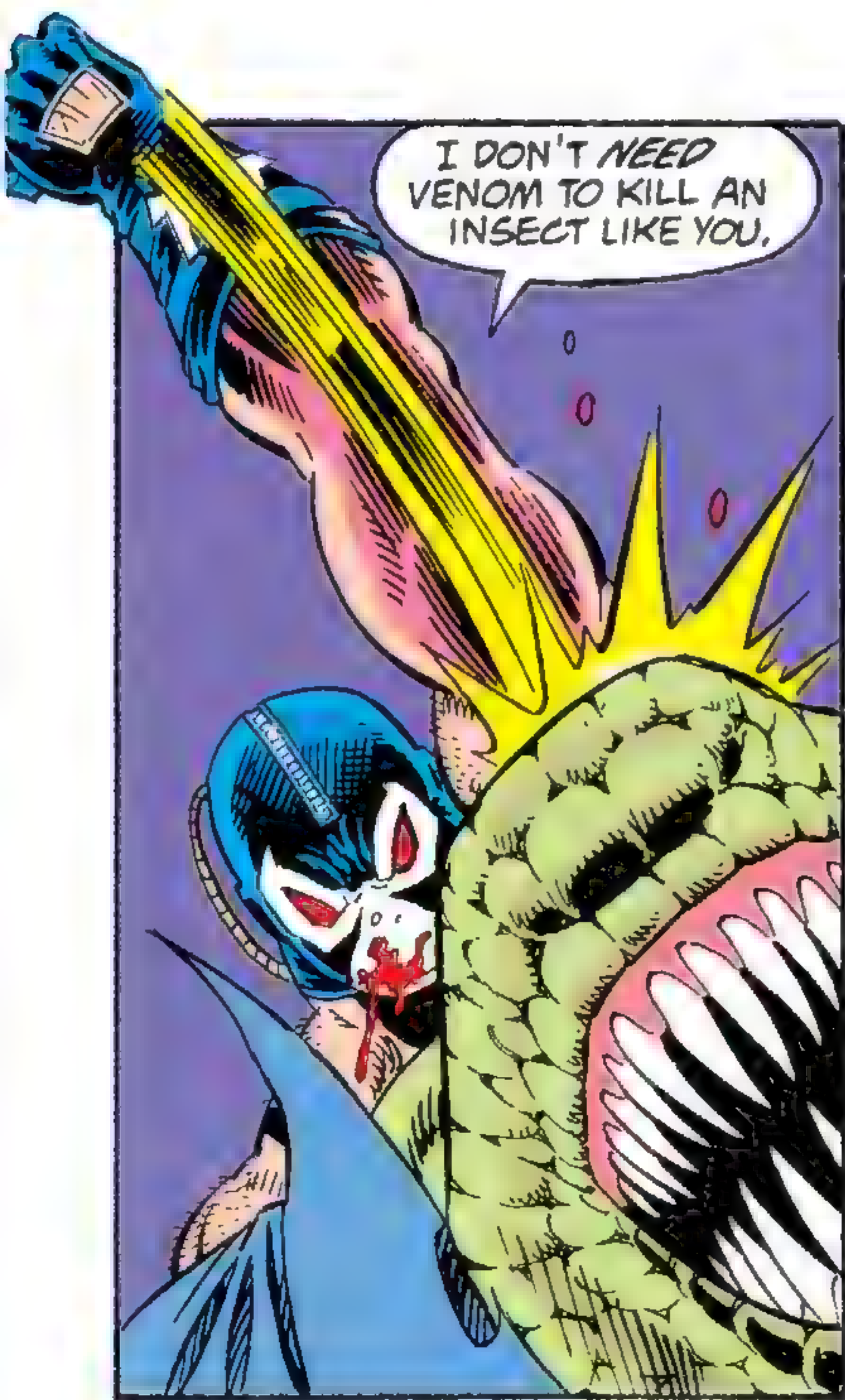
THAT'S RIGHT. SAY SOMETHING TO MAKE HIM MAD. (16)

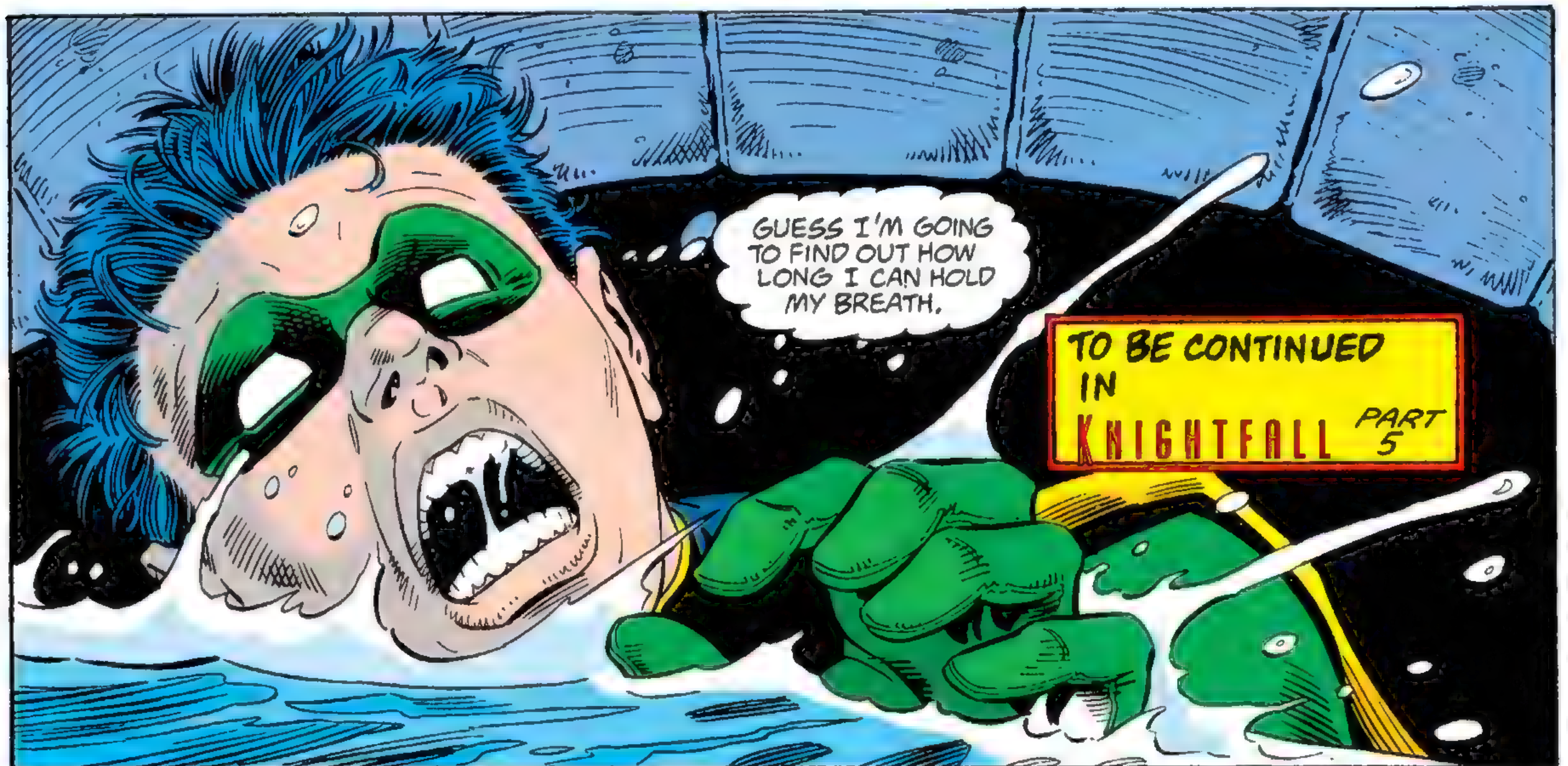
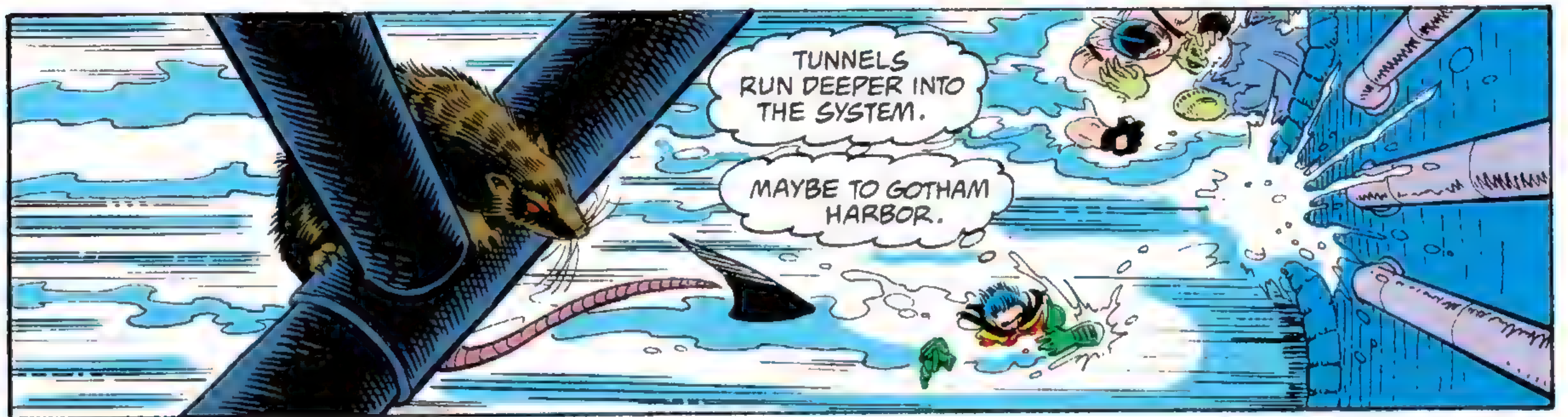
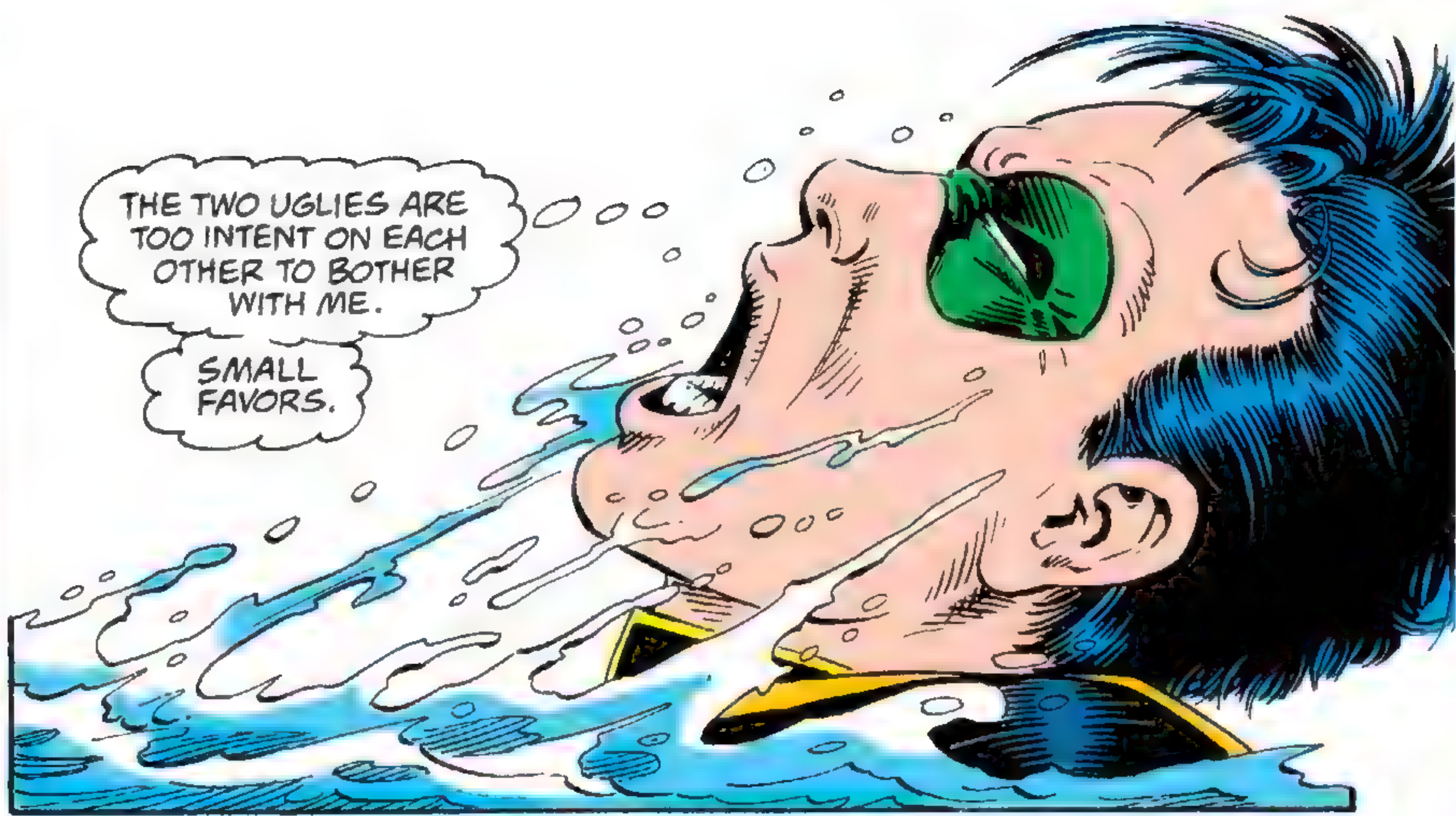
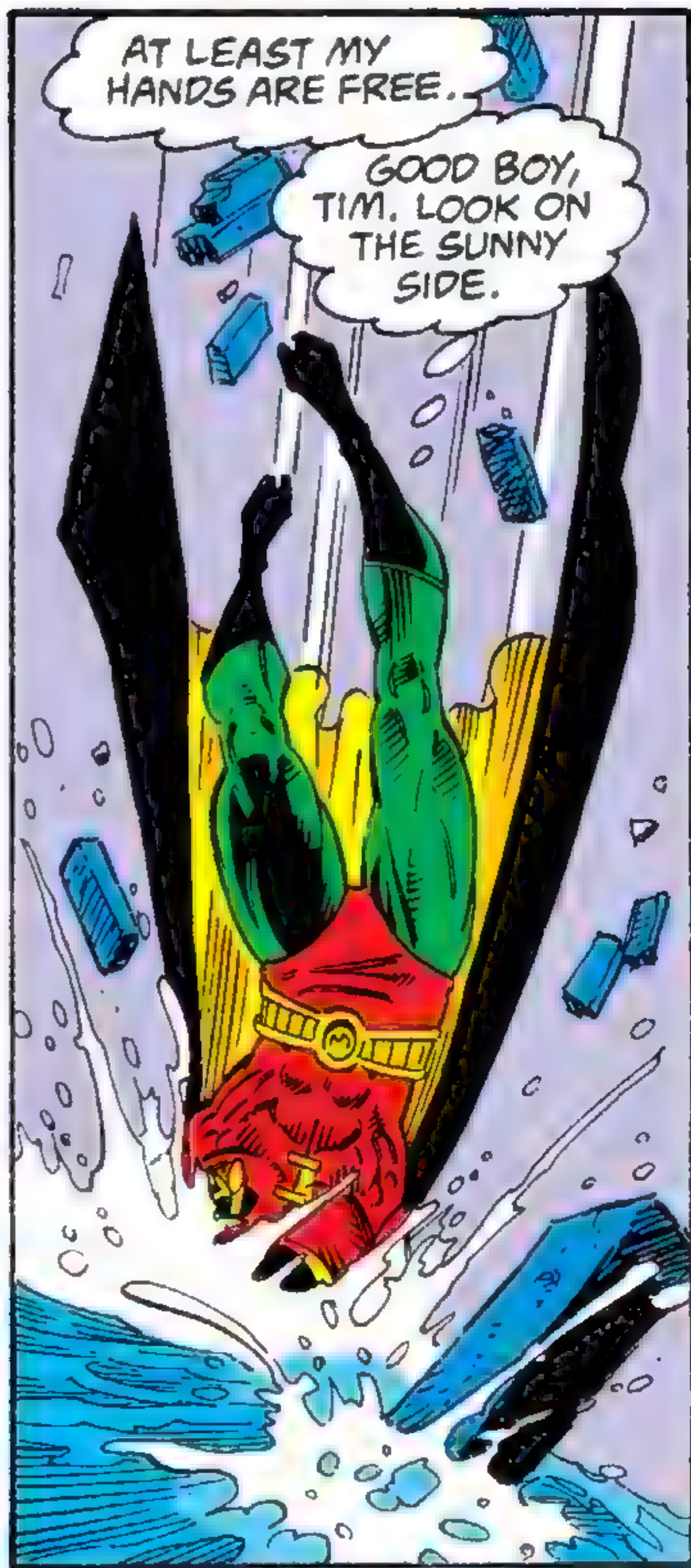




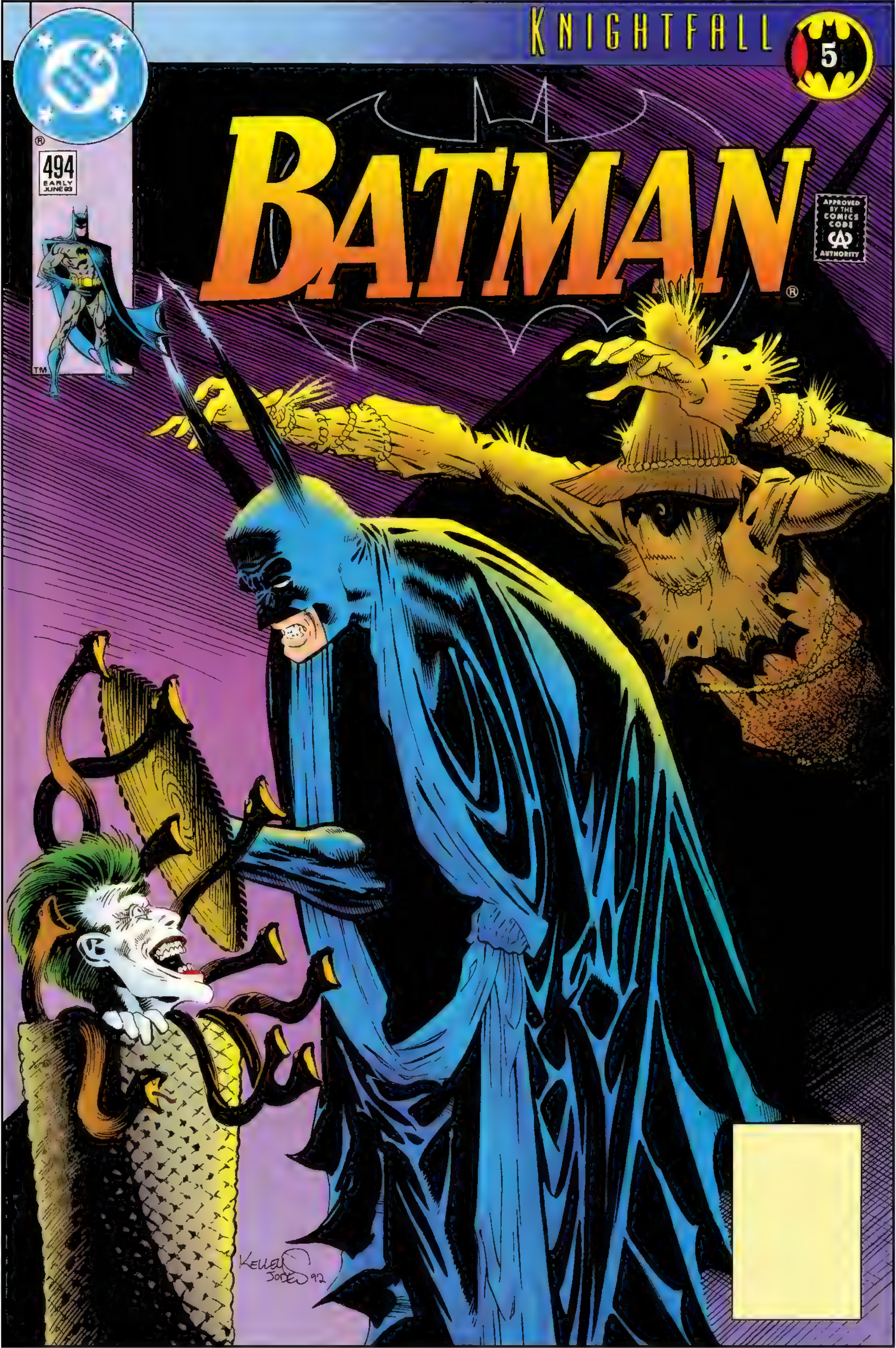








Cover art by KELLEY JONES



THE GOTHAM
SEWERS:

CURRENT'S
TOO STRONG --
SWEEPING ME
TOWARD THE
OUTFLOW TUNNELS
-- ALL THE WAY
TO GOTHAM
HARBOR...

... A
DESTINATION
THAT'LL
DEFINITELY
LEAVE ME
BREATHLESS.

NIGHT TERRORS

BATMAN
CREATED BY

BOB
KANE

DOUG
MOENCH
WRITER

JIM
APARO
PENCILLER

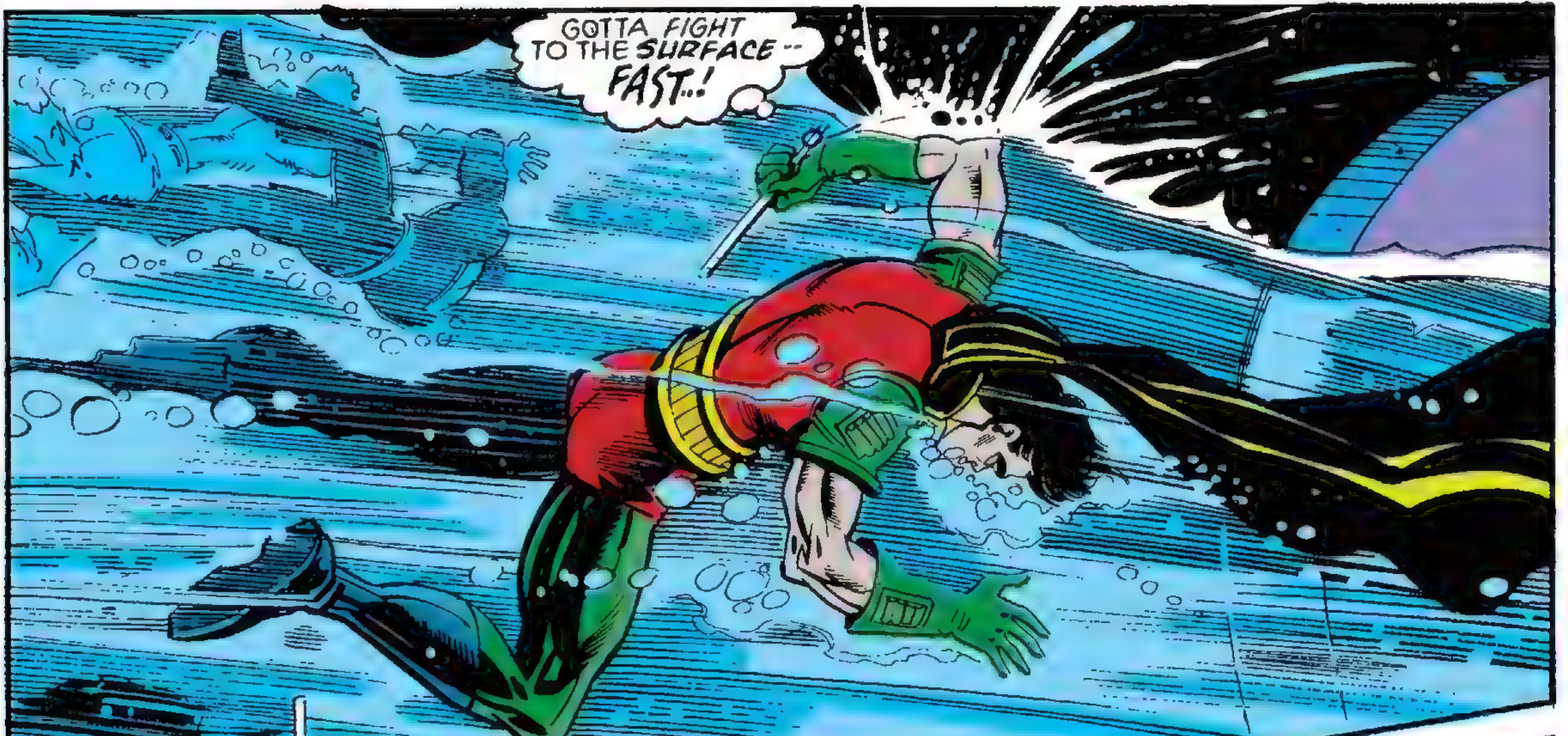
TOM
MANDRAKE
INKER

ADRIENNE
ROY
COLORIST

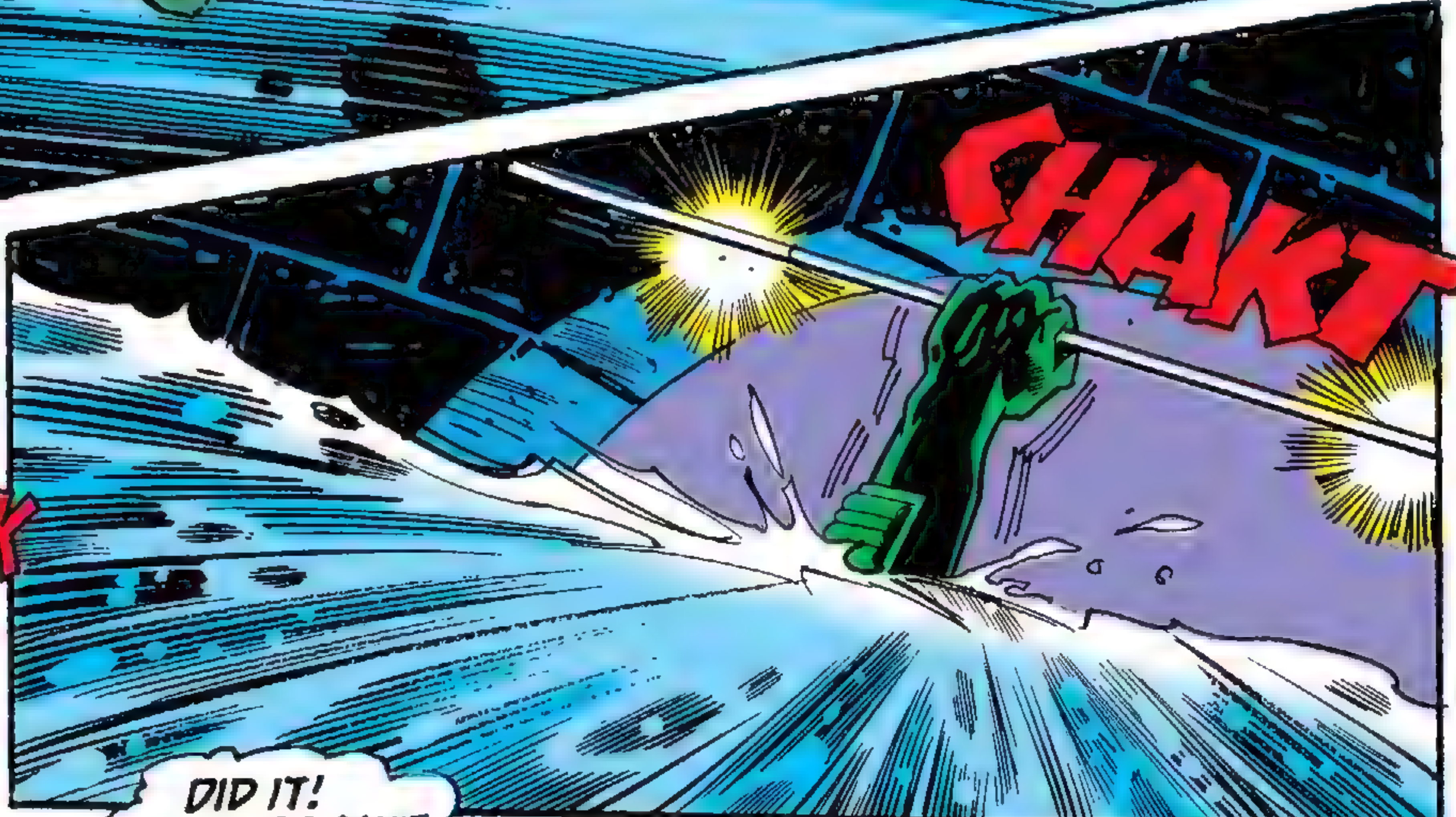
RICHARD
STARKINGS
LETTERER

JORDAN B.
GORFINKEL
ASST. EDITOR

DENNY
O'NEIL
EDITOR



GOTTA FIGHT TO THE SURFACE -- FAST..!



CHAKT



Huhhhh

...AND PIN MY LAST HOPE ON THE STAFF...

SNK

SNK

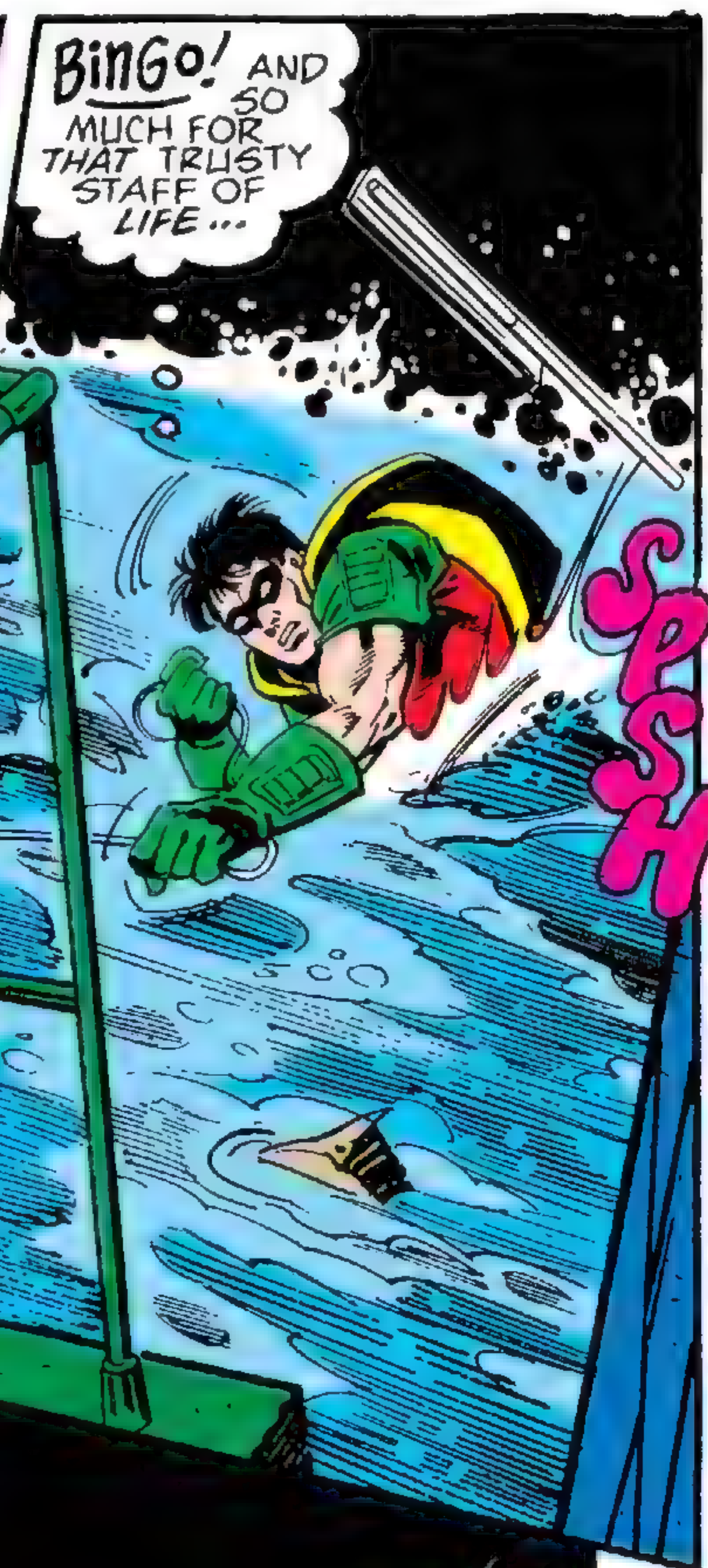
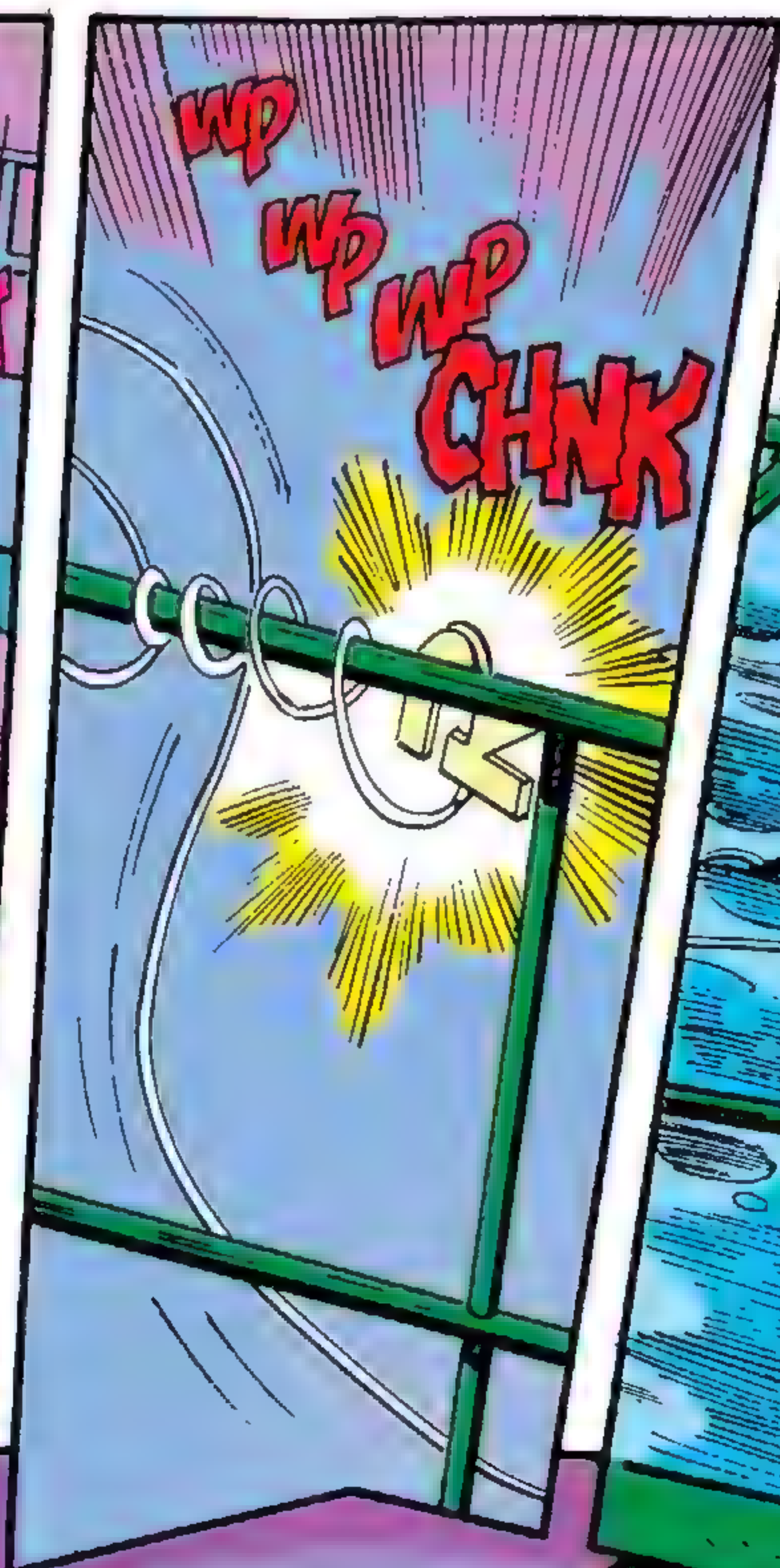
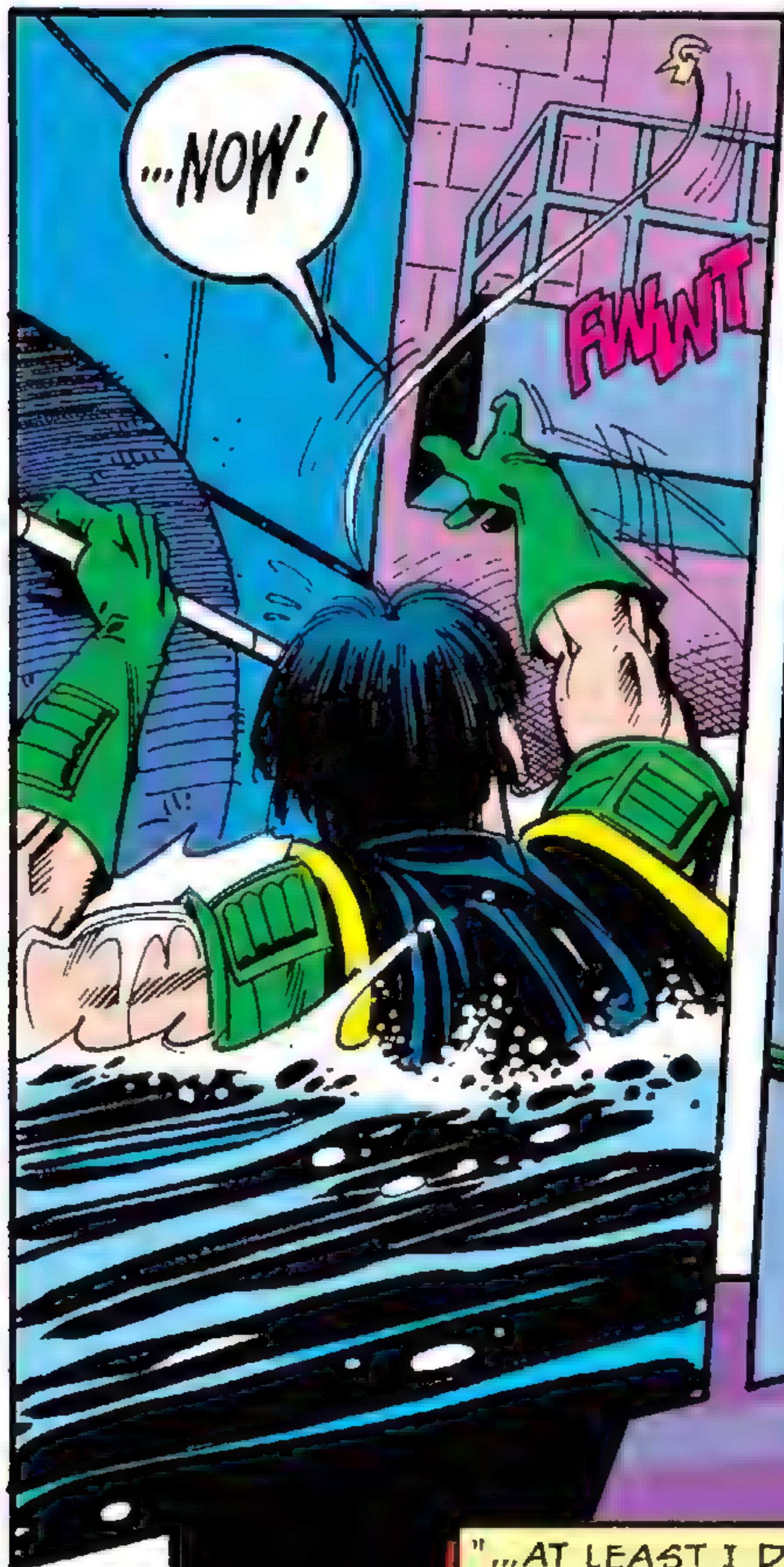


DID IT! -- BUT IF I CAN'T SLICK UP ENOUGH STRENGTH FOR THE NEXT STEP...

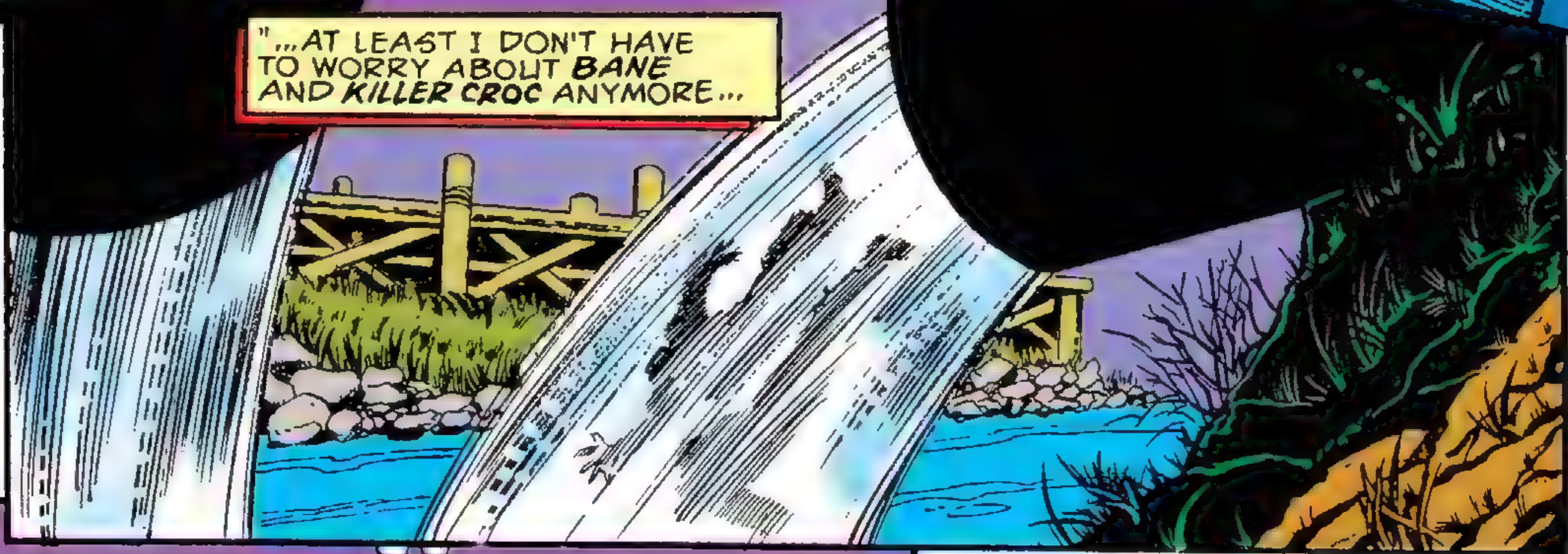
...I'LL JUST DROWN HERE INSTEAD OF HALFWAY THROUGH THE TUNNEL...



THIS IS IT -- TIME FOR THE LAST-GASP EFFORT...

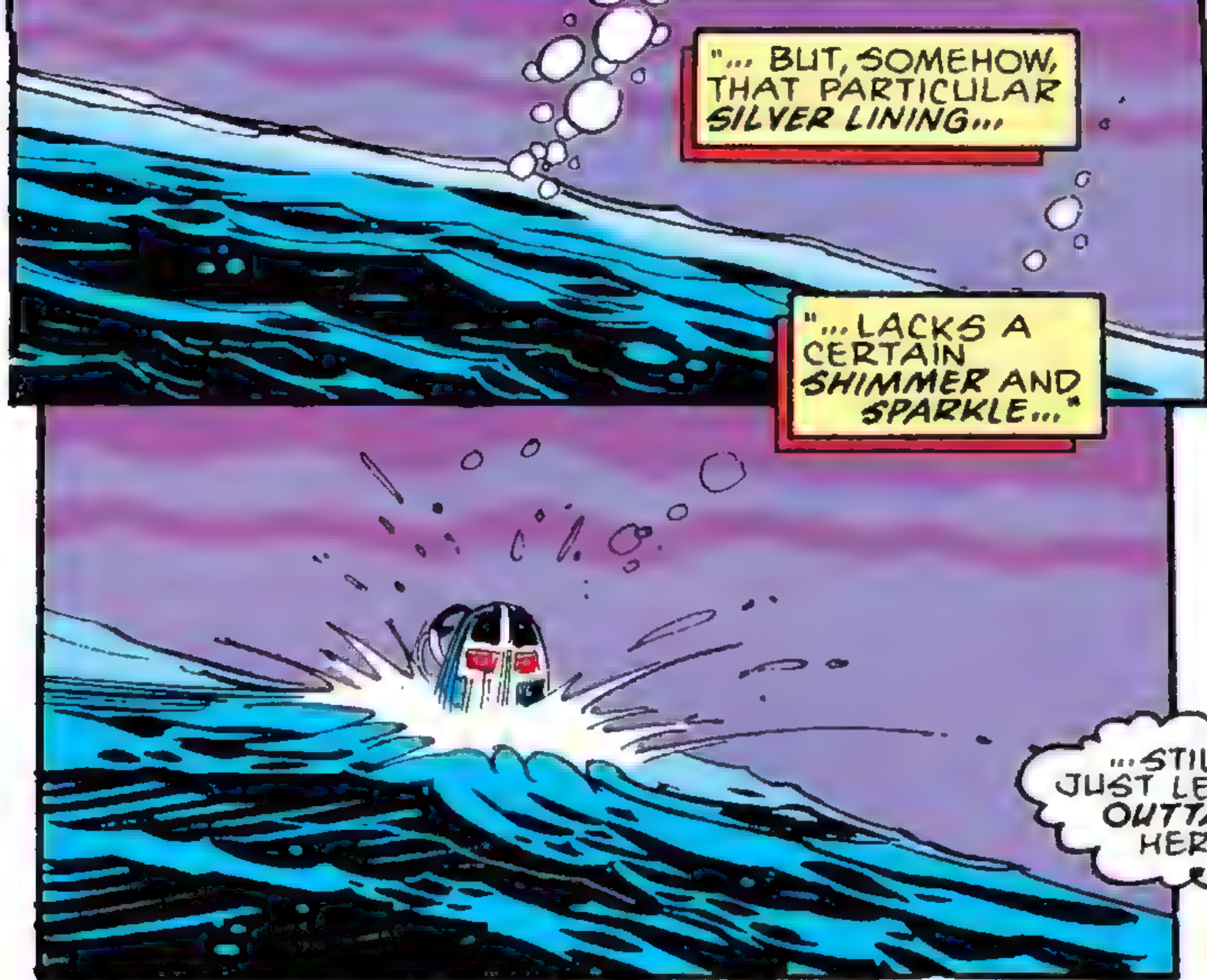


"...AT LEAST I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BANE AND KILLER CROC ANYMORE..."



"... BUT, SOMEHOW, THAT PARTICULAR SILVER LINING..."

"... LACKS A CERTAIN SHIMMER AND SPARKLE..."

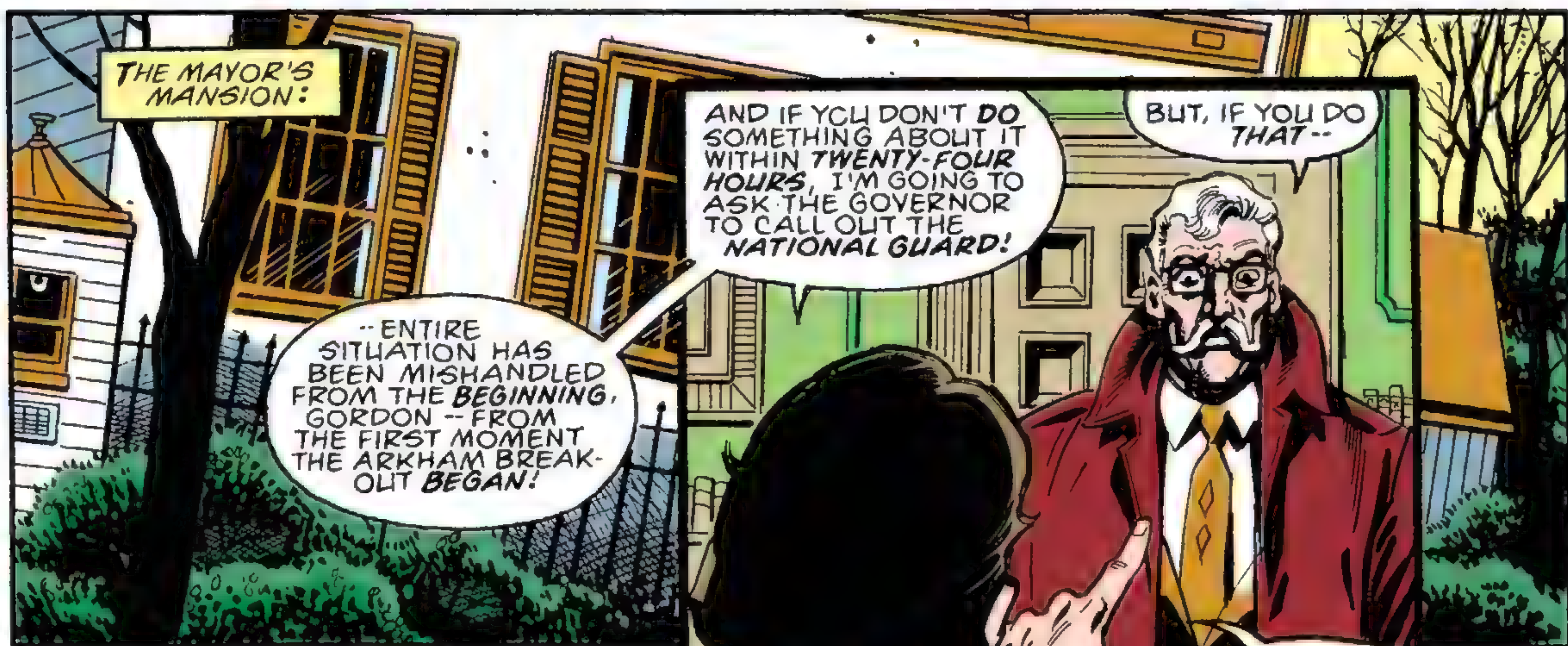


"...STILL, JUST LEMME OUTTA HERE..."









THE MAYOR'S MANSION:

-- ENTIRE SITUATION HAS BEEN MISHANDLED FROM THE BEGINNING, GORDON -- FROM THE FIRST MOMENT THE ARKHAM BREAK-OUT BEGAN!

AND IF YOU DON'T DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, I'M GOING TO ASK THE GOVERNOR TO CALL OUT THE NATIONAL GUARD!

BUT, IF YOU DO THAT--

THAT'S RIGHT, GORDON...



THE MAYOR OF THIS CITY WIELDS IMMENSE POWER, AND WITH THE PUBLICITY SURROUNDING A SINGLE PHONE CALL...



--I CAN DESTROY YOUR CAREER.

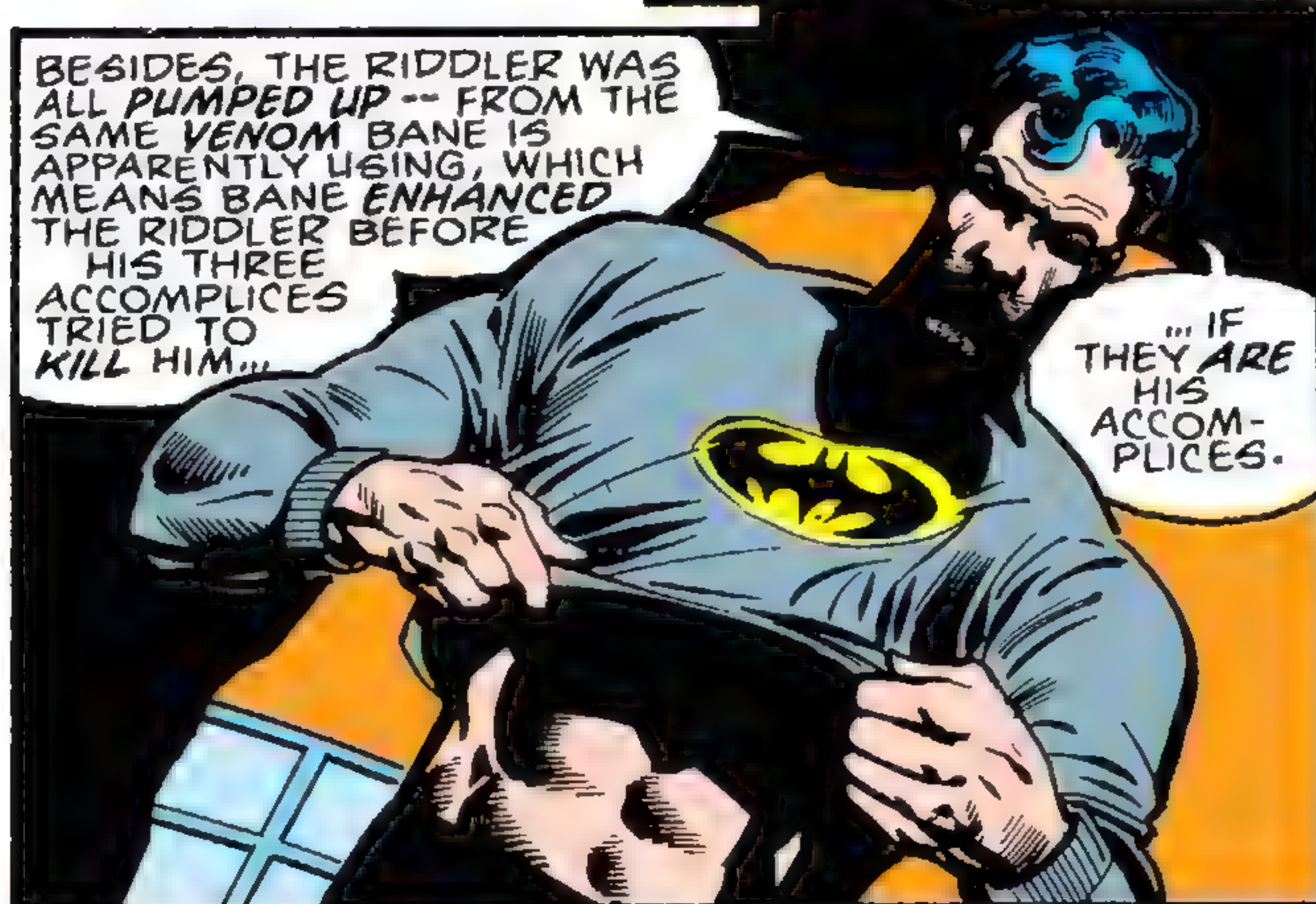
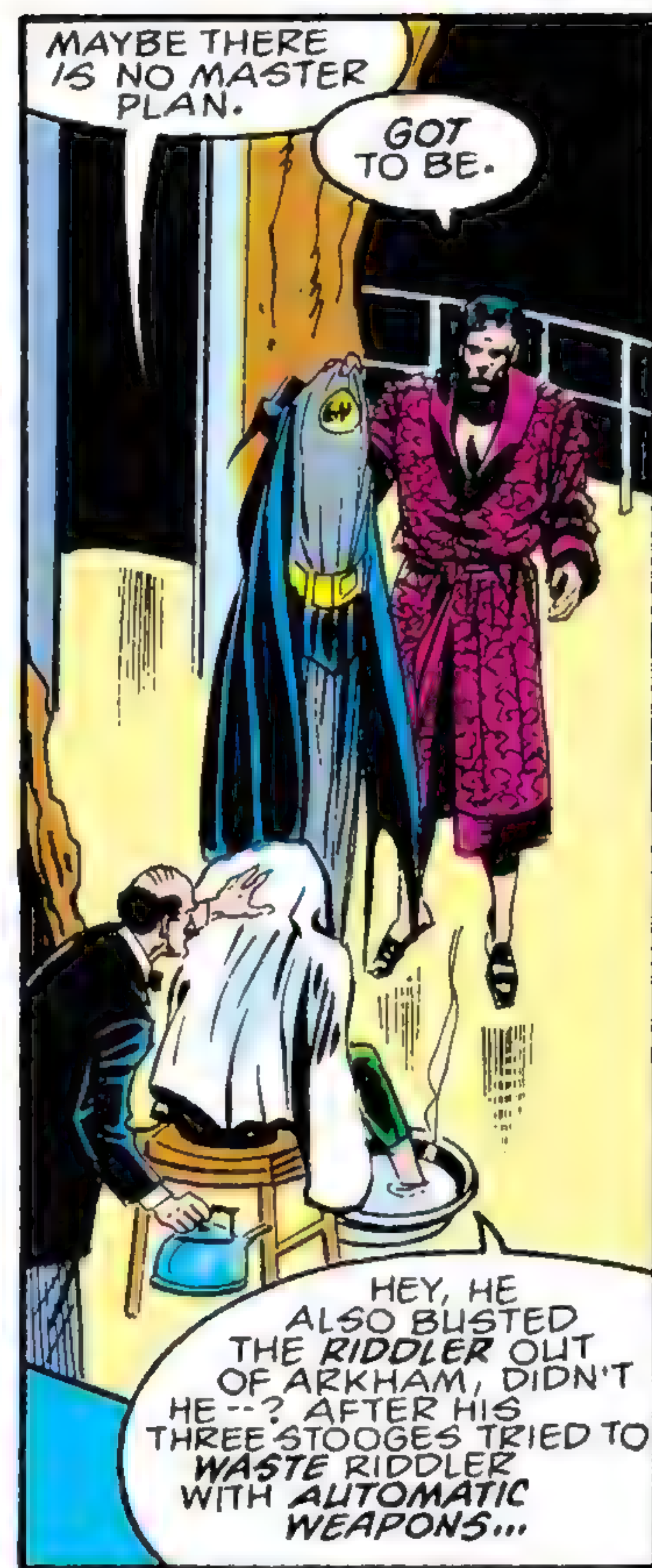
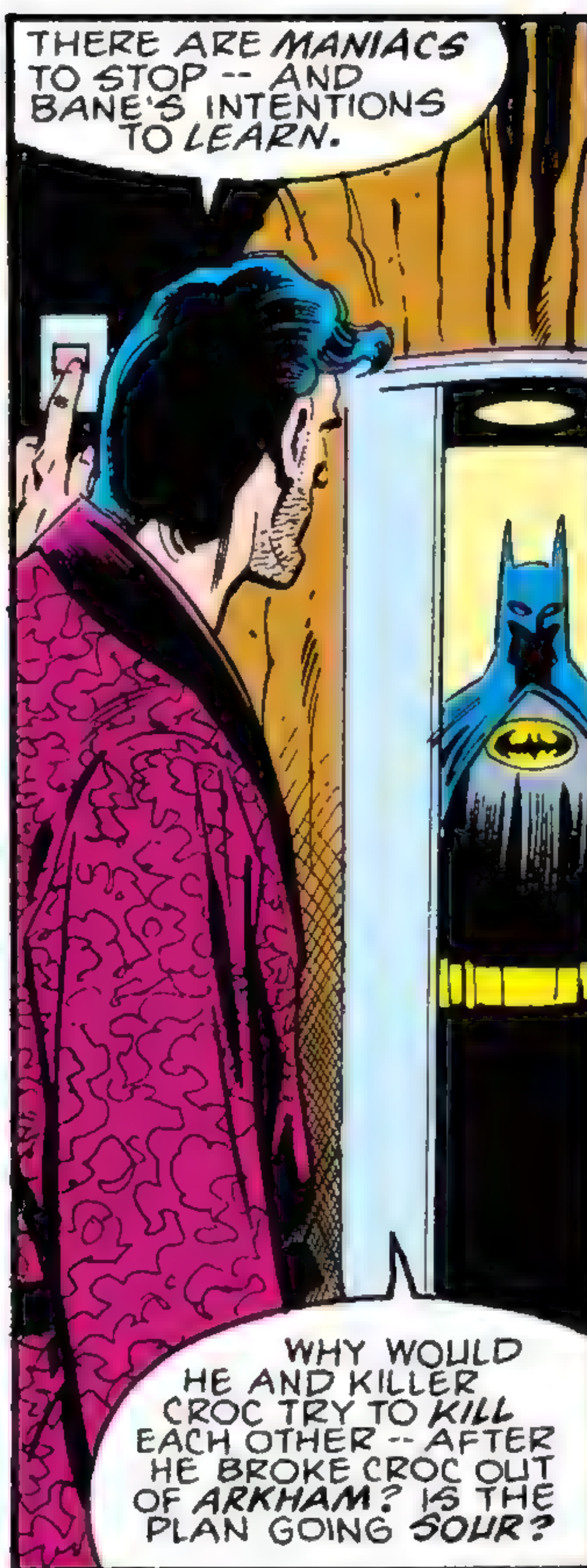


THE CAVE:

--SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT?

ME? WHAT ABOUT YOU, MAN?

STAY HUNCHED OVER, TIMOTHY...





I STILL DON'T BUY IT, ROBIN.

AT THE VERY LEAST, BANE IS USING THE ARKHAM INMATES HE FREED -- FOR A DELIBERATE PURPOSE.

RIGHT-- AND HE'S USING THEM TO DESTROY YOU --!



THAT'S THE PURPOSE-- AND YOU CAN'T FALL FOR IT!

WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE, ROBIN? LETTING MADNESS RUN ROUGHSHOD OVER GOTHAM?

I TOLD YOU WHAT ZSASZ DID!



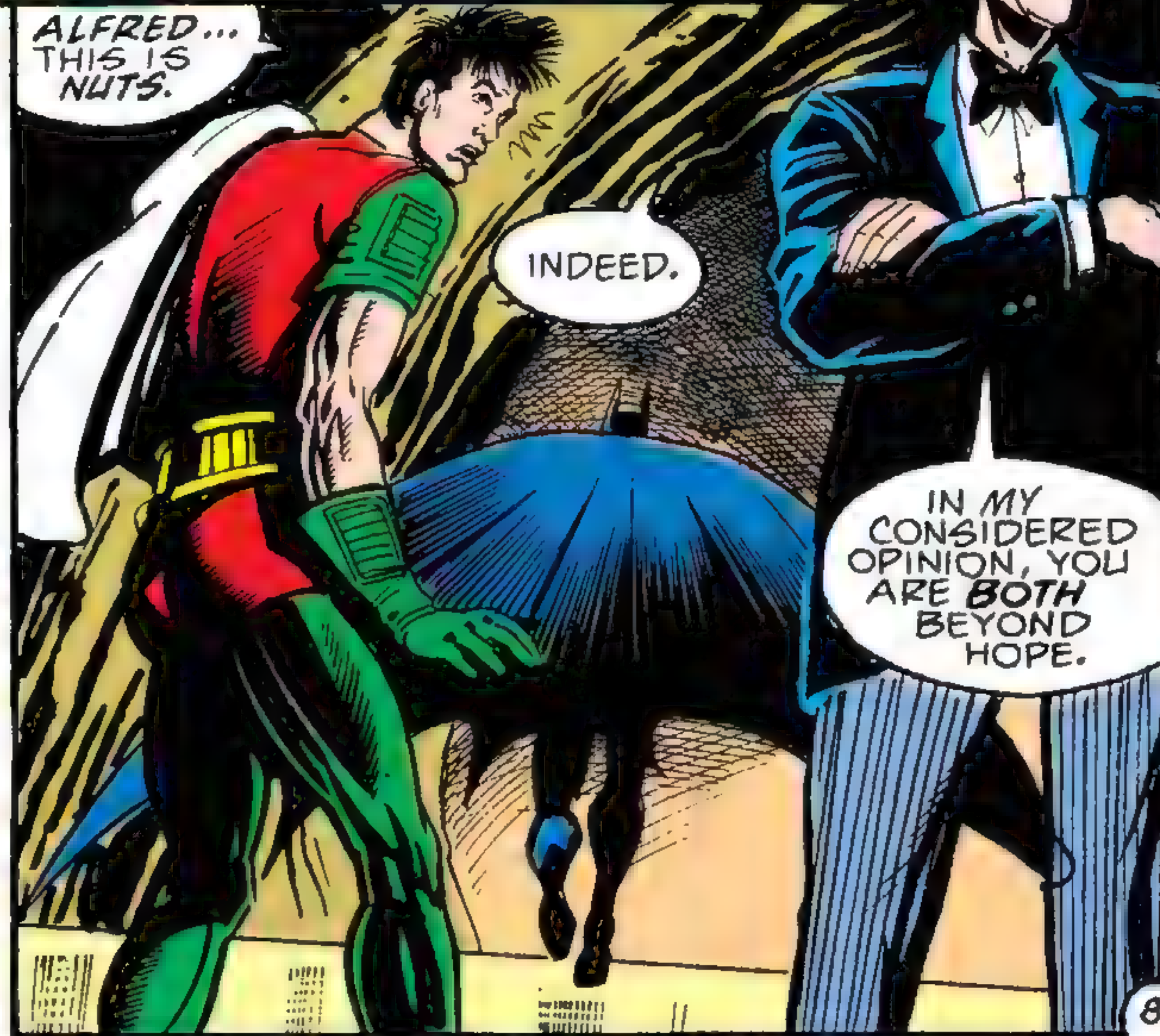
HEY, I KNOW THE SITUATION, BUT YOU NEED A REST.

MAYBE IF AZRAEL AND I --

JEAN-PAUL IS FORMIDABLE -- MAYBE EVEN UP TO THE TASK...



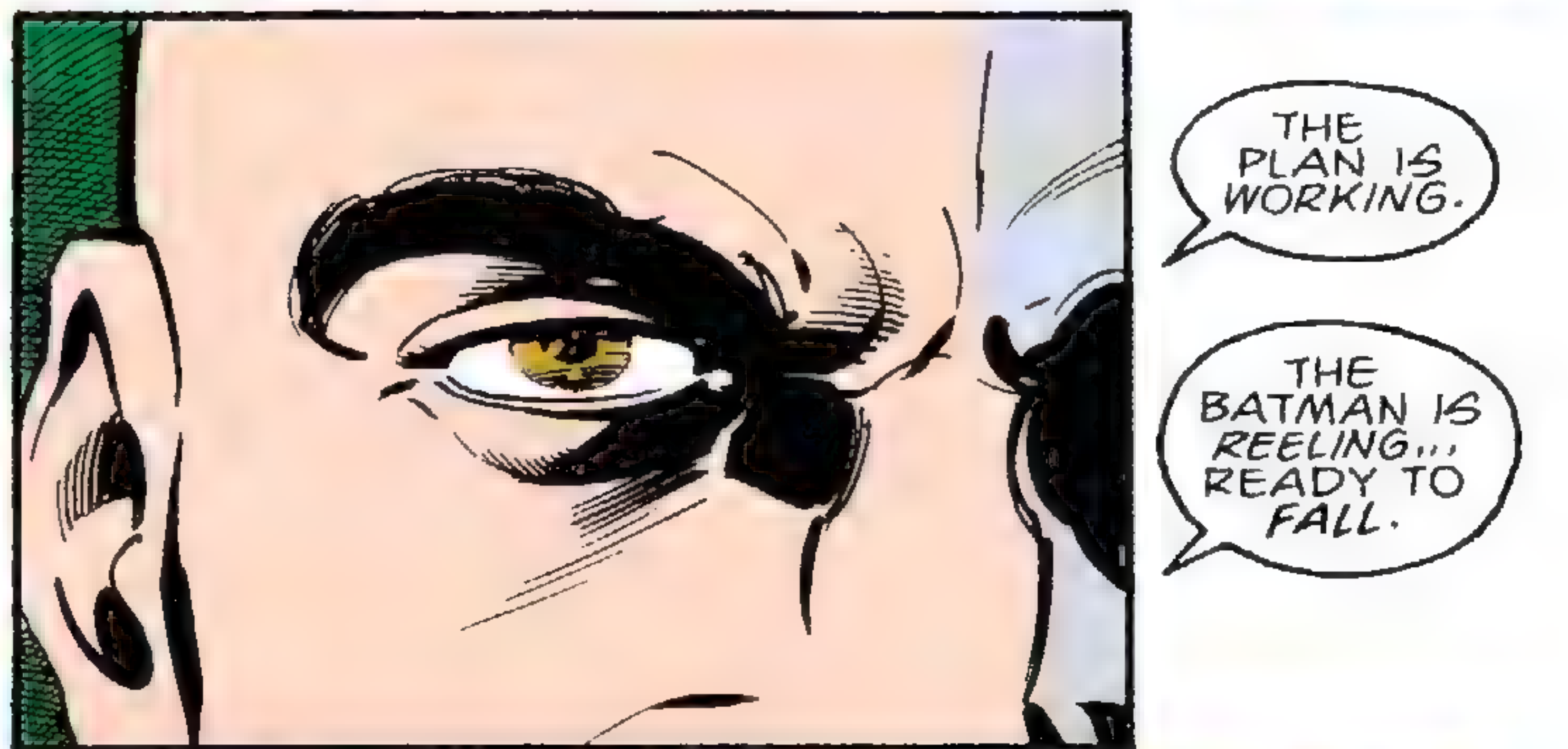
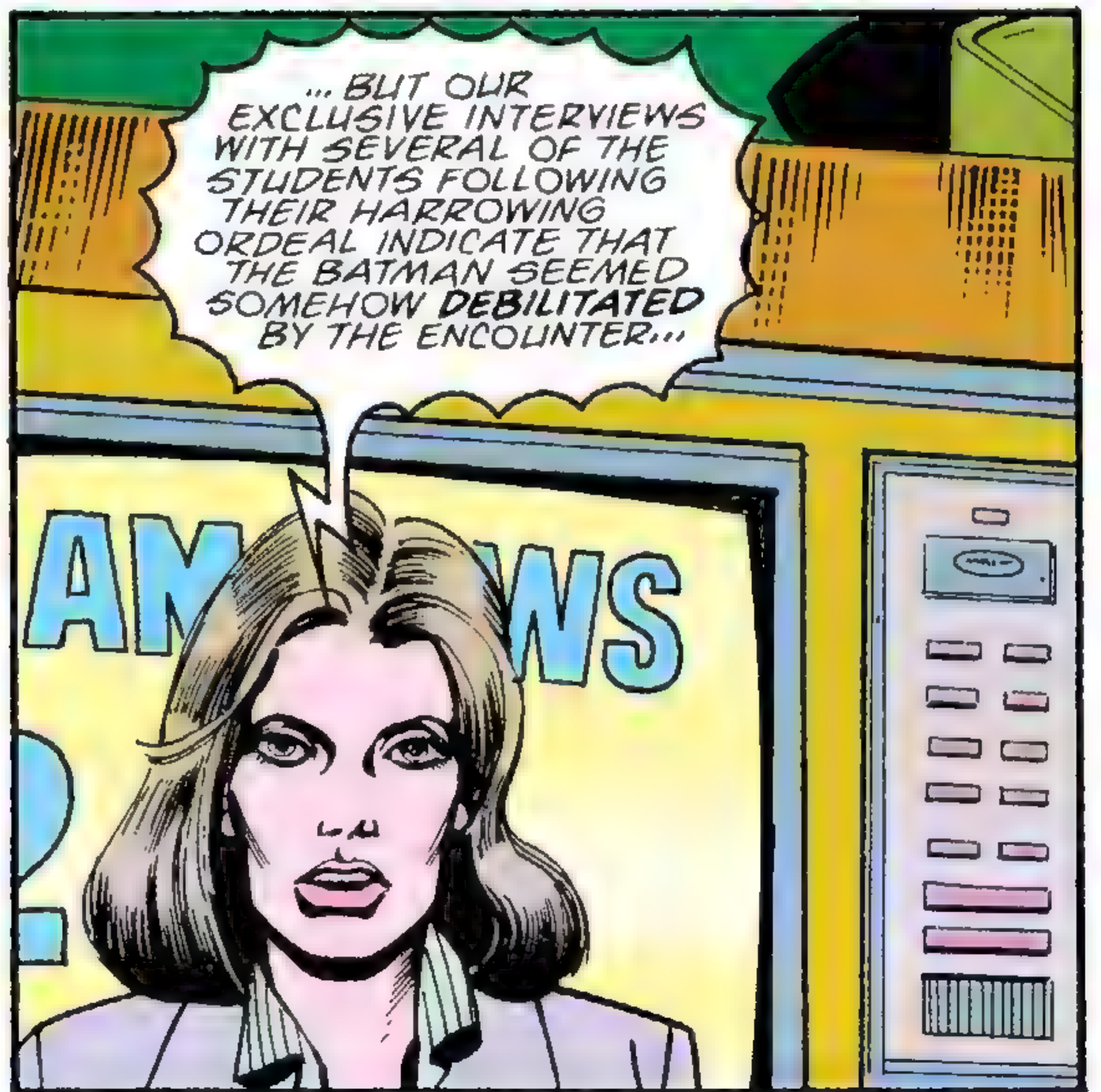
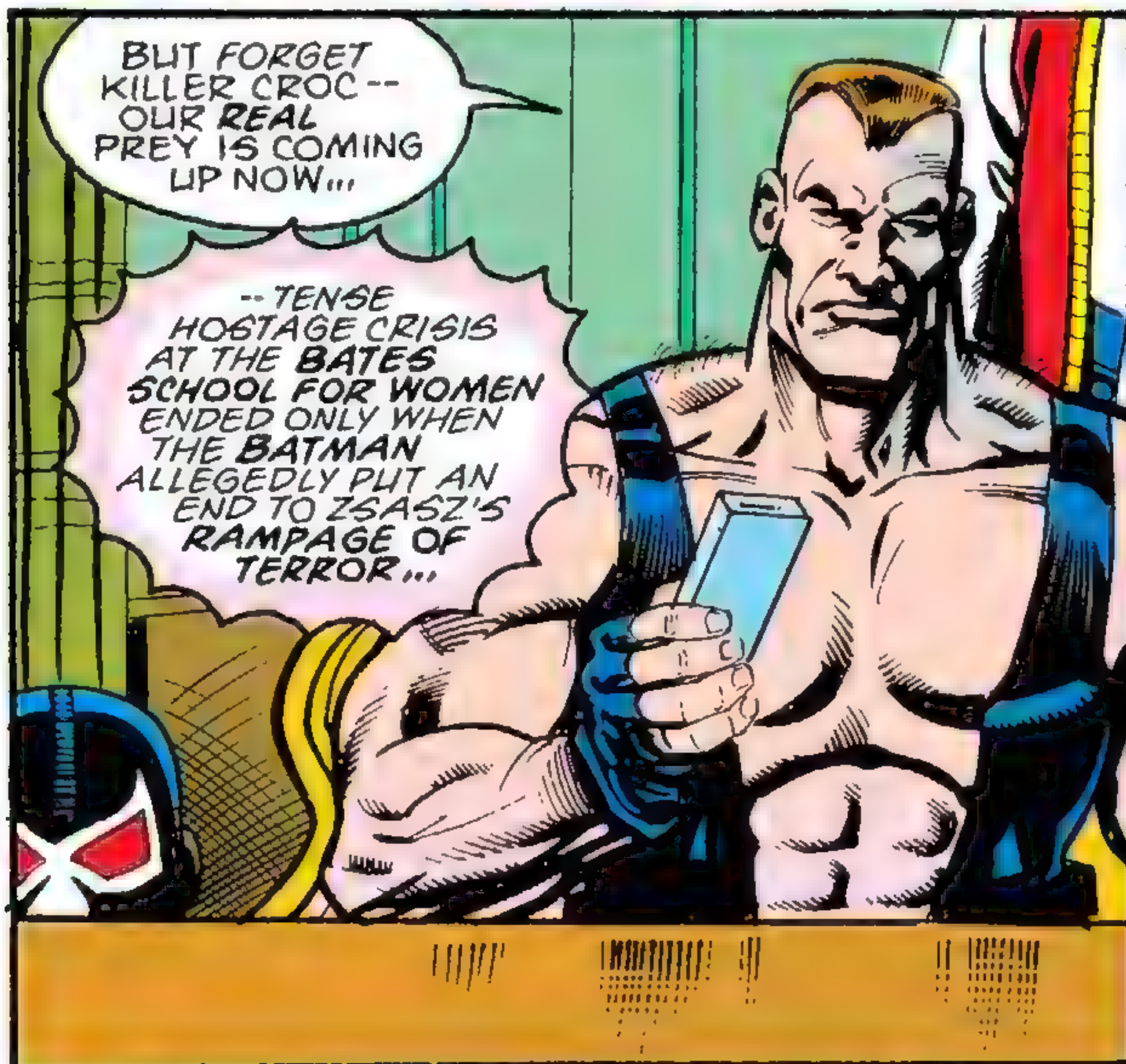
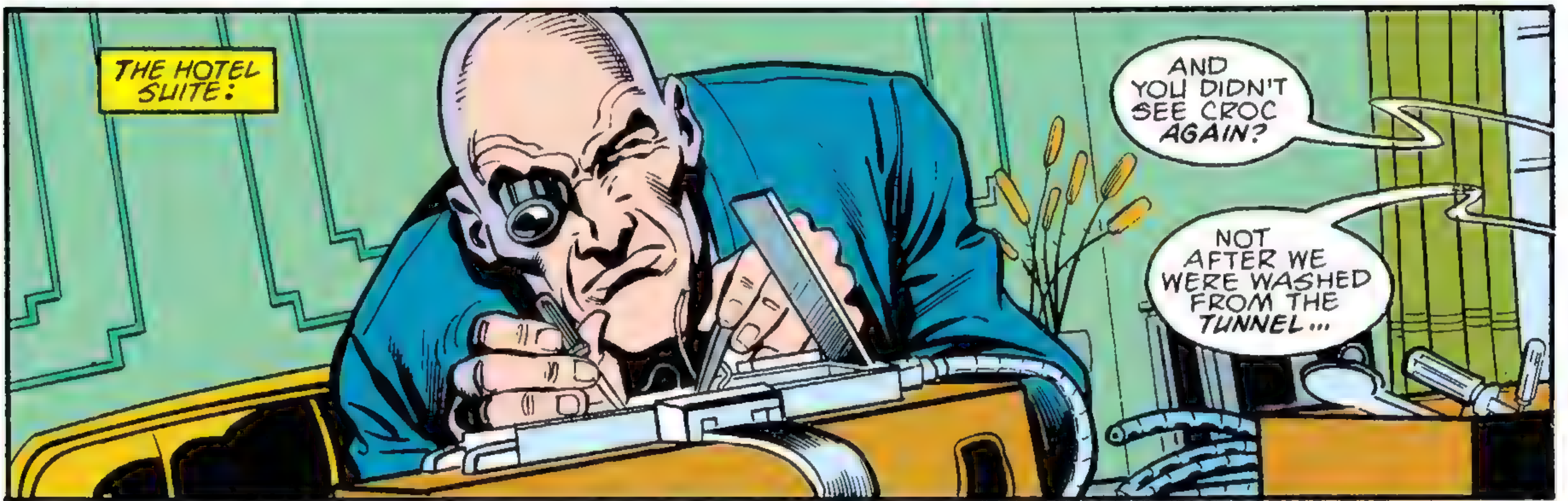
BUT BANE IS AFTER ME -- AND AS LONG AS I CAN STAND, THIS IS MY BUSINESS.



ALFRED... THIS IS NUTS.

INDEED.

IN MY CONSIDERED OPINION, YOU ARE BOTH BEYOND HOPE.



THE
STREETS:

ZSASZ
TAUGHT ME A
BITTER LESSON --
HOW FAST AN INSANE
MURDERER CAN
STRIKE -- MUCH LIKE
ANOTHER SERIAL
KILLER RECENTLY
ESCAPED FROM
ARKHAM...

CORNELIUS
STIRK.

COMPUTER
SEARCH --
HISTORICAL
FIGURES --
ANOMALOUS
REPORTS--

--WITHIN
LAST
WEEK.

SEARCHING.

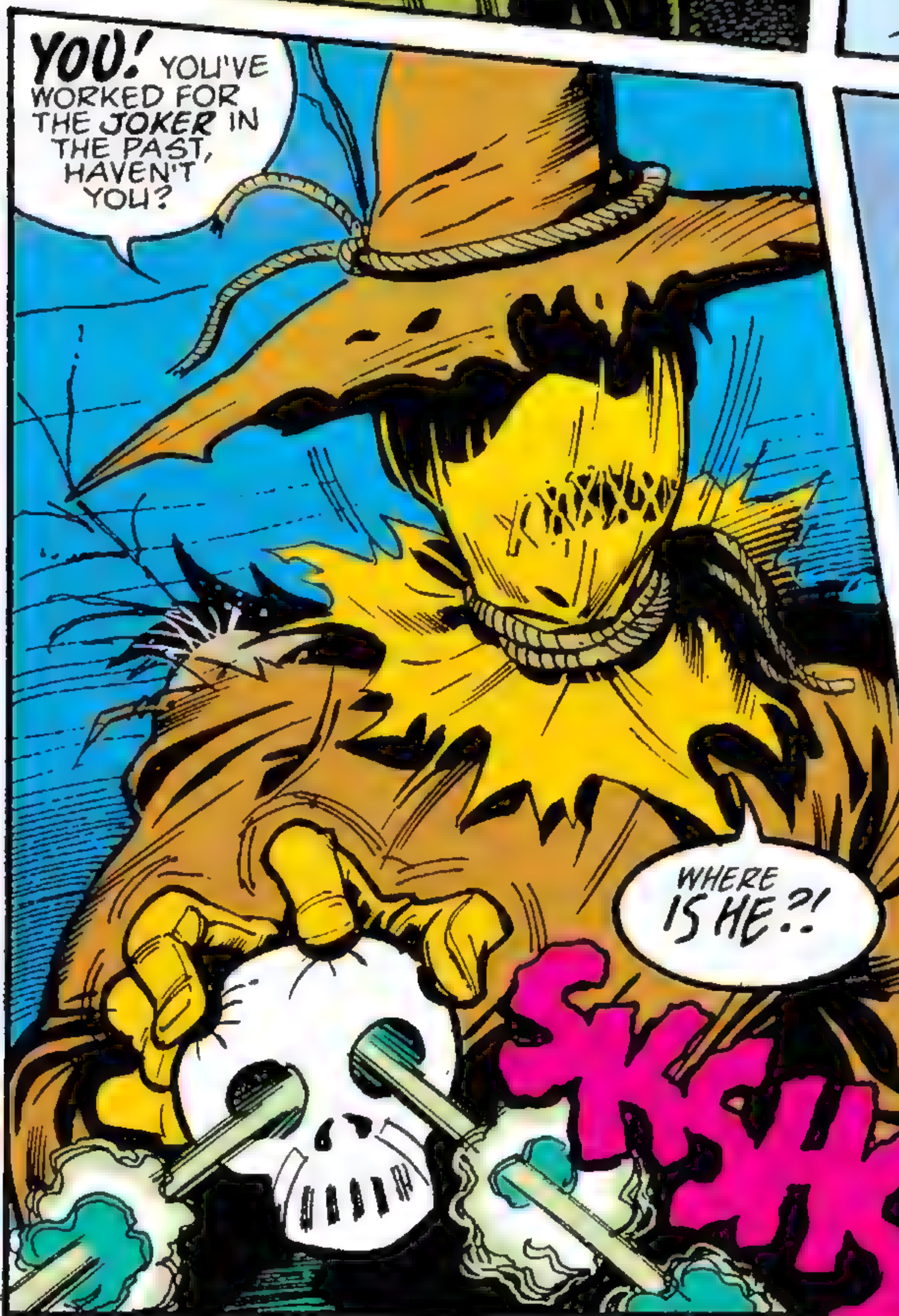
JOHN FITZGERALD
KENNEDY SEEN AT
ASHBURN AND
OAK CLIFF; MAHATMA
GANDHI REPORTED
ON SEWELL NEAR
RAVENSWOOD; ELVIS
PRESLEY SIGHTED AT--

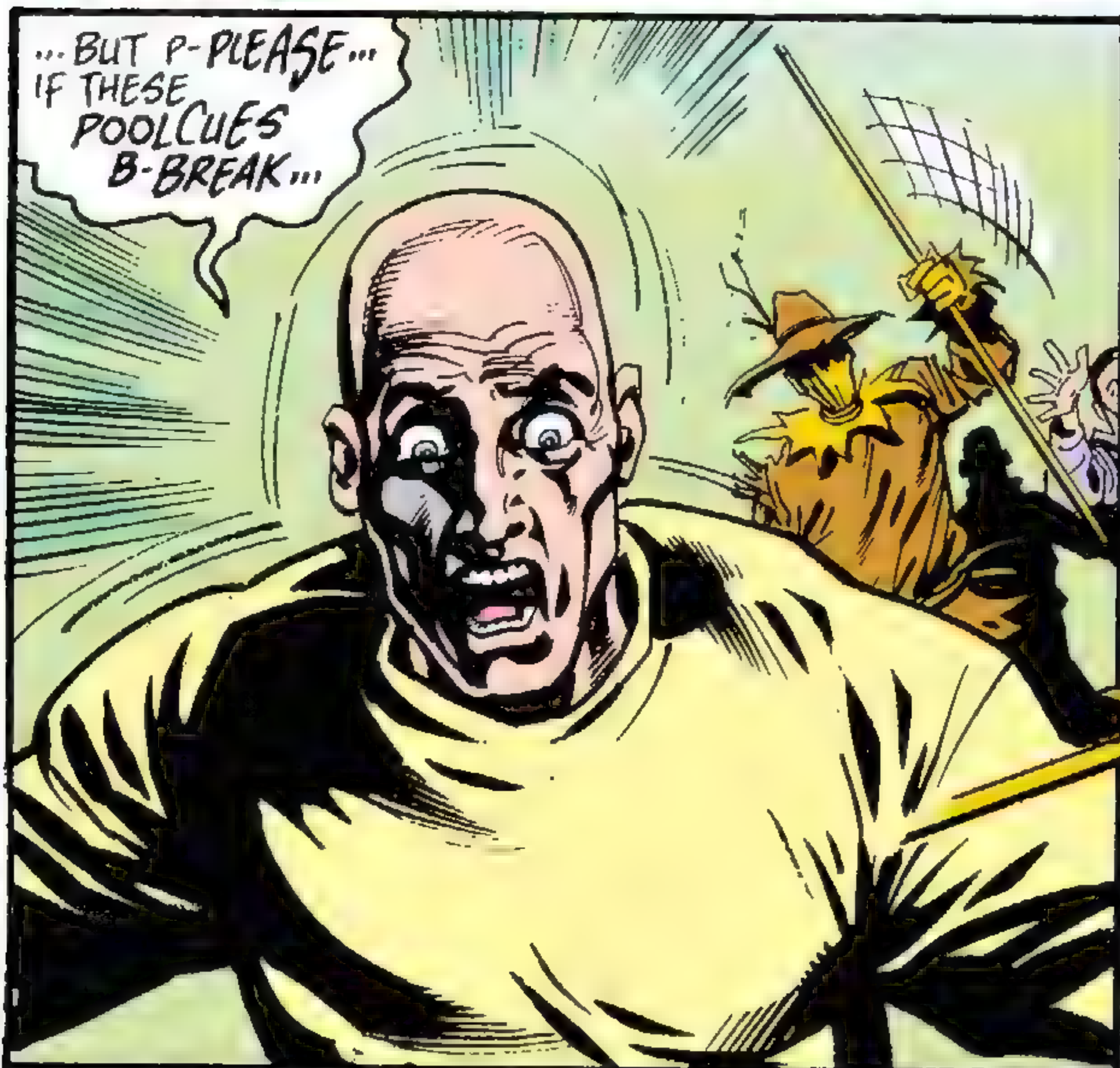
ENOUGH.

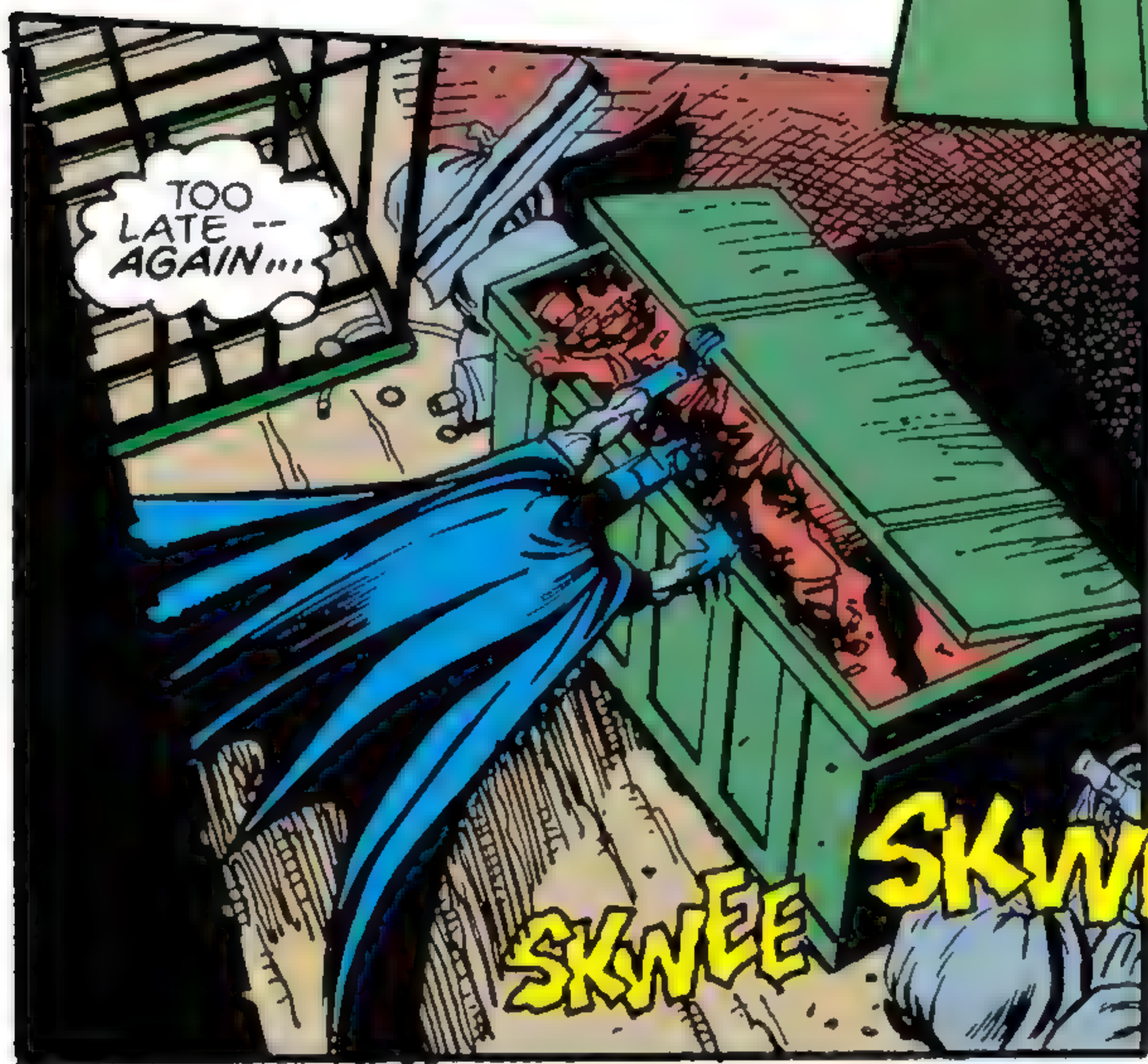
THE KENNEDY
AND GANDHI LOCATIONS
ARE BOTH IN THE
HUB, EXACTLY THE KIND
OF NEIGHBORHOOD
FAVORED BY STIRK --
AND SINCE HE'S USED
HIS HYPNOTIC POWERS
TO APPEAR AS
ABRAHAM LINCOLN
IN THE PAST...

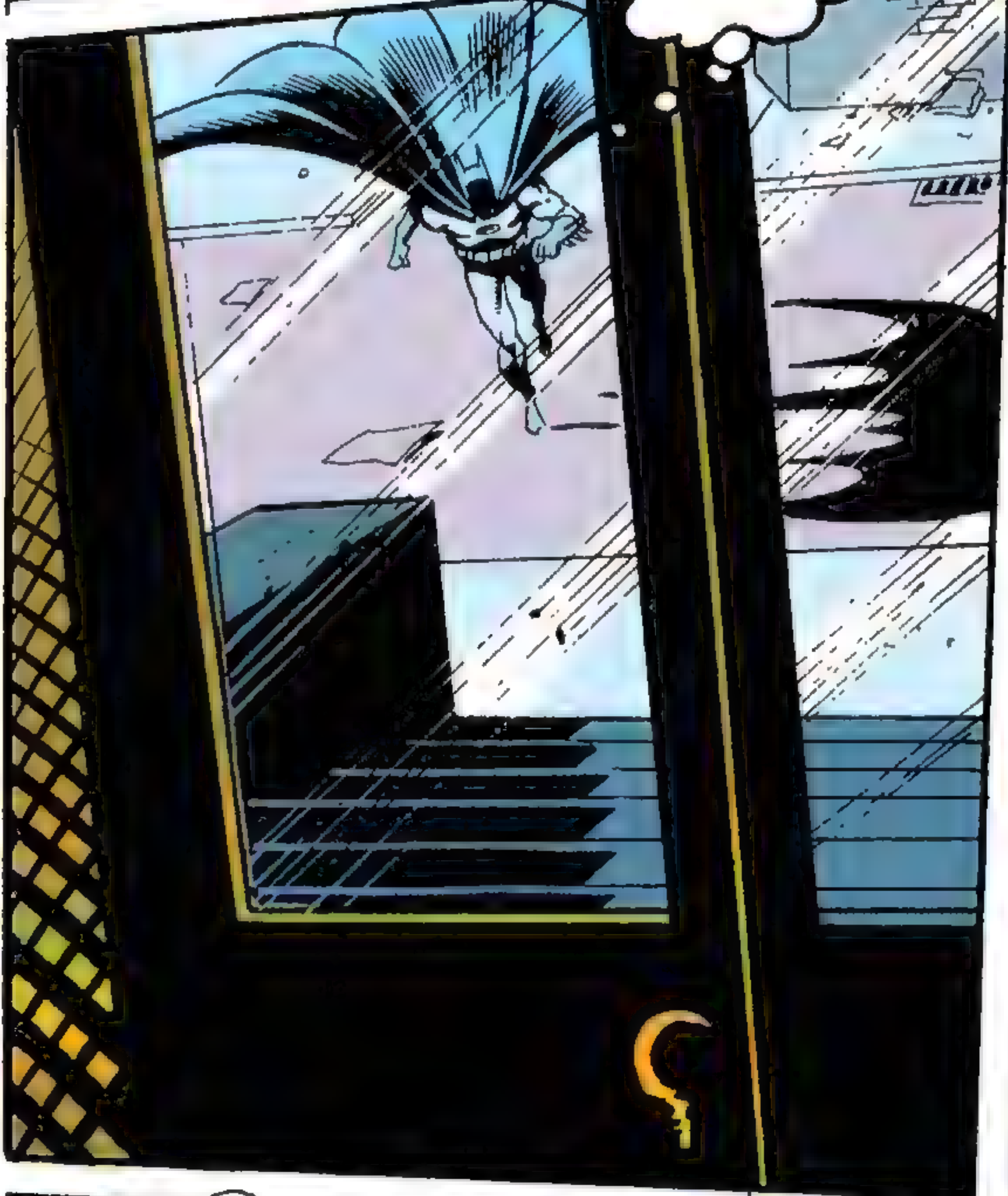
STREEERAAOW

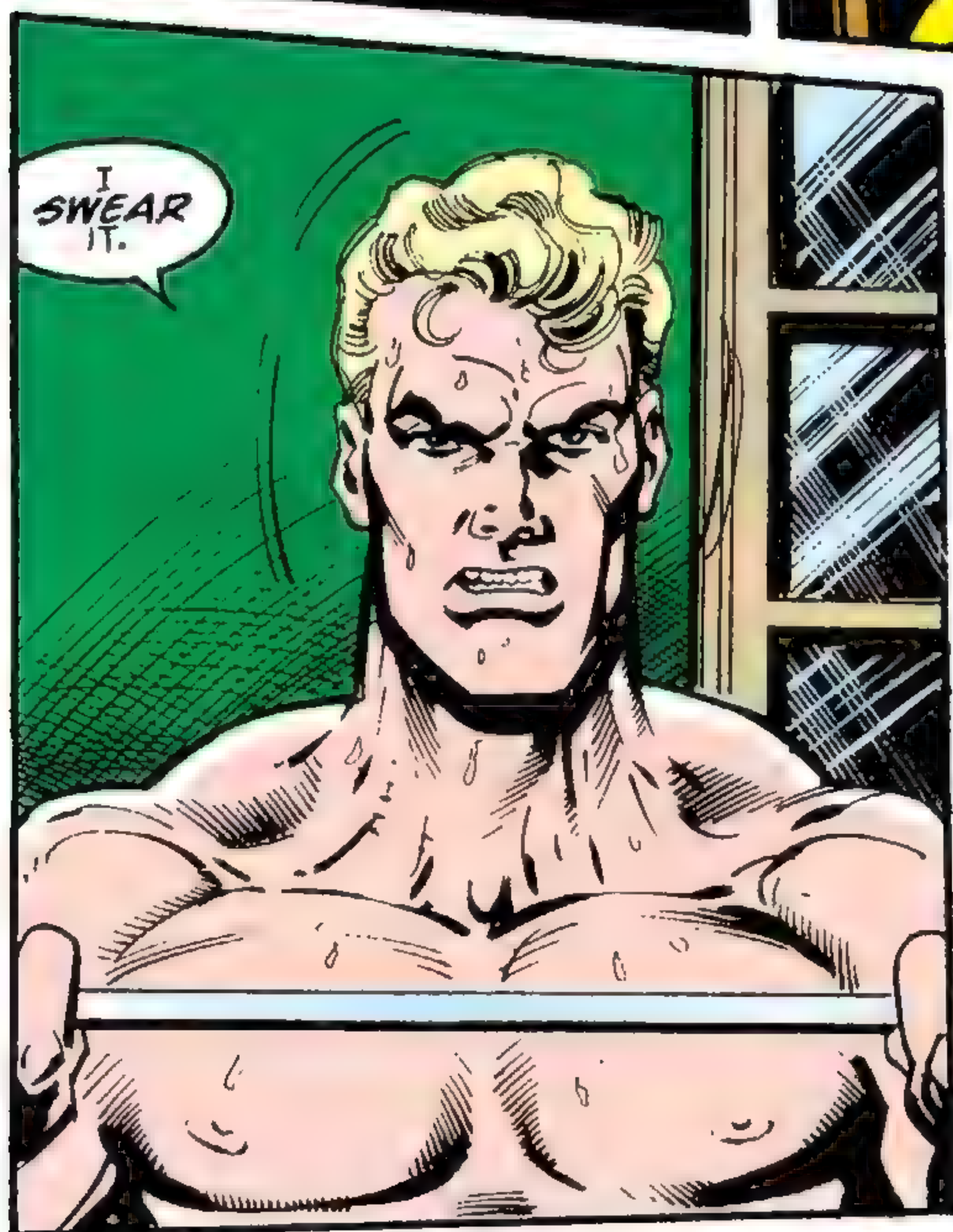
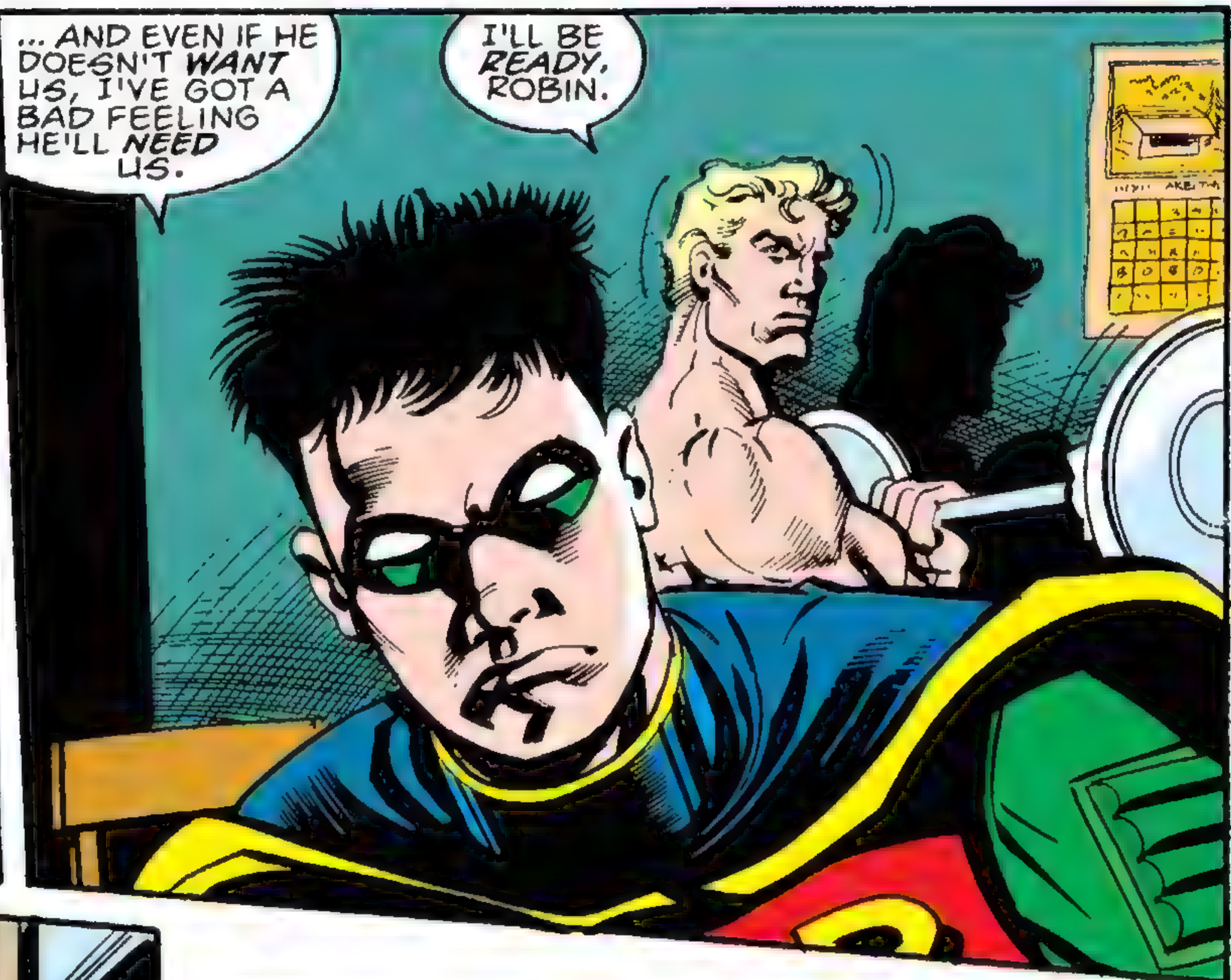
THE
HUB IT
IS!

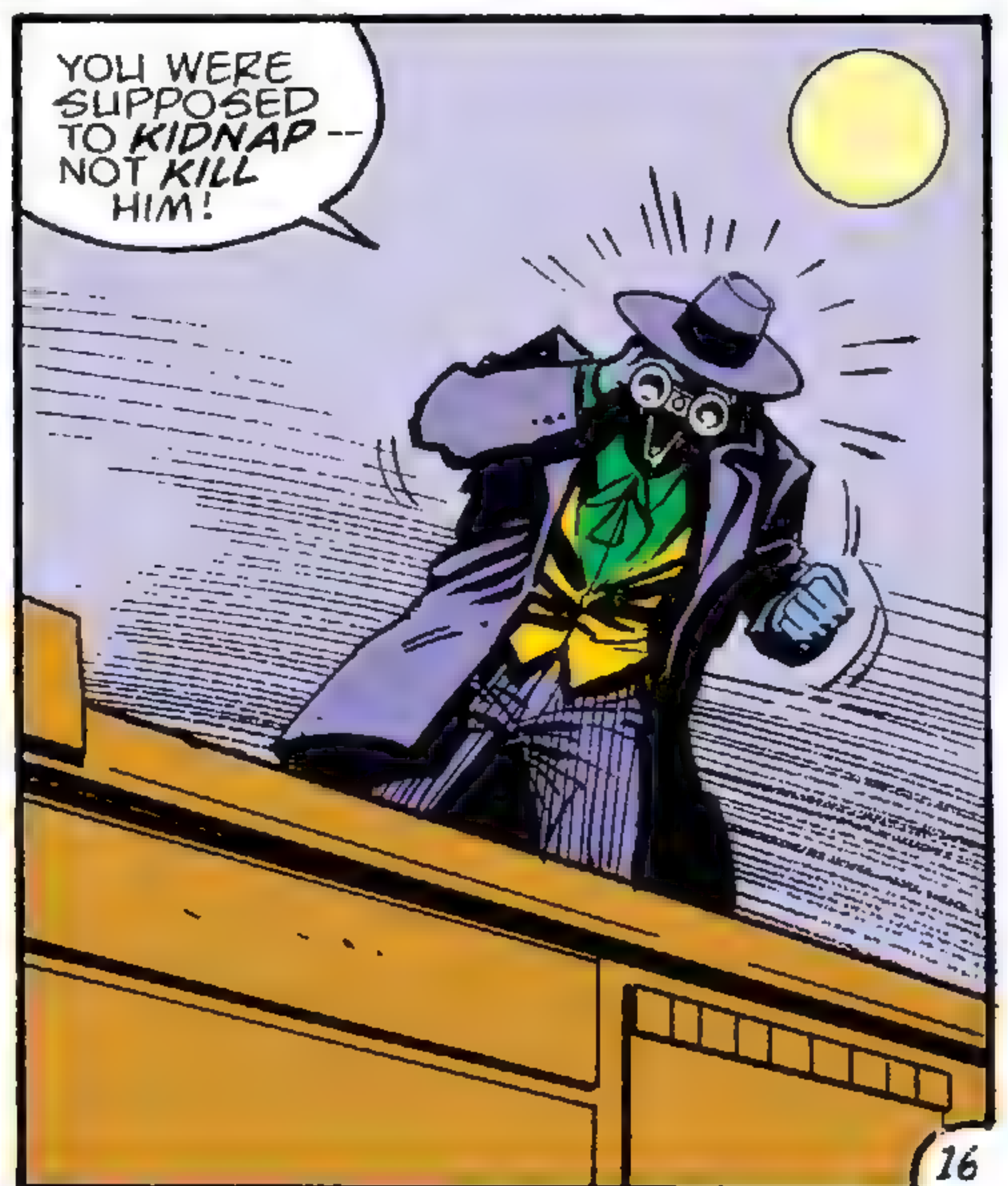
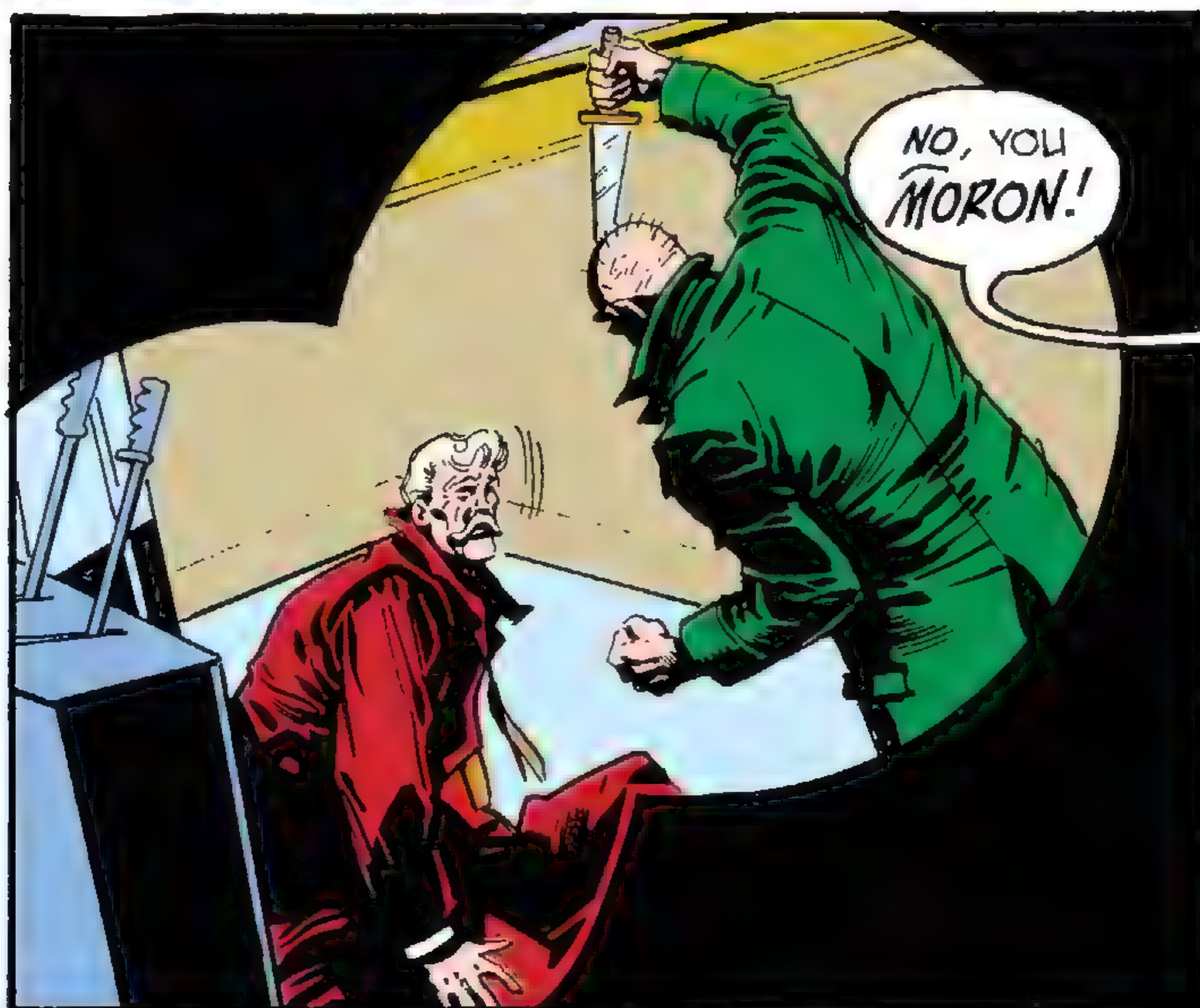


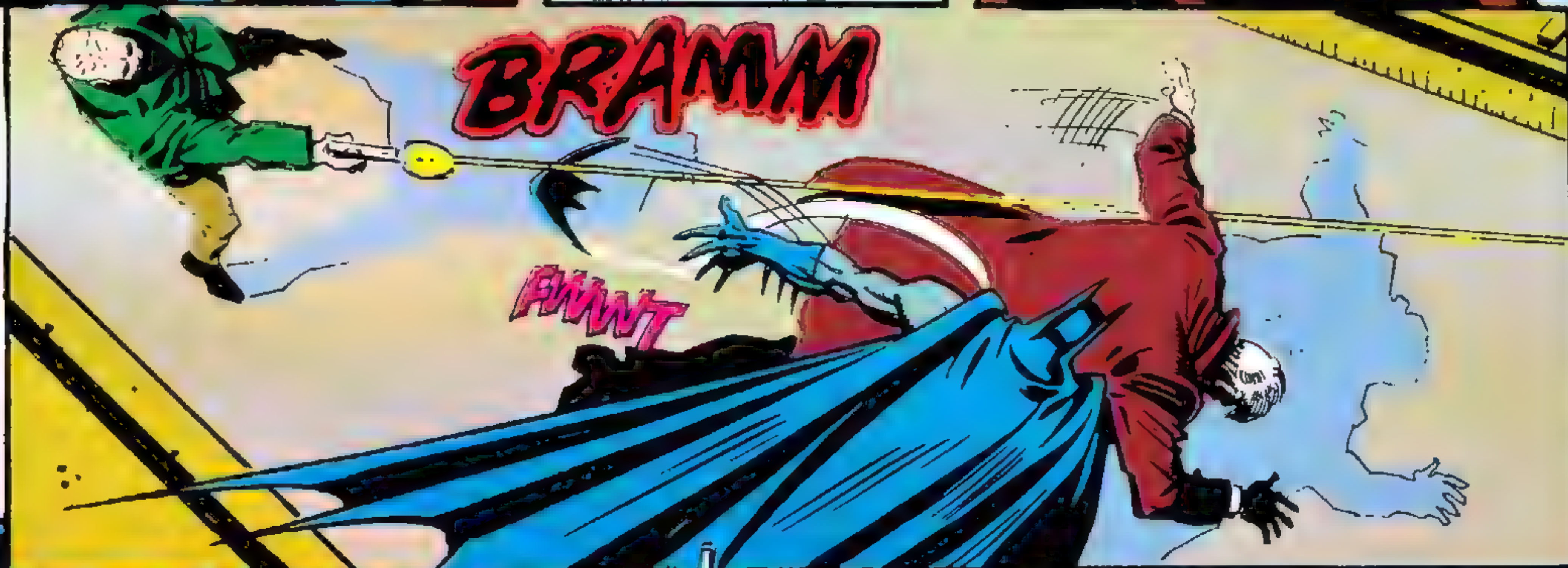
















AFTER MY VISIT TO THE 8-BALL, I KNEW I'D FIND YOU SOMEWHERE NEAR GORDON...

SCARECROW -- WHAT A BIZARRE SURPRISE!

... AND I'M OFFENDED, JOKER, BY THE FACT THAT YOU WENT TO A RANK AMATEUR IN THE REALM OF FEAR...

... WHEN THE MASTER WAS READILY AVAILABLE.



MEANING YOU, OF COURSE... BUT MAYBE I FIGURED I COULD CONTROL STIRK, EH?

AND HOW WRONG YOU WERE! BAD CHOICE, JOKER -- AND IT MAKES ME ANGRY.

IN FACT, I'M TEMPTED TO GIVE YOU A DOSE OF MY FEAR...



HAHAHA

JUST TRY IT, SCARECROW! I'M SURE I'D FIND THE EXPERIENCE HIGHLY AMUSING!

I'D PREFER TAKING STIRK'S PLACE -- BUT THIS TIME IT MUST BE AN EQUAL PARTNER-SHIP...

NO ONE CONTROLS ANYONE.



JUST WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND? IF ONE MAY USE THE TERM ON CRANILM-PACKED STRAW.

THE POLICE COMMISSIONER IS PEANUTS! IF YOU WANT TO BRING REAL FEAR AND CHAOS TO GOTHAM...



... WHY NOT GO STRAIGHT TO THE TOP?

TERRORIZE THE MAYOR?

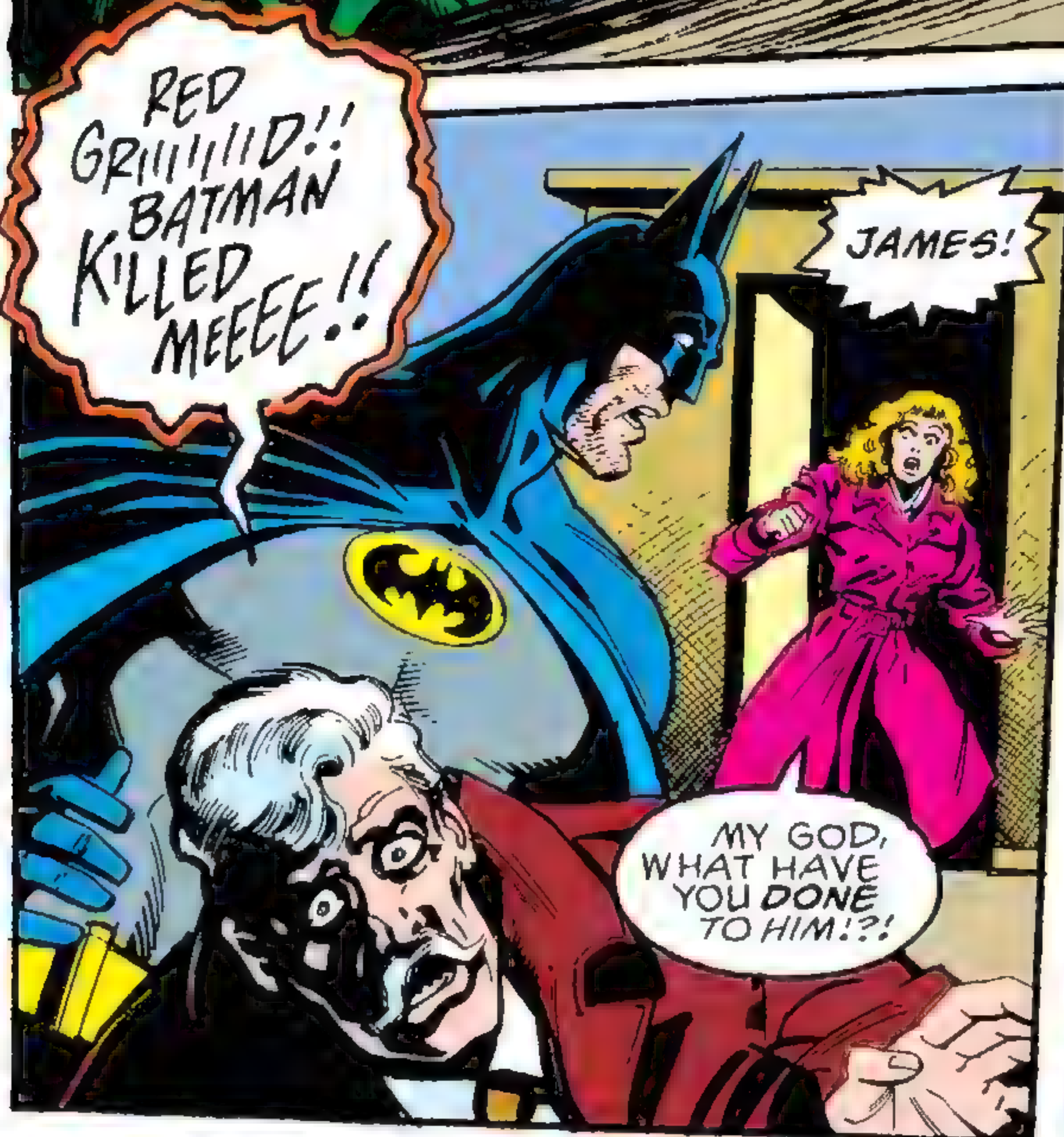
Hmm... I THINK... I LIKE IT!

HAHAHA



R-RED GRID...
MANDALA... OF
B-BLOOD...

EASY, GORDON --
IT'S JUST AN
HYPNOTIC MIND-
PLANT... HIS
PSIONIC POWER
PUT YOU
INTO A --



RED
GRIIIIID!!
BATMAN
KILLED
MEEEEE!!

JAMES!

MY GOD,
WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE
TO HIM!?!



IT... IT
WAS
CORNELIUS
STIRK...
POSING
AS ME...

STIRK?
THE
SERIAL
KILLER?

B-BATMAN...
MY F-FRIEND...
WITH A
KNIFE...

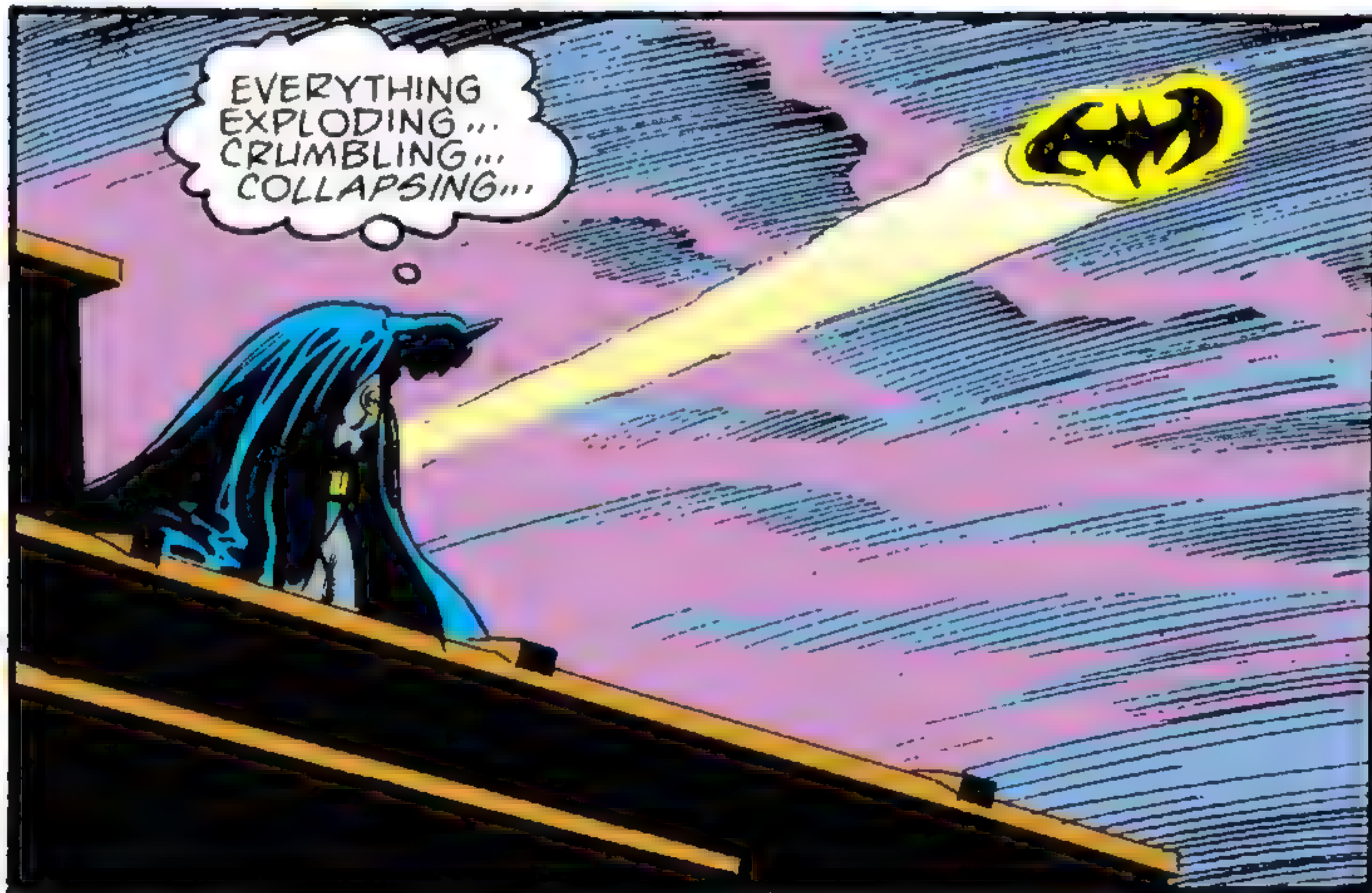
IF IT
WEREN'T
FOR
YOU --



YOU'RE
WRONG, MRS.
GORDON --
YOUR HUSBAND
WAS THE
TARGET,
NOT ME.

JUST AS HE
WAS IN THE
HEADHUNTER
INCIDENT --

-- WHEN
I TOLD YOU
TO LEAVE
US
ALONE?!



EVERYTHING
EXPLODING...
CRUMBLING...
COLLAPSING...



... AND THE
BIG ONES...
THE ONES
LIKE TWO-
FACE AND
THE
JOKER...

THEY
HAVEN'T EVEN
MADE THEIR
MOVES YET!

THE MAYOR'S MANSION, MASTER BEDROOM:

FSSSSSS

NFFF...
MMNN?
?

HA HA HA HA

WHA?!

N-NO! C-CAN'T BE REAL ---!

Ah... W... VERY... INDEED... MAYO... HYP... REA...

M-MUST BE... A N-NIGHTMARE... N-NOT REAL...

BUT ARE REAL MR. ZZZ...? ...



"... AS YOUR
BODYGUARDS
DOWNSTAIRS
COULD READILY
ATTEST --
WERE THEY
STILL
CAPABLE OF
SPEECH."

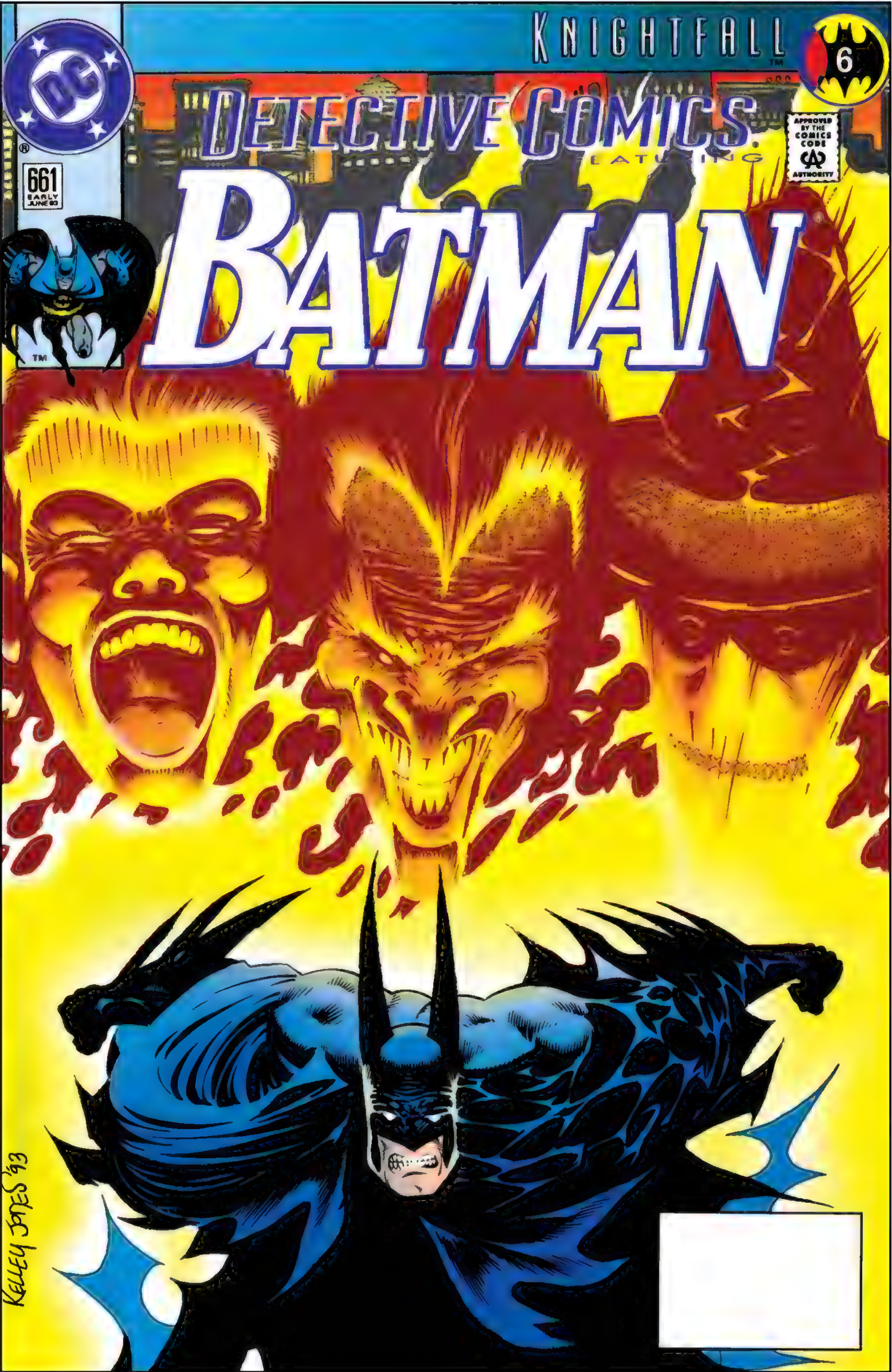
N-NO...
P-P-POISONOUS!

WHAT'S
POISONOUS,
MR. MAYOR?
WHAT ARE YOU
SEEING?
WHAT'S YOUR
GREATEST
FEAR?

SPIDERS?
SNAKES?

BAD
SUSHI?

21

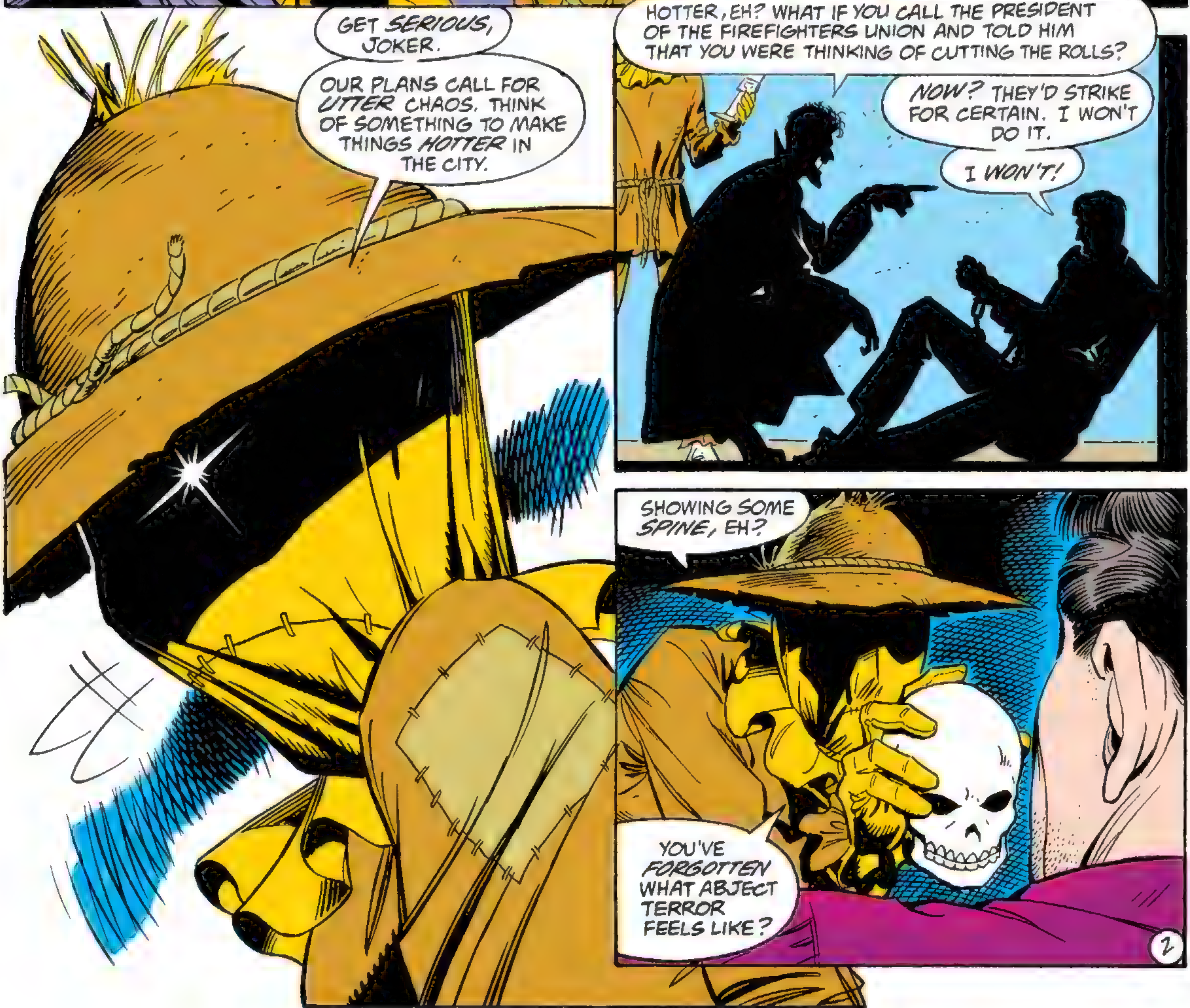




CHUCK DIXON . GRAHAM NOLAN . SCOTT HANNA
writer penciller inker

ADRIENNE ROY . JOHN COSTANZA . SCOTT PETERSON
colorist letterer and

• BATMAN created by BOB KANE. • DENNIS O'NEIL
editors





ALL RIGHT.

I'LL CALL.



THIS WILL BE ONE HOT NUMBER.

"HE CALLS HIMSELF THE FIREFLY. HIS REAL NAME IS GARFIELD LYNN'S."



"IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE THEY LOCKED HIM AWAY IN ARKHAM THAT I ALMOST FORGOT HIM."

"ALMOST."

"HE USED TO WORK IN THE MOVIES, AN EXPERT IN PYROTECHNICS."

"HIS OCCUPATION HID HIS REAL OBSESSION."

"PYROMANIA."

"BEING HOLLYWOOD'S MASTER OF EXPLOSION AND FIRE EFFECTS WASN'T ENOUGH FOR HIM."

SO BEAUTIFUL...

YOU DANCE SO GRACEFULLY... SO LOVELY...

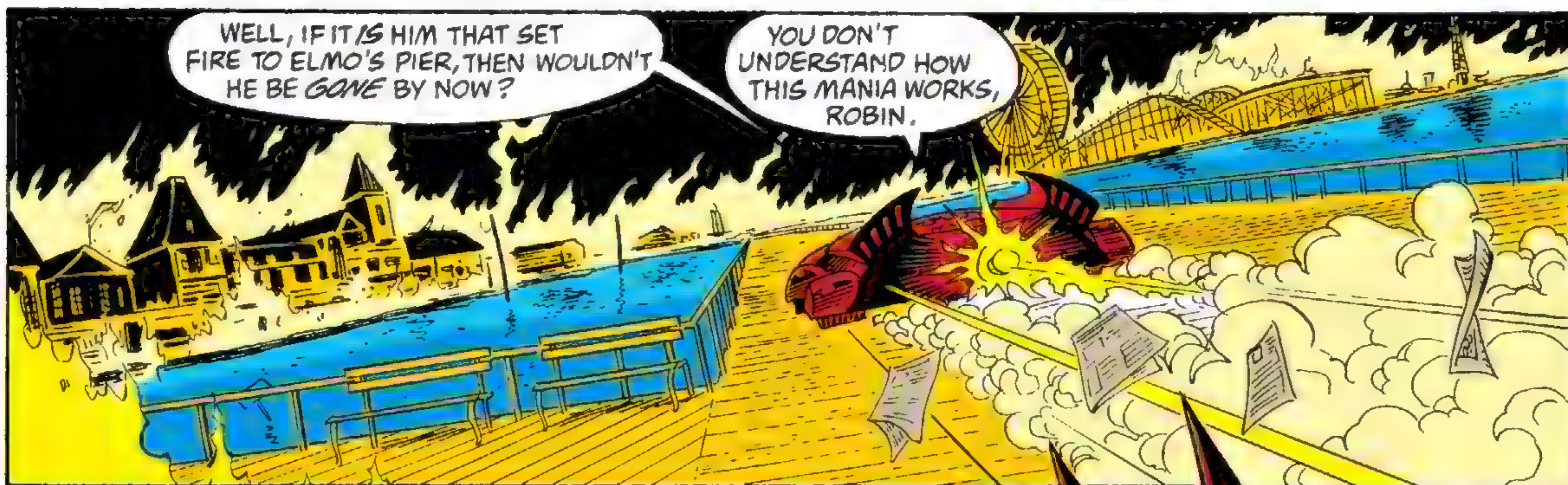
"HE TURNED TO ARSON FOR PROFIT."

YES... YES...

"AND THEN ARSON FOR PLEASURE."

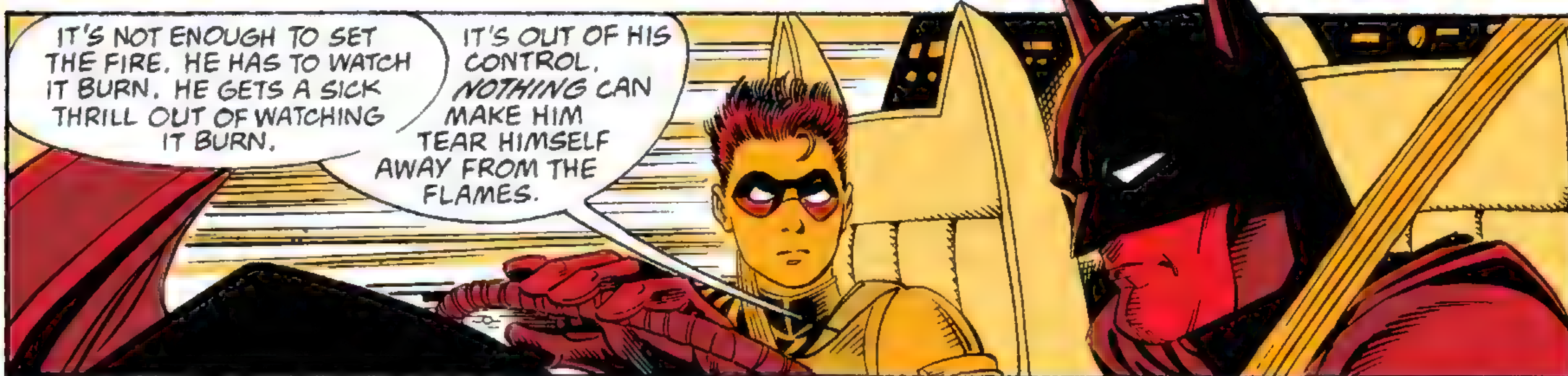
YES! YES!

DANCE!



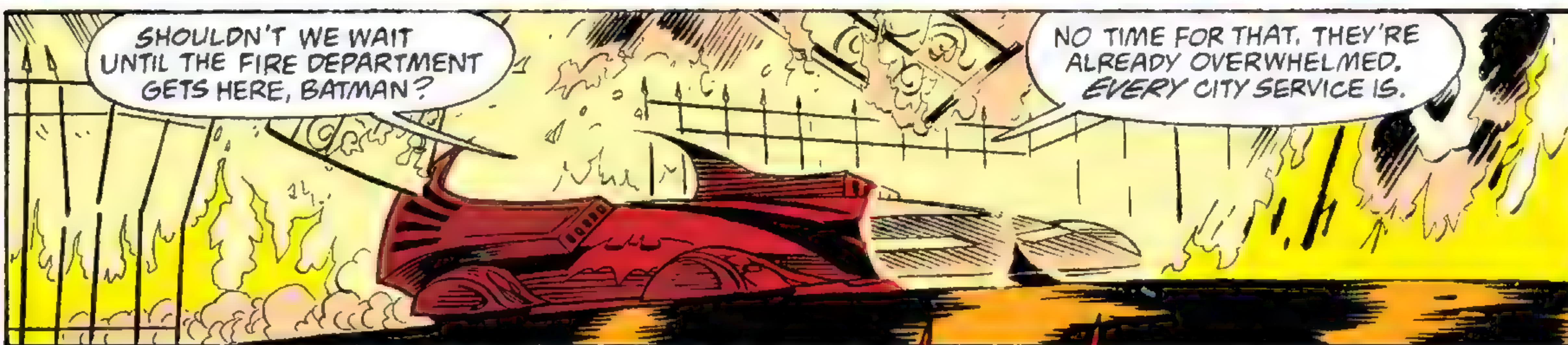
WELL, IF IT'S HIM THAT SET
FIRE TO ELMO'S PIER, THEN WOULDN'T
HE BE GONE BY NOW?

YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND HOW
THIS MANIA WORKS,
ROBIN.



IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SET
THE FIRE. HE HAS TO WATCH
IT BURN. HE GETS A SICK
THRILL OUT OF WATCHING
IT BURN.

IT'S OUT OF HIS
CONTROL.
NOTHING CAN
MAKE HIM
TEAR HIMSELF
AWAY FROM THE
FLAMES.



SHOULDN'T WE WAIT
UNTIL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT
GETS HERE, BATMAN?

NO TIME FOR THAT. THEY'RE
ALREADY OVERWHELMED.
EVERY CITY SERVICE IS.



IT'S UP
TO ME.

YOU
MEAN
US.

I'M TAKING
THIS ONE
ALONE.



I DON'T
LIKE THIS.

YOU DON'T HAVE
TO. YOU BARELY ESCAPED
KILLER CROC AND THAT
MONSTER BANE. YOUR
LUCK CAN'T HOLD
FOREVER.

AND
YOURS
CAN?



STAY WITH
THE CAR.

THE PIER BECOMES
A BLAST FURNACE.

A BLISTERING WIND
BEGINS TO SWIRL.



I LEAP INTO A FIRESTORM.

WELCOME TO
MY INFERNO,
BATMAN. ISN'T
IT LOVELY?

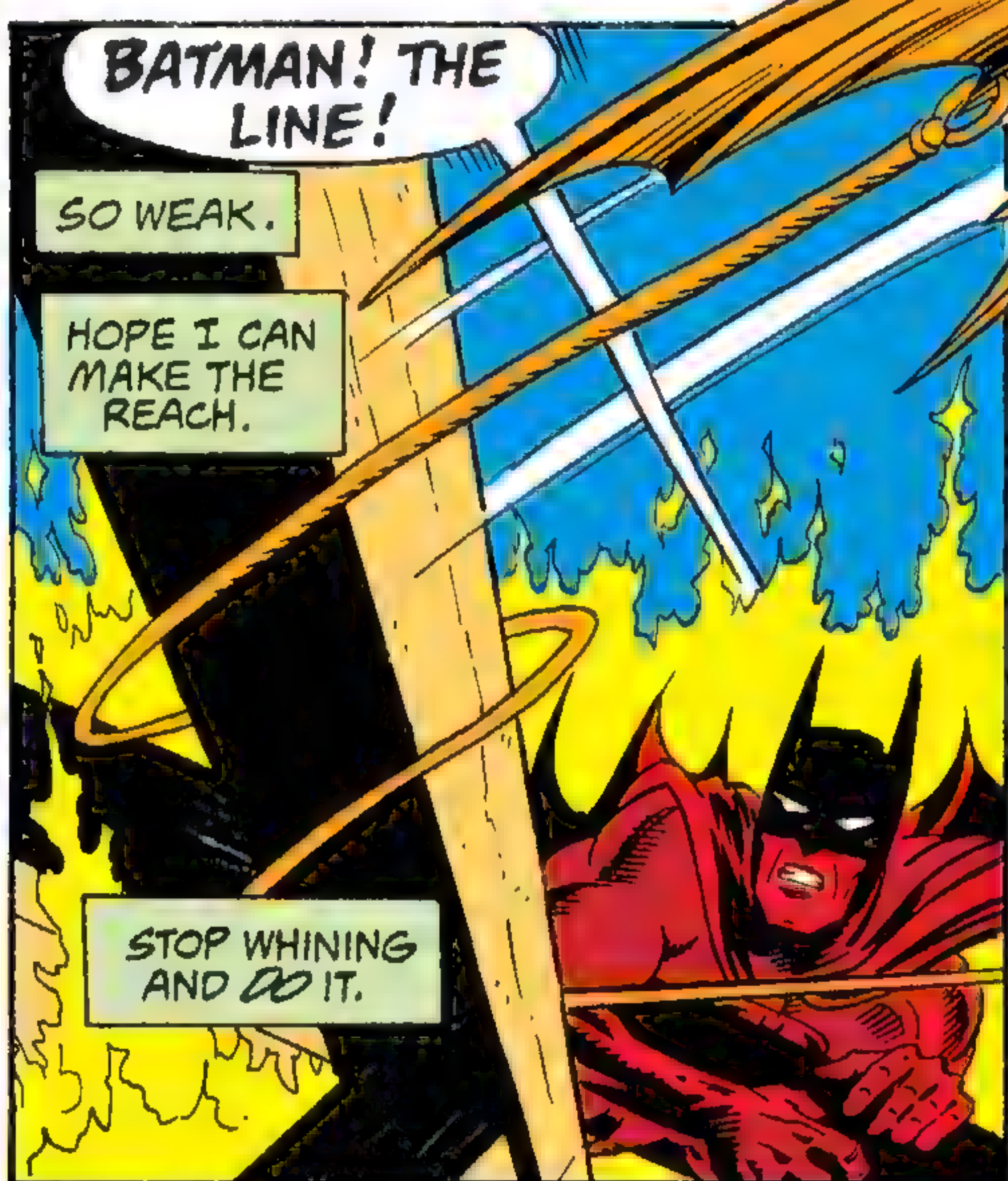
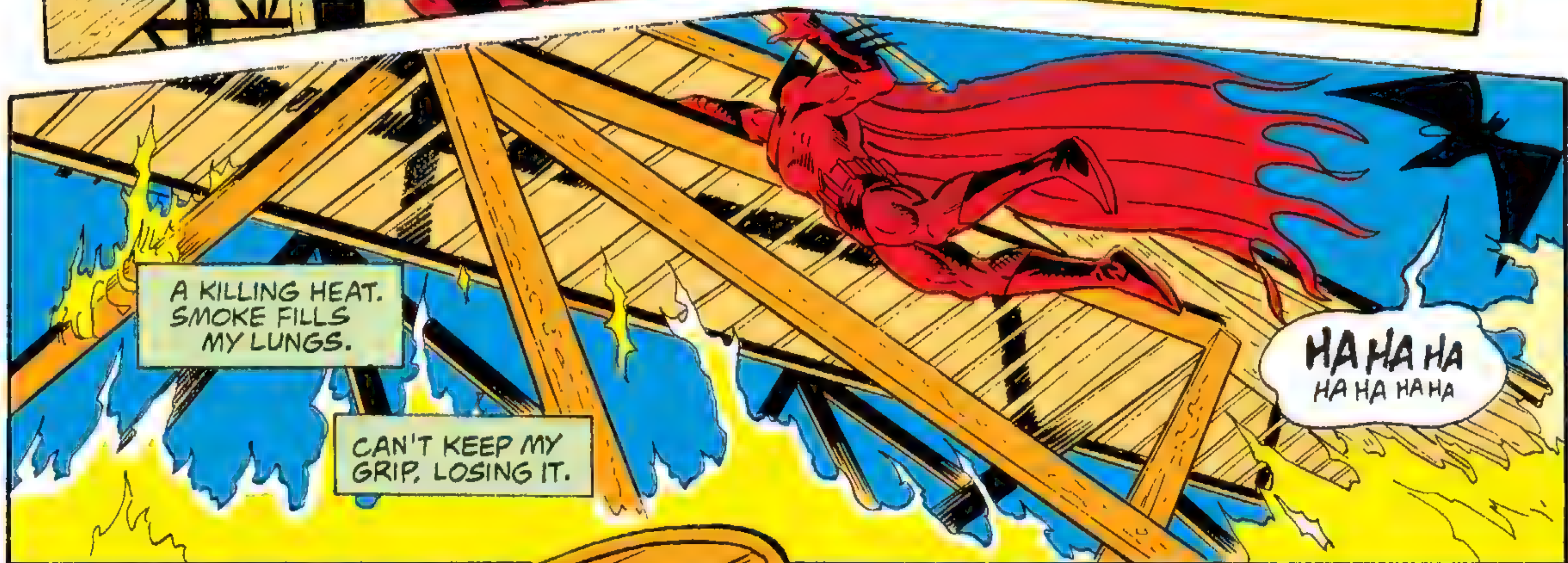
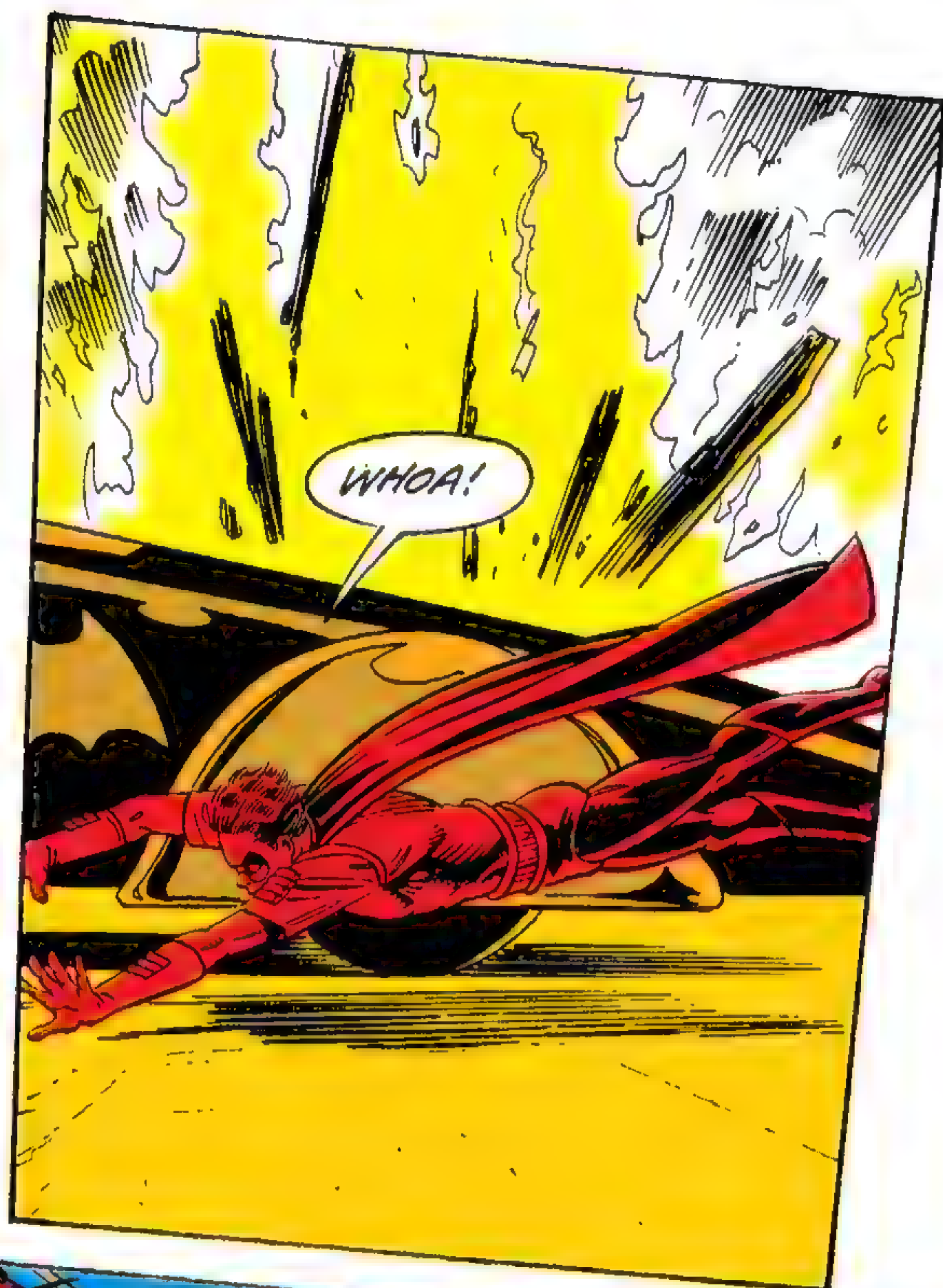
GIVE IT UP, LYNNS.
THERE'S NO WAY DOWN
FROM HERE UNLESS
IT'S WITH ME.

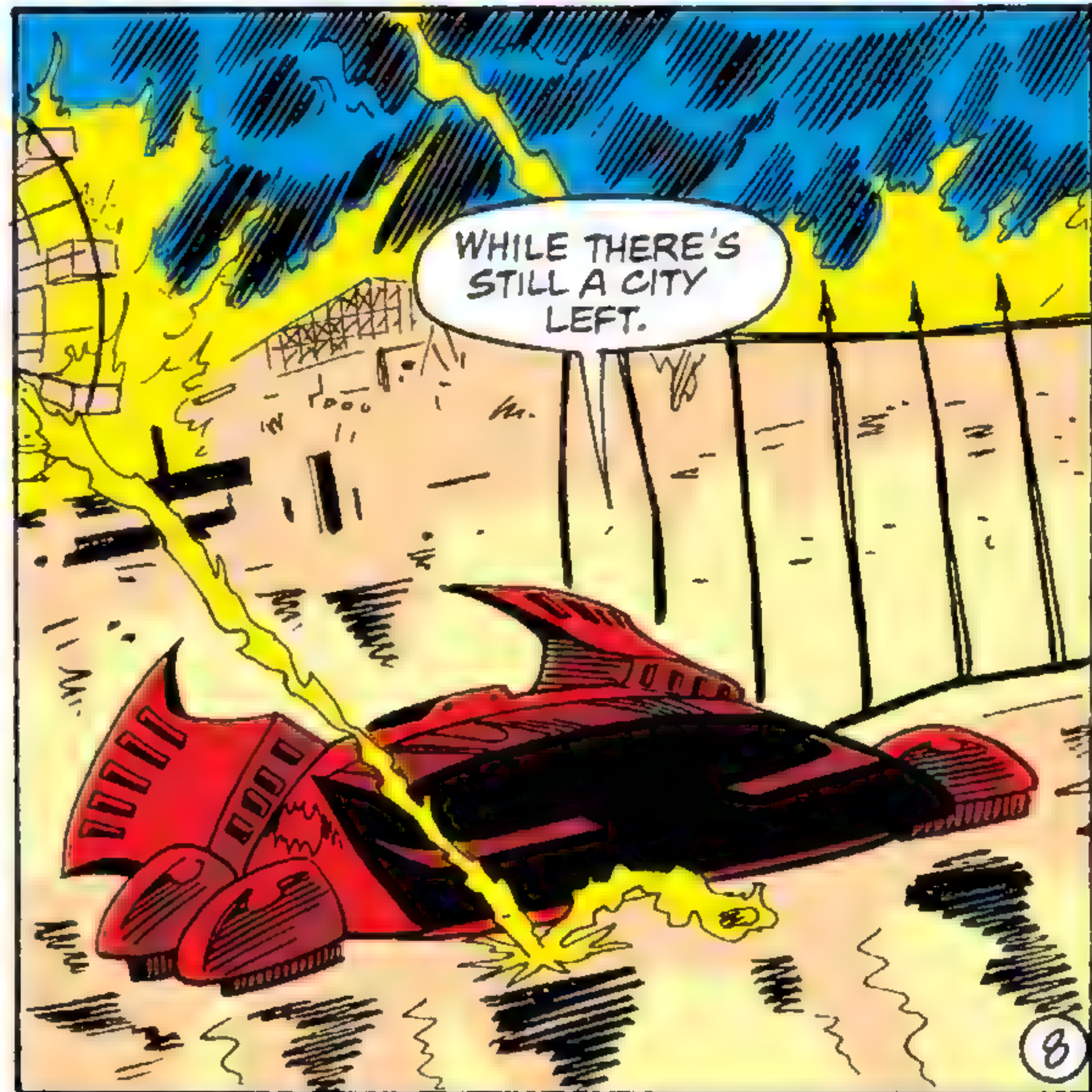


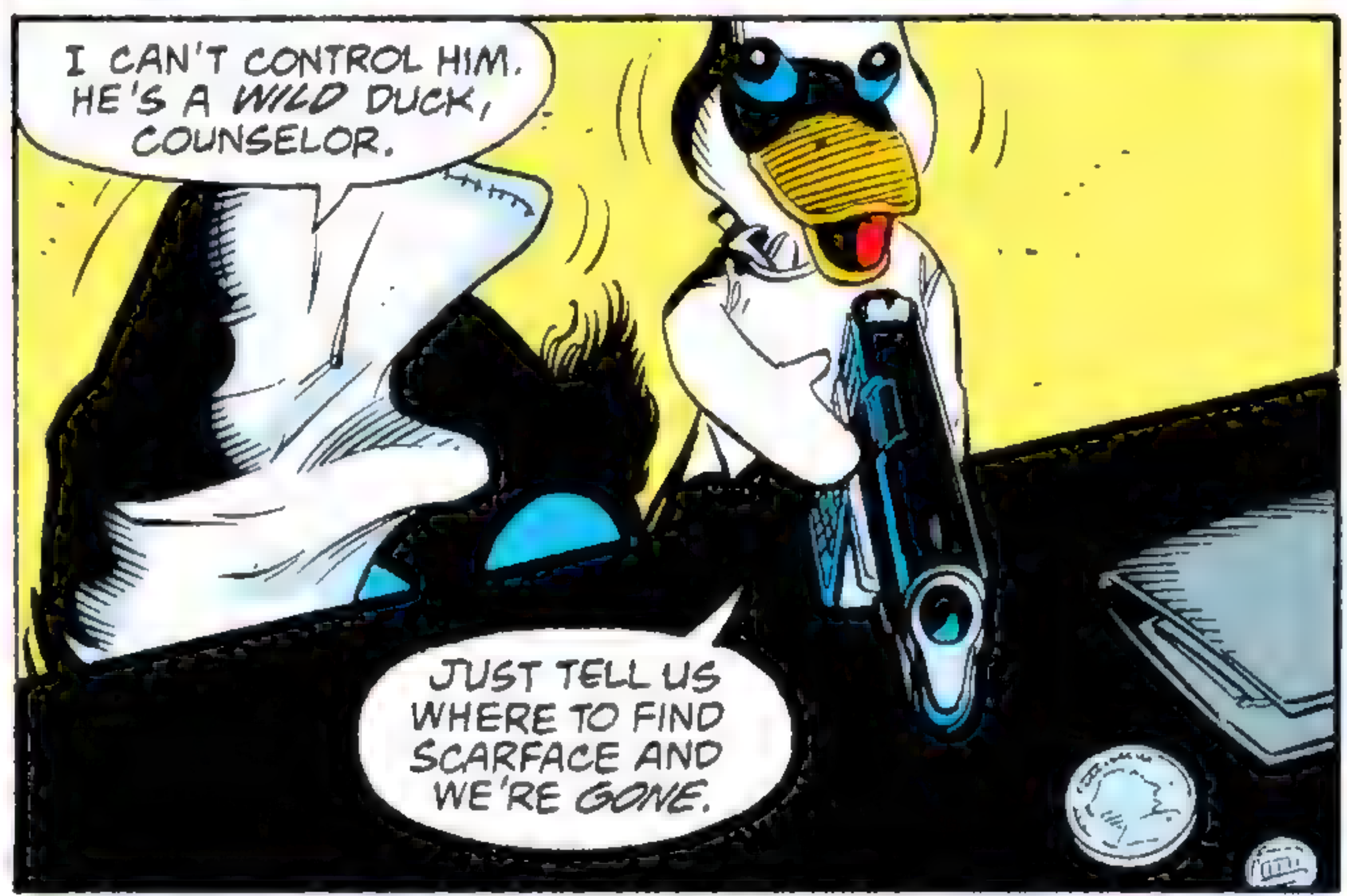
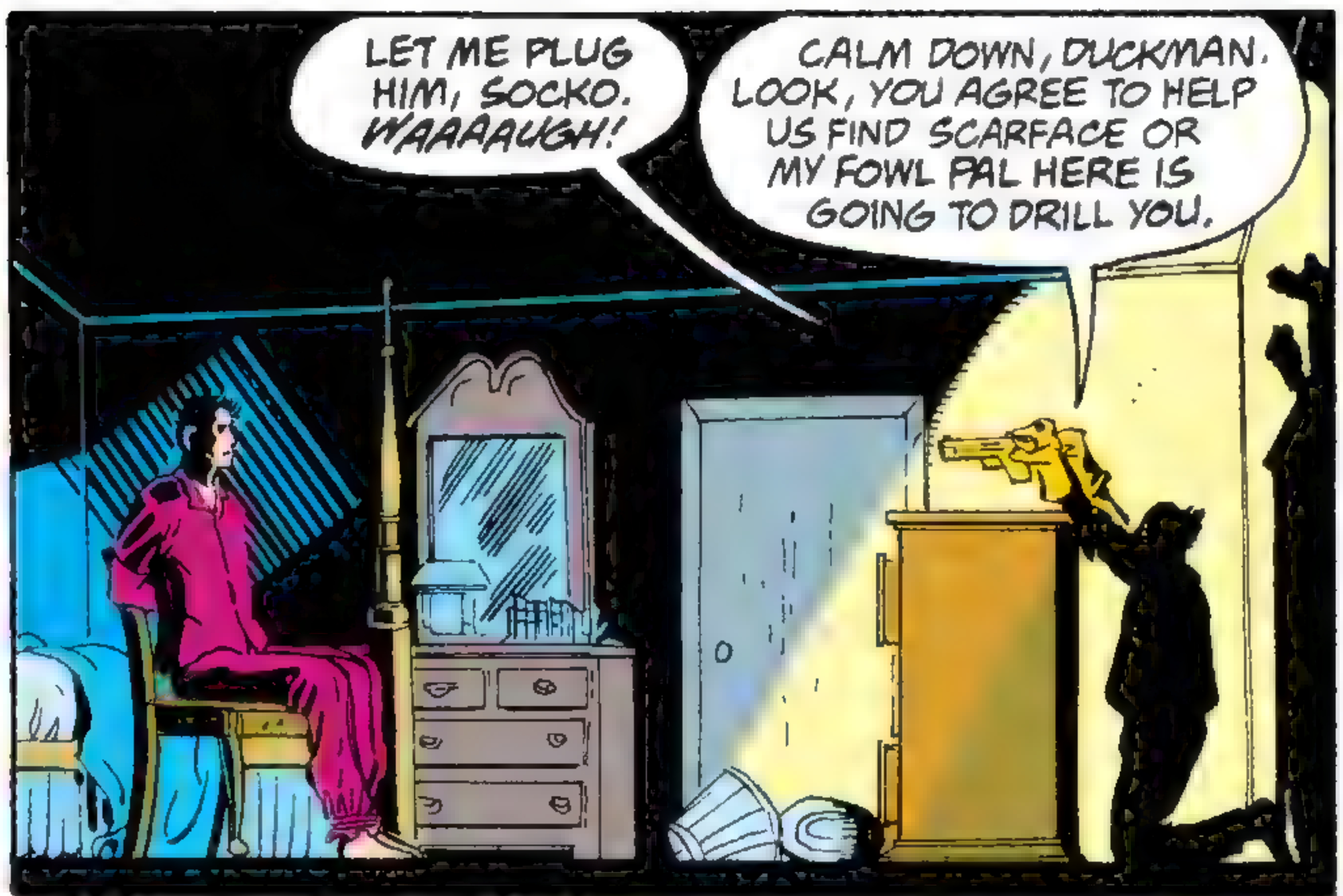
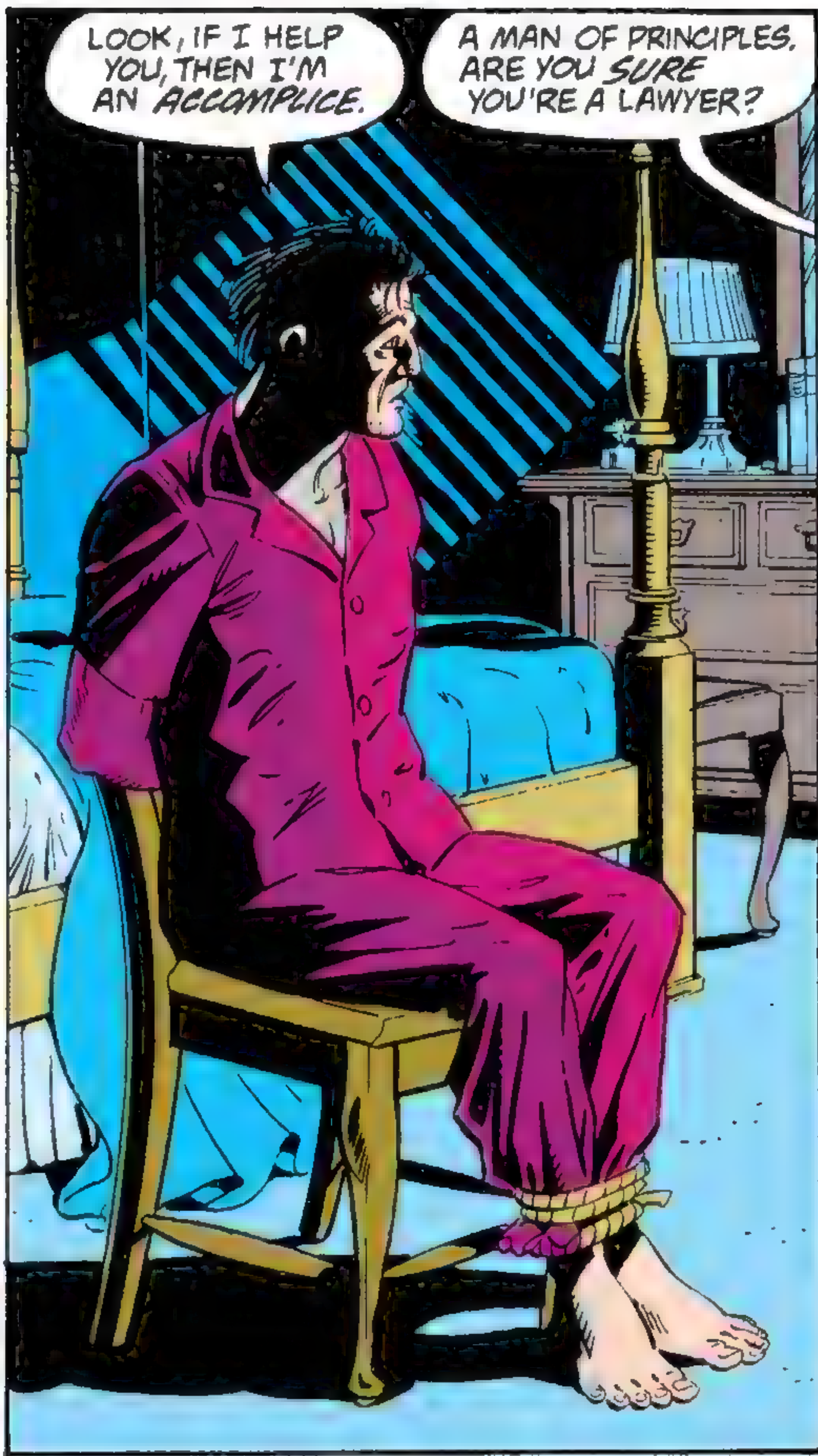
WROOOOSH

STILL THE
ARROGANT
ONE, EH?

WELL, YOU'RE
NOT TAKING ME AS
EASILY AS YOU
DID BEFORE.











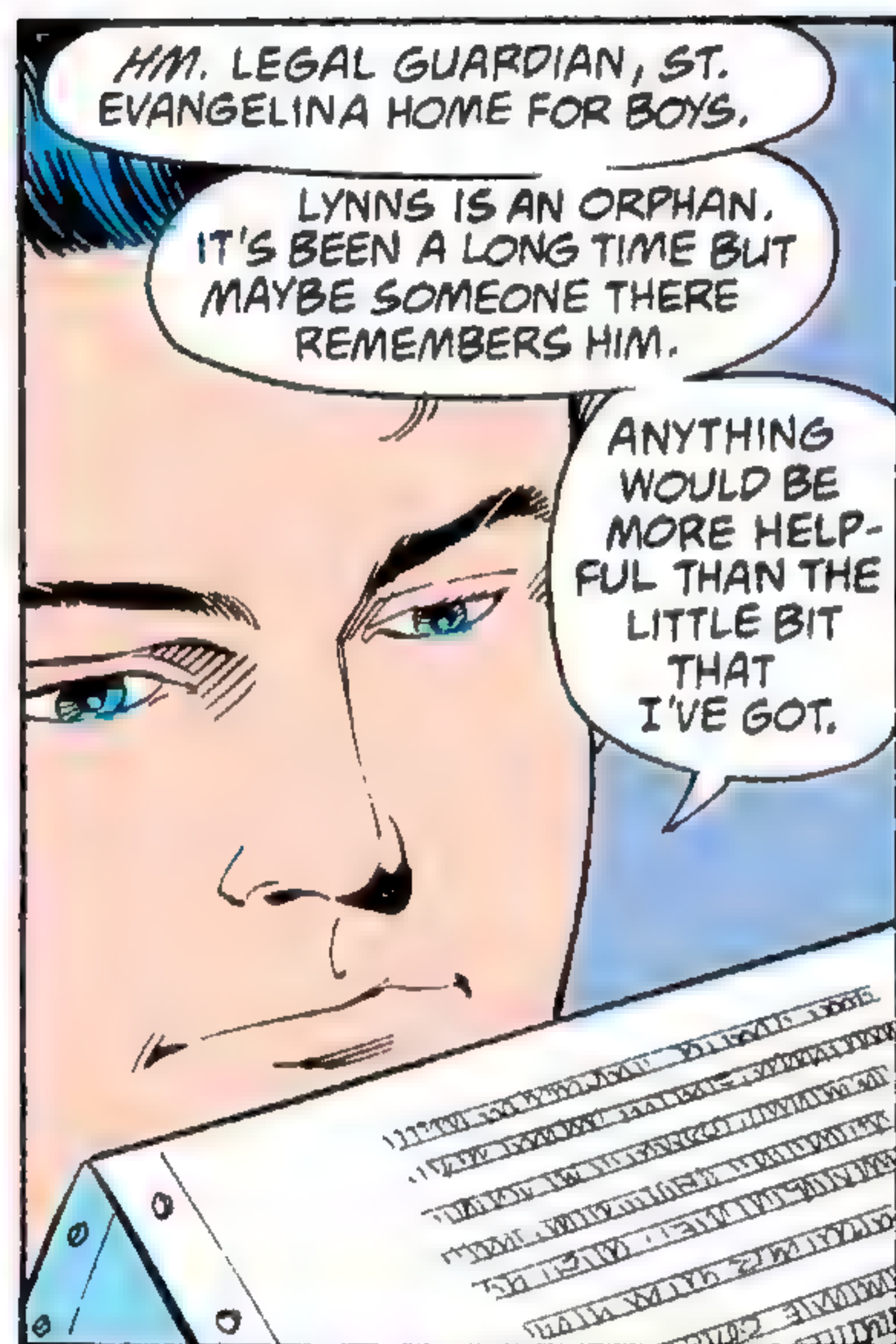
GARFIELD LYNNS. HE'S BEEN LOCKED UP SO LONG THAT THERE'S NOT MUCH IN THE NETWORKS ABOUT HIM.

NOTHING AT DMV. NO CREDIT HISTORY. NOTHING FROM ARKHAM SINCE THE PLACE GOT NUKED. HE'S A BLANK SLATE EXCEPT FOR HIS POLICE FILE.



ARREST RECORD GOES BACK TO JUVIE. MULTIPLE COUNTS OF ARSON AND RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT. EVEN AN ATTEMPTED HOMICIDE.

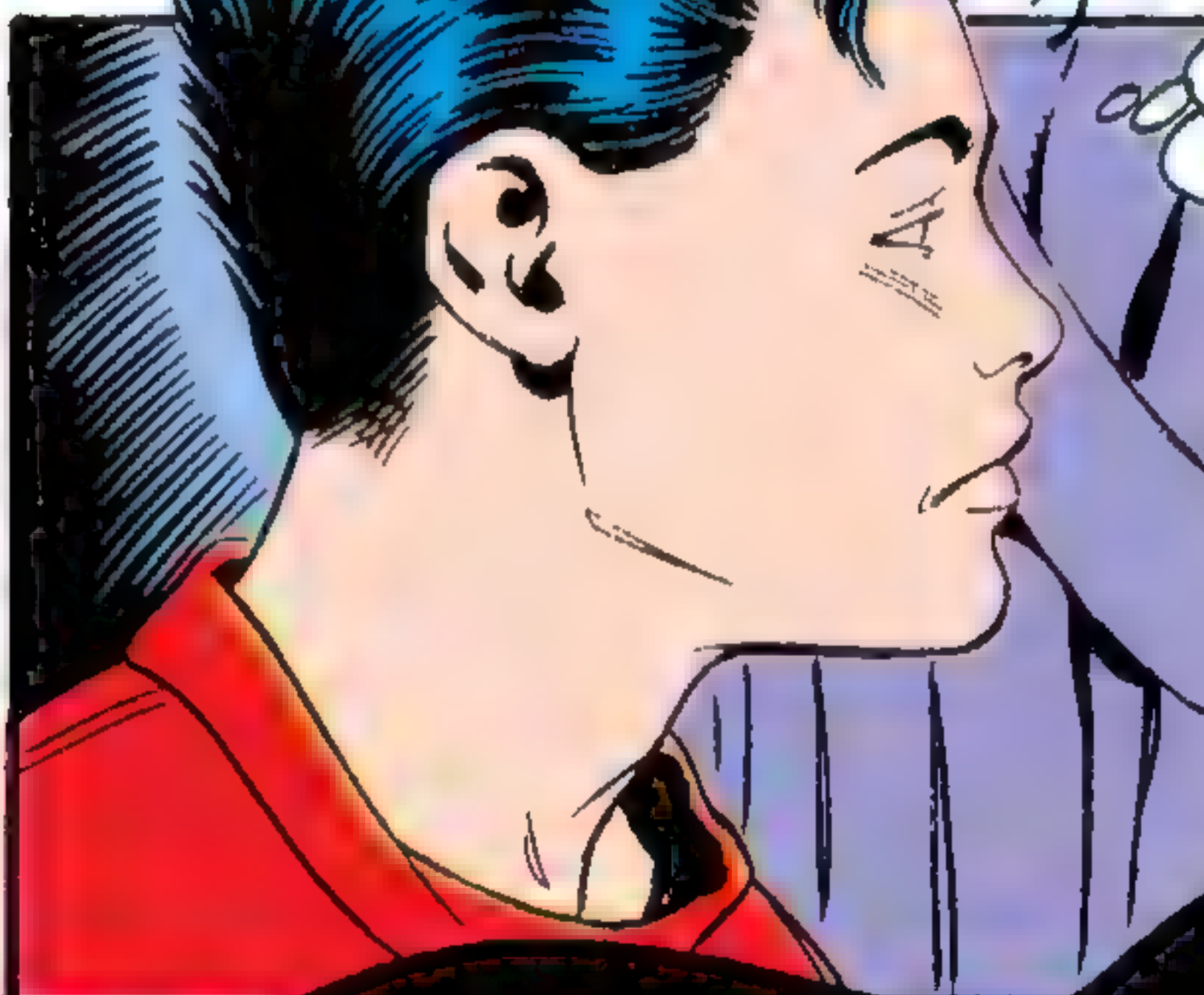
NO NAMES LISTED FOR HIS PARENTS.



H/M. LEGAL GUARDIAN, ST. EVANGELINA HOME FOR BOYS.

LYNNS IS AN ORPHAN. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME BUT MAYBE SOMEONE THERE REMEMBERS HIM.

ANYTHING WOULD BE MORE HELPFUL THAN THE LITTLE BIT THAT I'VE GOT.



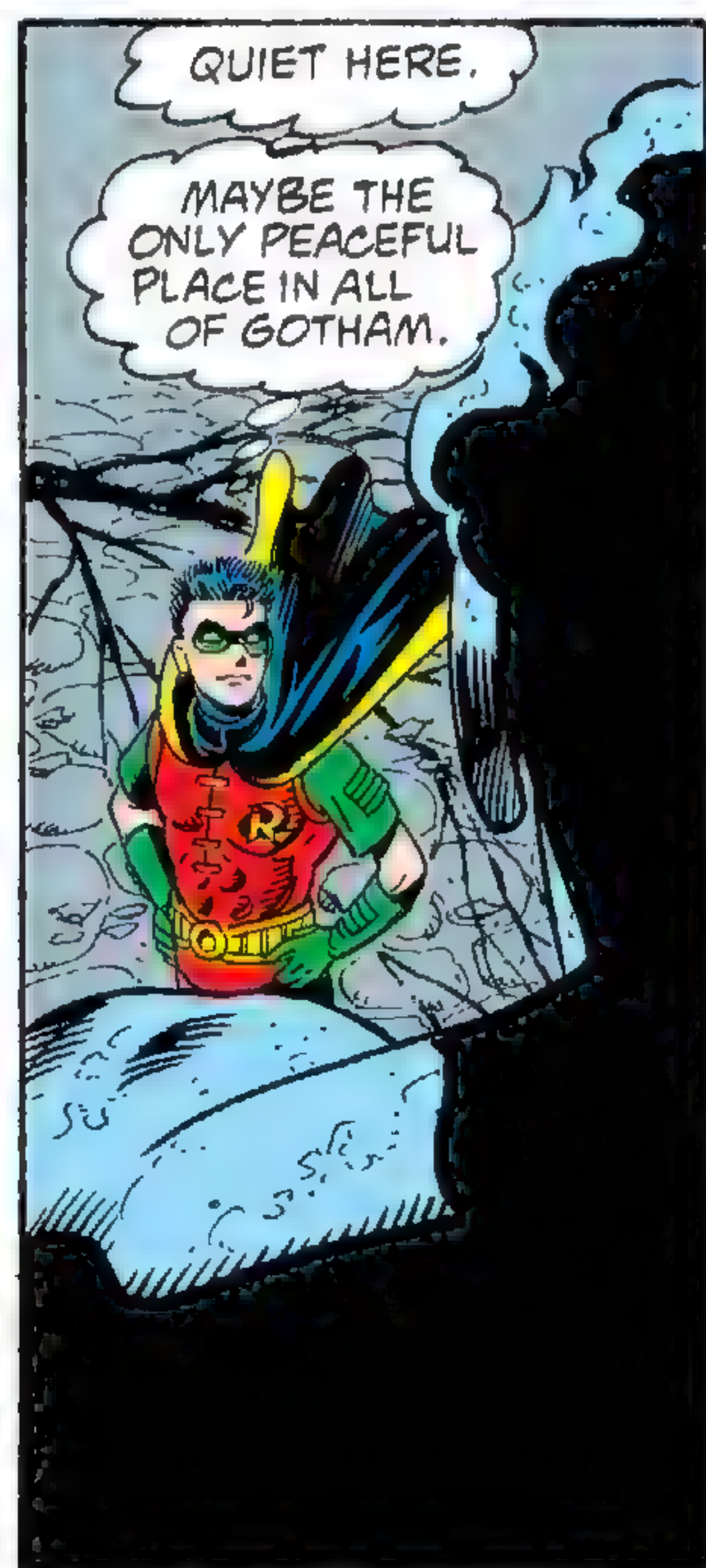
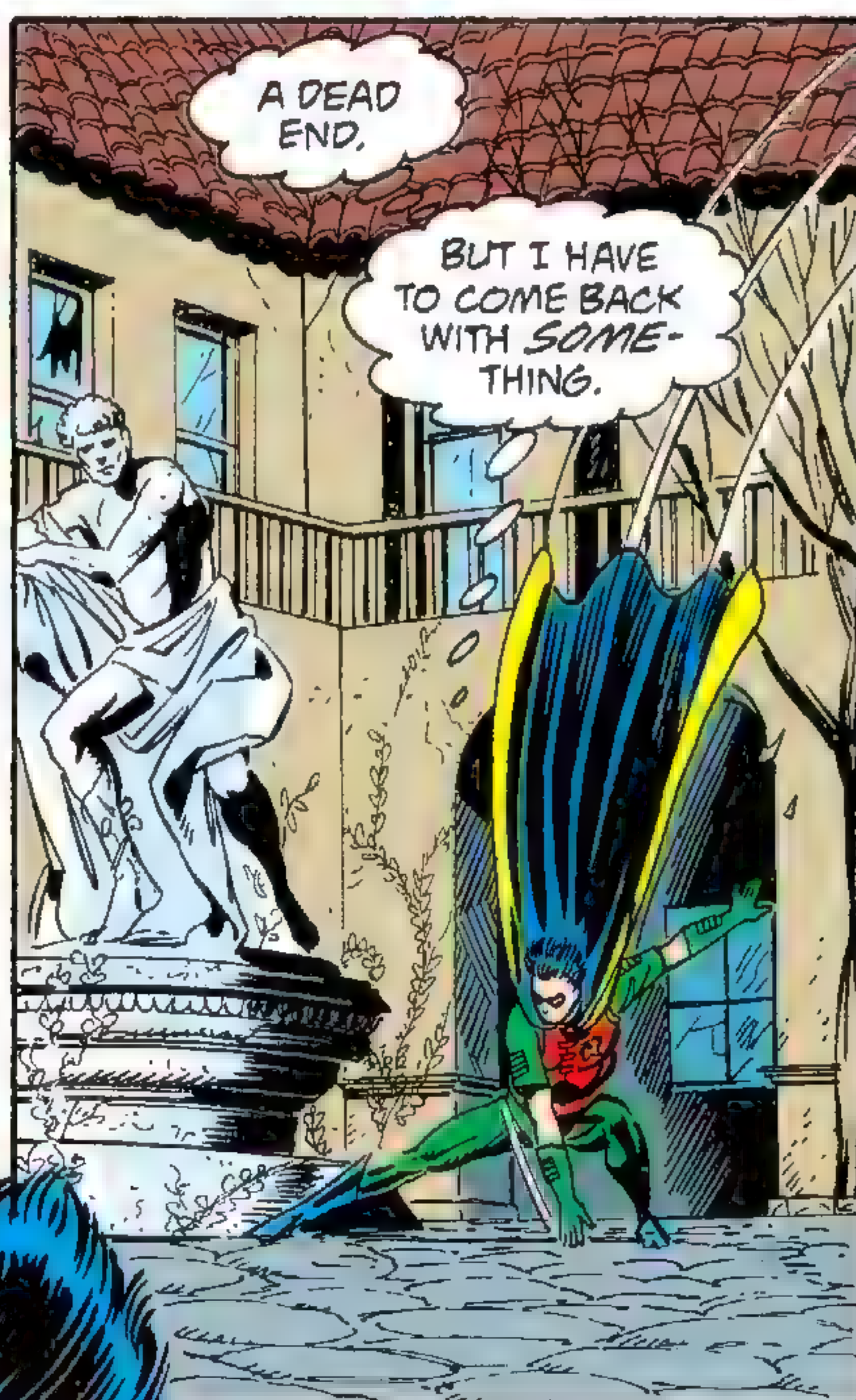
ALL I HAVE TO DO NOW IS FIGURE WHAT EXCUSE I'M GOING TO USE TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE TONIGHT.

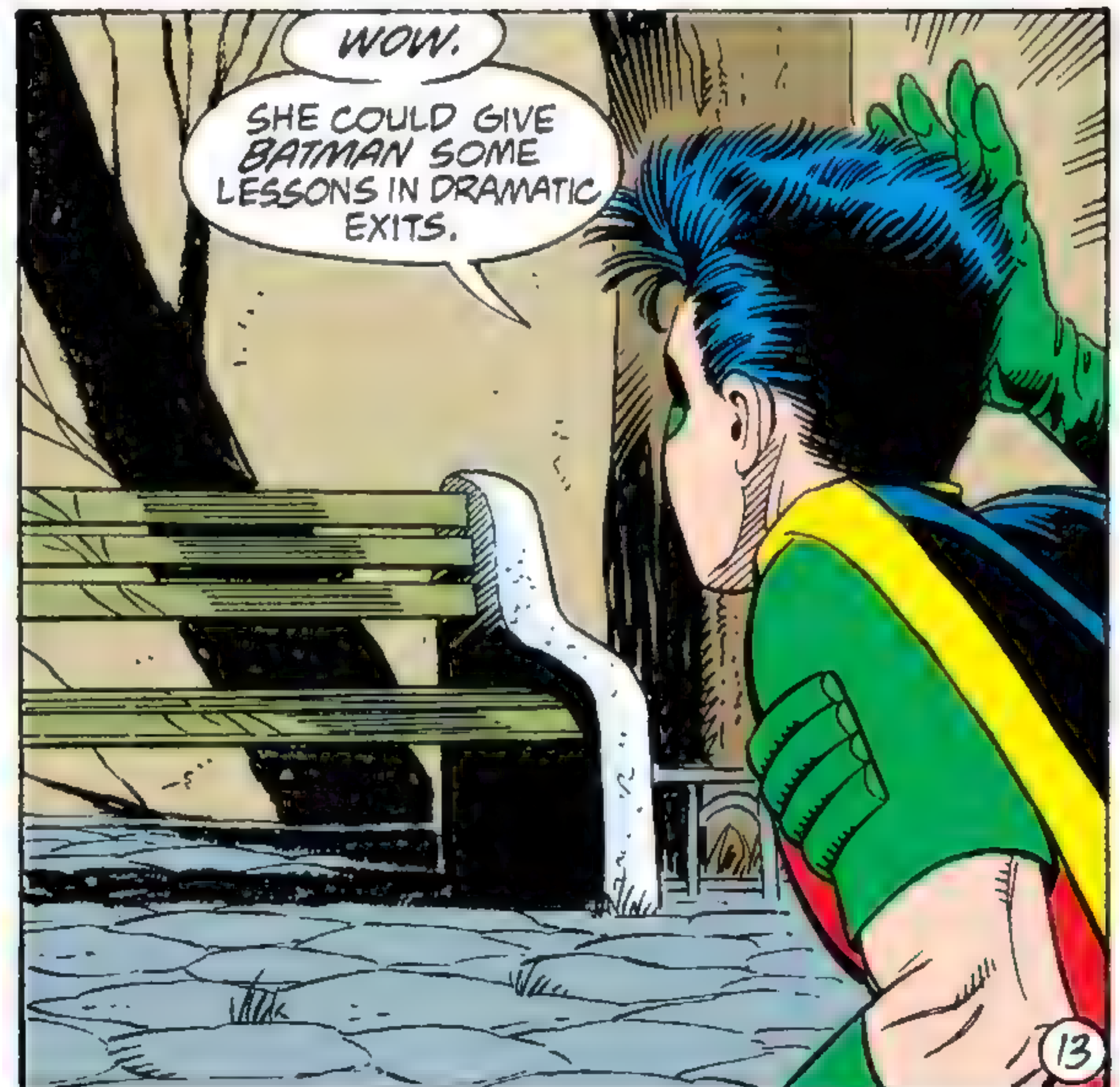
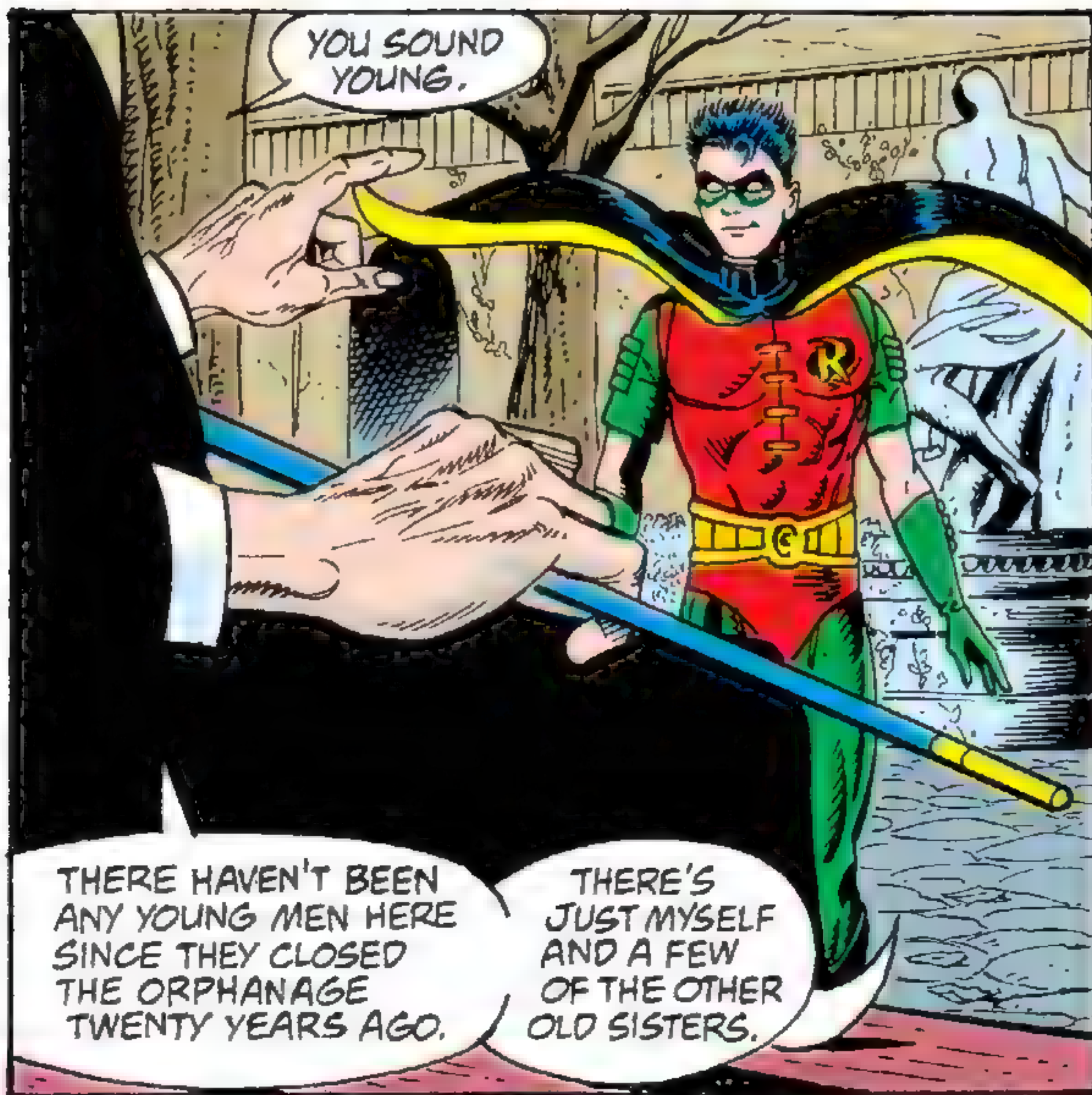
I CAN TELL DAD THAT I'M SPENDING THE NIGHT AT IVES' HOUSE.



I TOLD IVES THAT I'M GOING INTO TOWN TO SEE ARIANA.

THE LYING IS THE ONLY PART OF THIS JOB THAT I HATE.

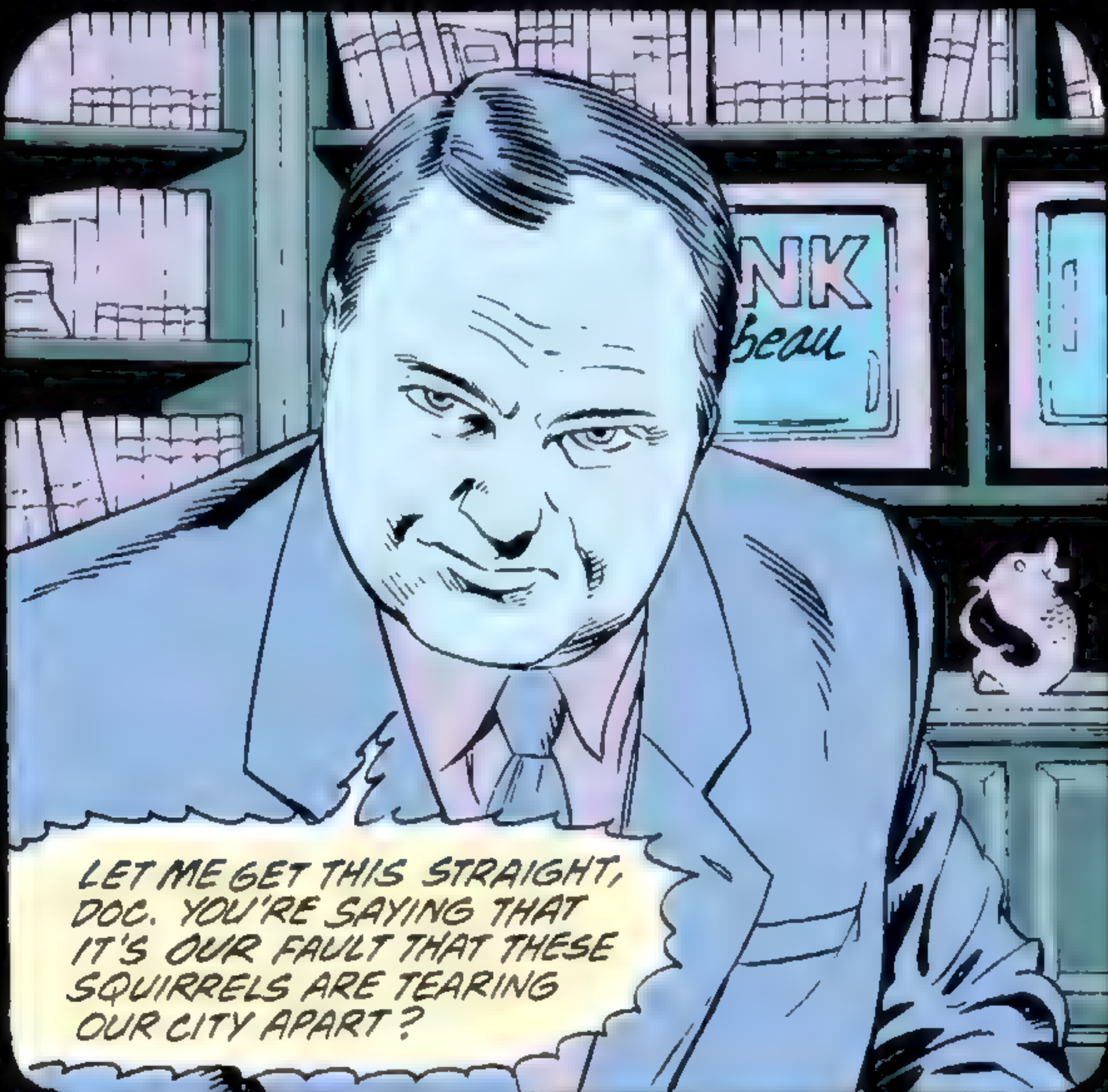




--AND POWER HAS
YET TO BE RESTORED
TO LINTOWN, EASTOWN
OR SHELDON PARK.

HOT TOWN
TONIGHT?

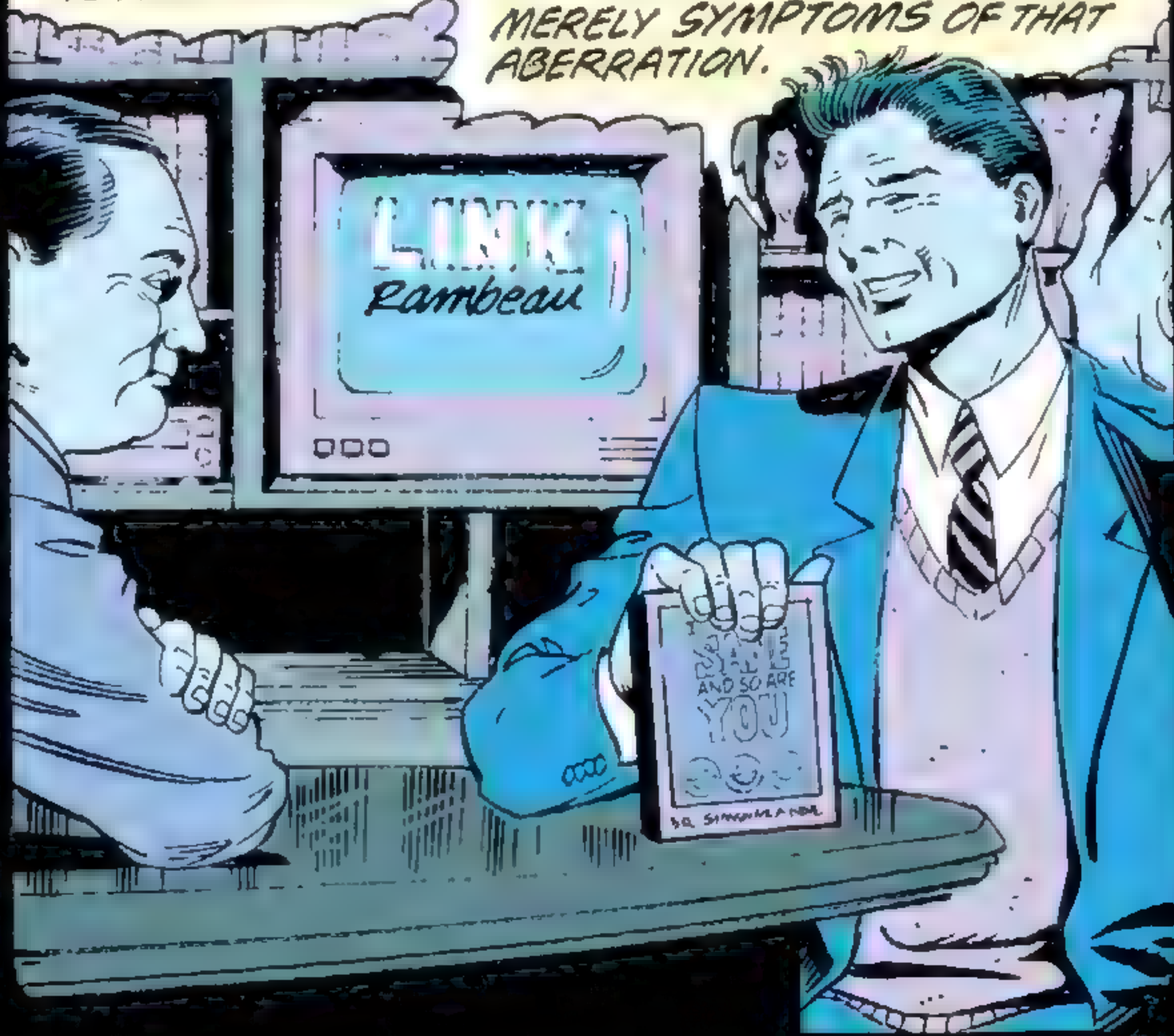
WE NOW JOIN THE
LINK RAMBEAU SHOW,
ALREADY IN PROGRESS.



LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT,
DOC. YOU'RE SAYING THAT
IT'S OUR FAULT THAT THESE
SQUIRRELS ARE TEARING
OUR CITY APART?

ABSOLUTELY. OUR
ENTIRE CULTURE
IS ABERRANT.

THESE DANGEROUS
INDIVIDUALS NOW CAUSING
SUCH AN INCONVENIENCE ARE
MERELY SYMPTOMS OF THAT
ABERRATION.



"AN INCONVENIENCE."
WE HAVE A BODY COUNT
RIVALING SARAJEVO.
PARTS OF THE CITY
BURN OUT OF
CONTROL. LAWLESS-
NESS AND CHAOS
ARE THE ORDER OF
THE DAY.

AND WE
ENCOURAGE
THIS, RIGHT?

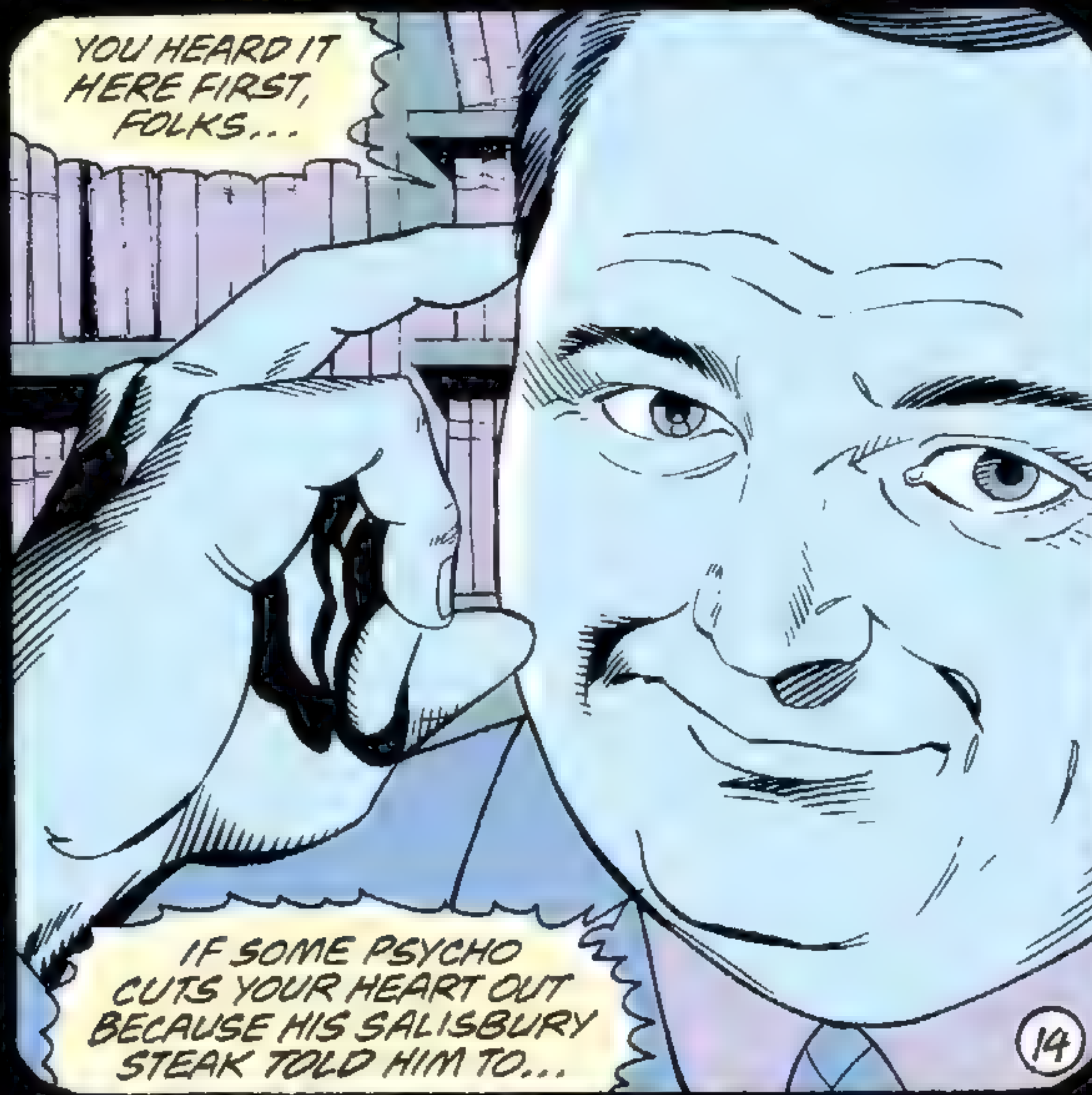
IT'S ALL RIGHT
HERE IN "I'M SANE
AND SO ARE YOU".

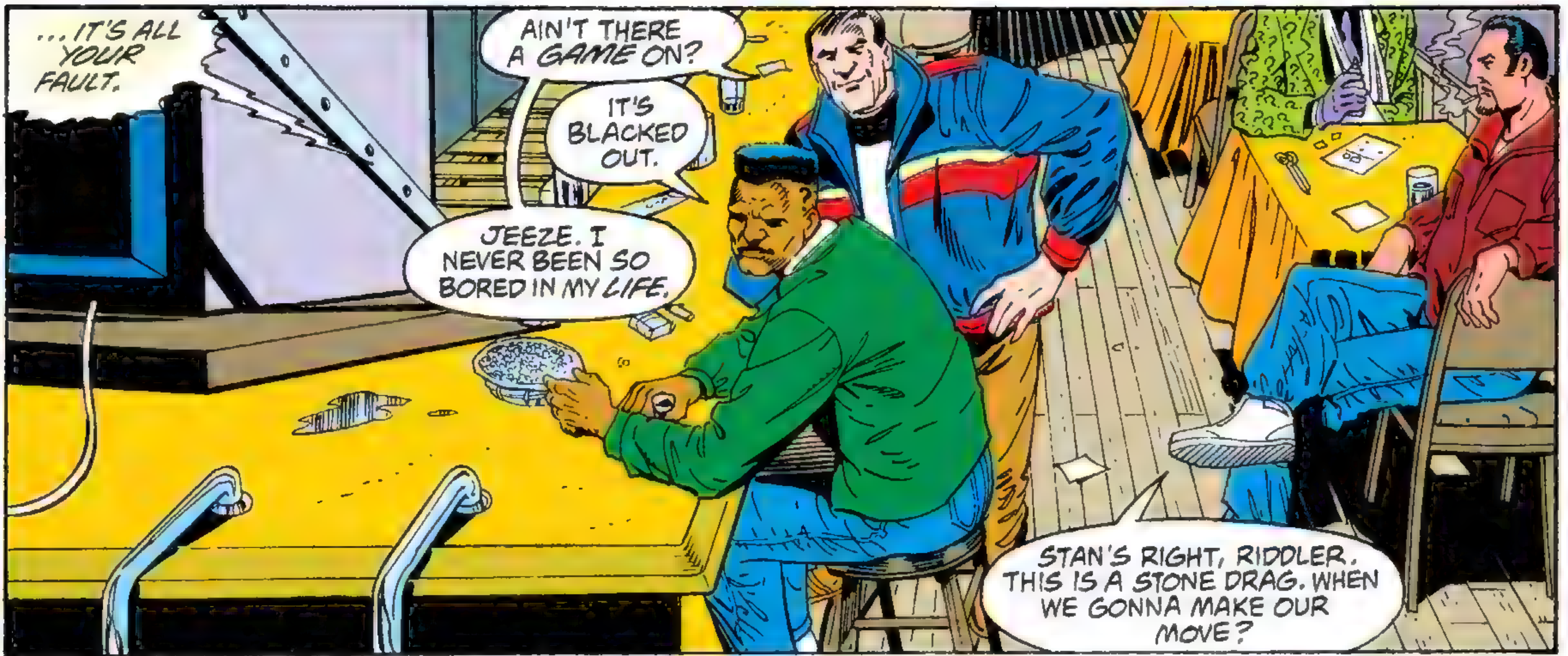
ALL OF US MUST
SHARE THE BLAME.

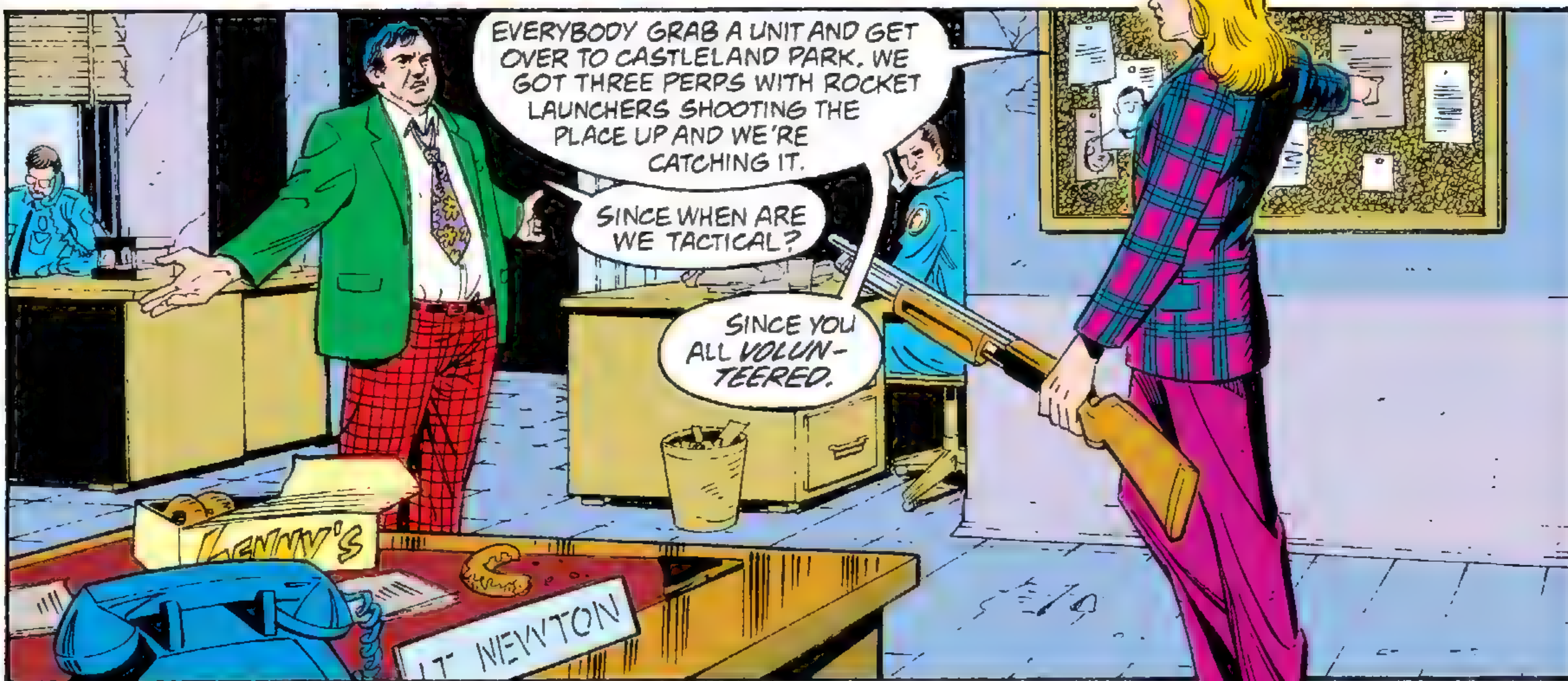


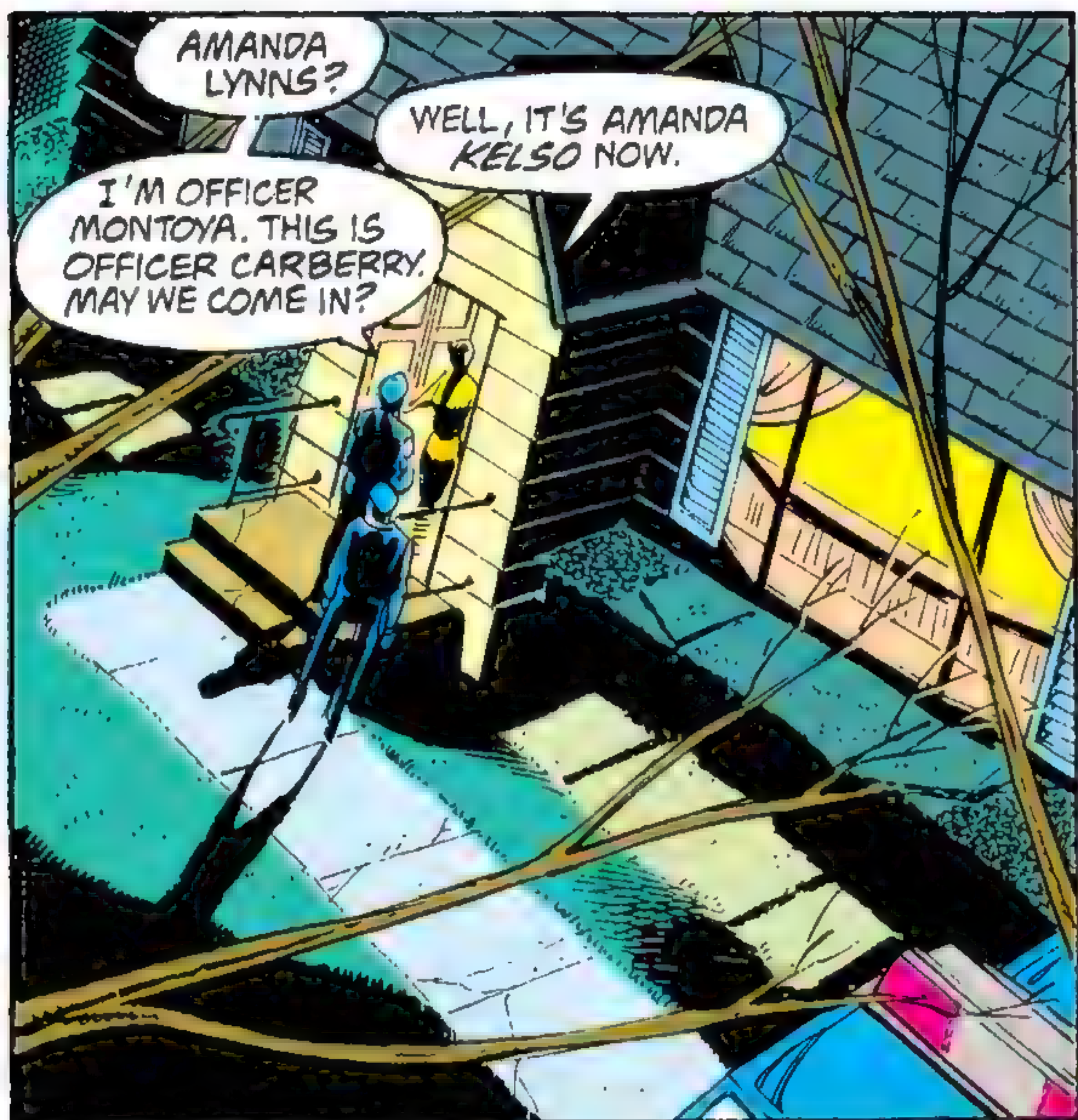
YOU HEARD IT
HERE FIRST,
FOLKS...

IF SOME PSYCHO
CUTS YOUR HEART OUT
BECAUSE HIS SALISBURY
STEAK TOLD HIM TO...









AMANDA
LYNNS?

WELL, IT'S AMANDA
KELSO NOW.

I'M OFFICER
MONTOKA. THIS IS
OFFICER CARBERRY.
MAY WE COME IN?

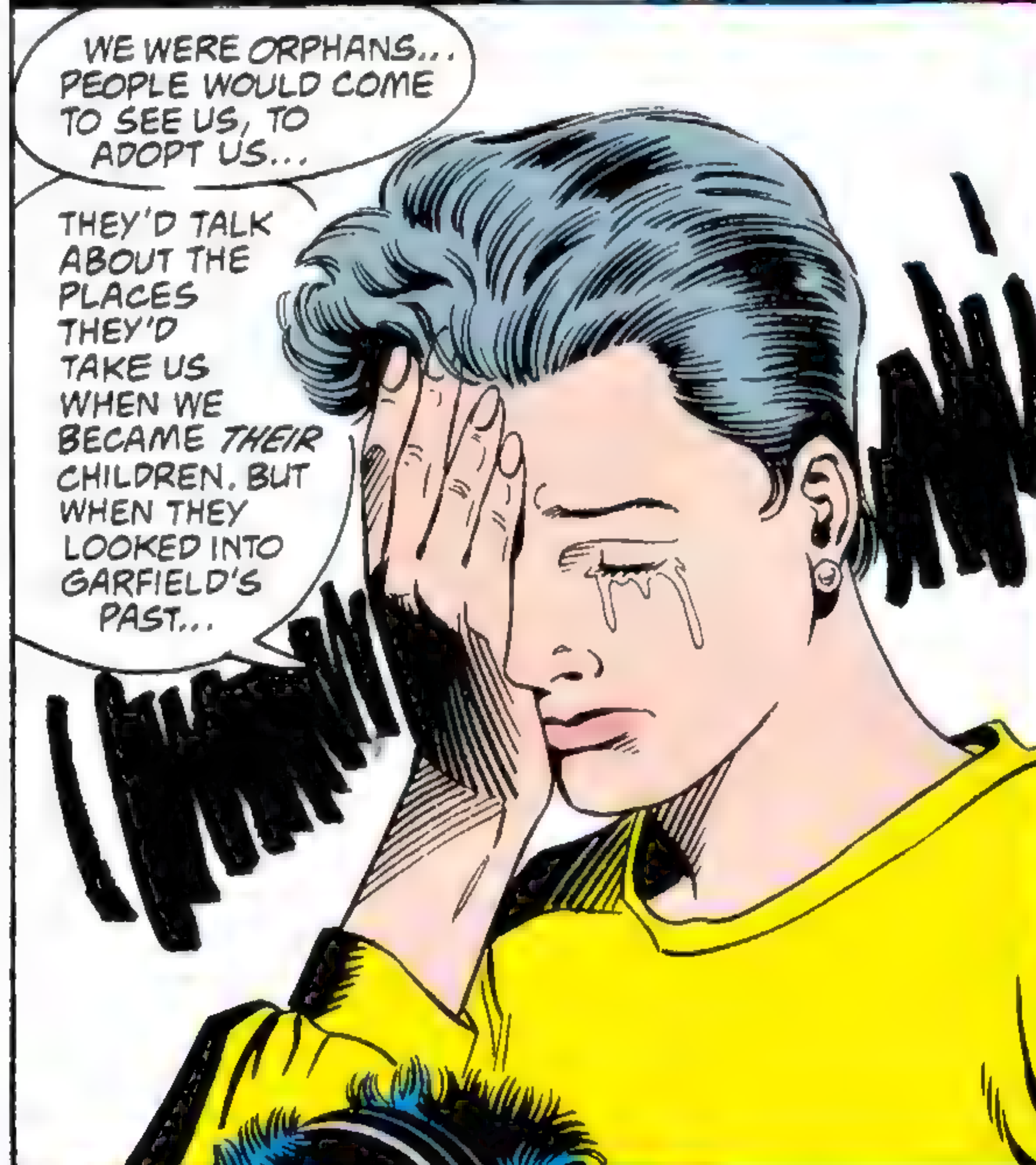


WE WERE TOLD THAT YOU—

I KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE,
BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN
GARFIELD. HE DIDN'T
COME HERE WHEN
HE ESCAPED.

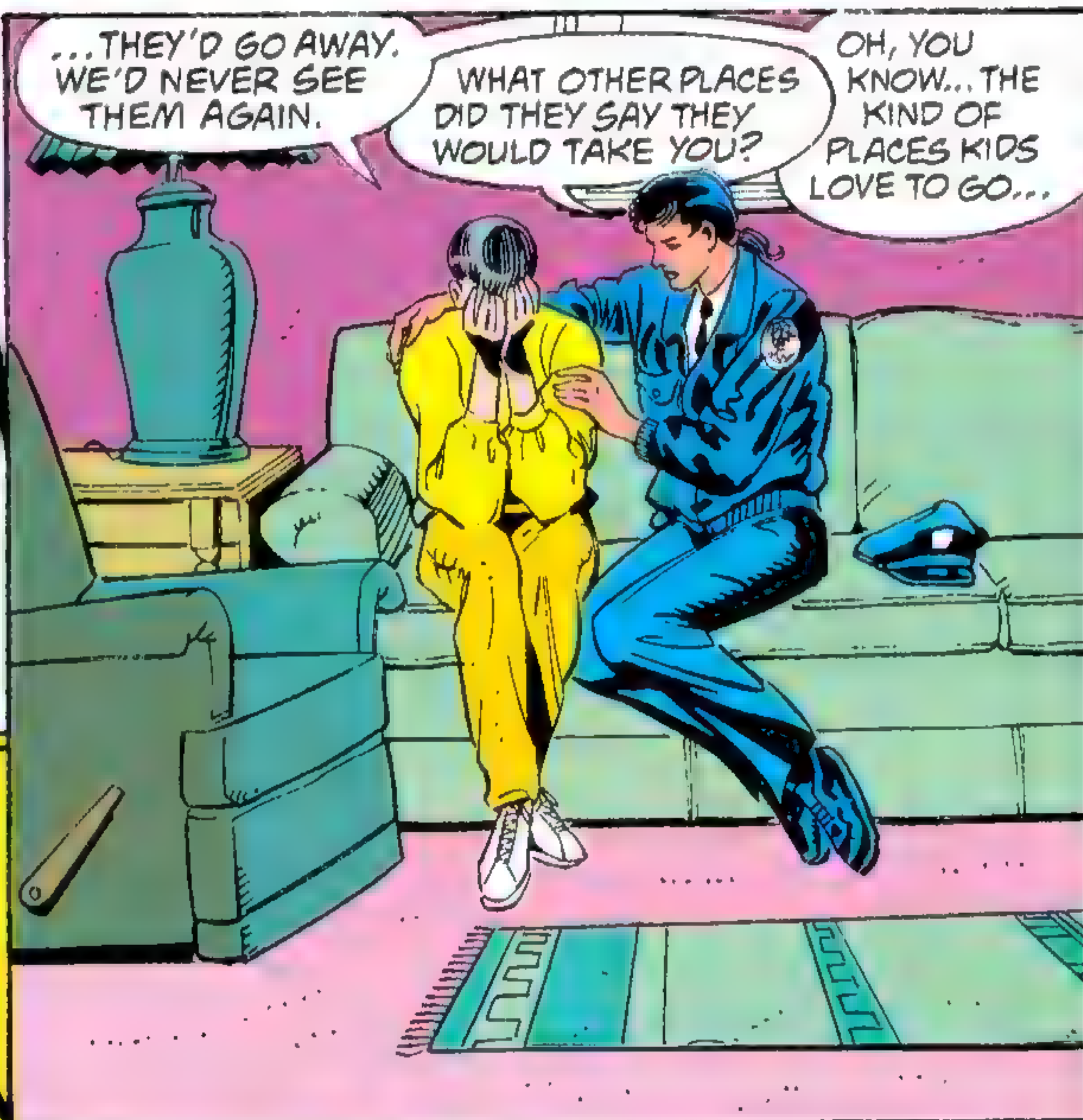
THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN MY
FIRST QUESTION. HE'S BURNT
DOWN ELMO'S PIER. WE WERE
WONDERING IF YOU KNEW
WHY.

GOD...



WE WERE ORPHANS...
PEOPLE WOULD COME
TO SEE US, TO
ADOPT US...

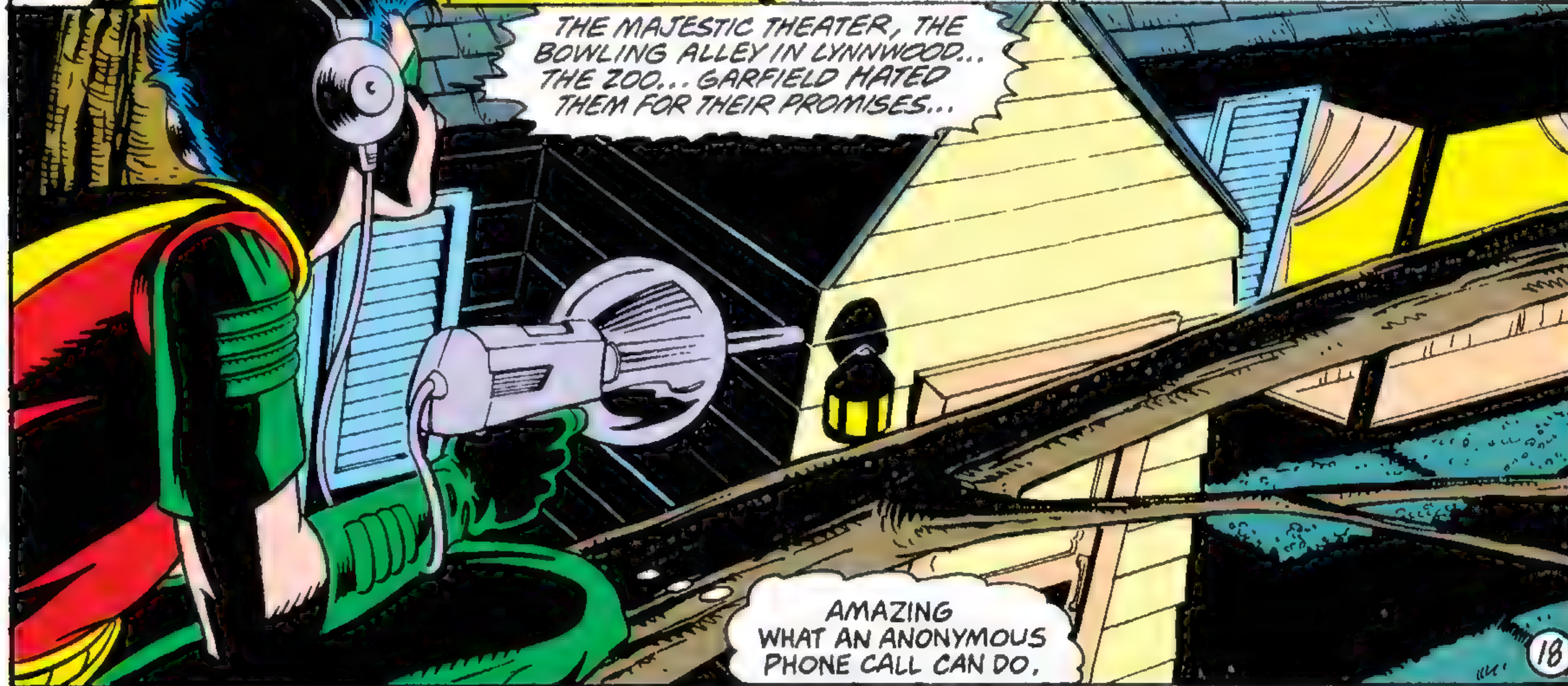
THEY'D TALK
ABOUT THE
PLACES
THEY'D
TAKE US
WHEN WE
BECAME THEIR
CHILDREN. BUT
WHEN THEY
LOOKED INTO
GARFIELD'S
PAST...



...THEY'D GO AWAY.
WE'D NEVER SEE
THEM AGAIN.

WHAT OTHER PLACES
DID THEY SAY THEY
WOULD TAKE YOU?

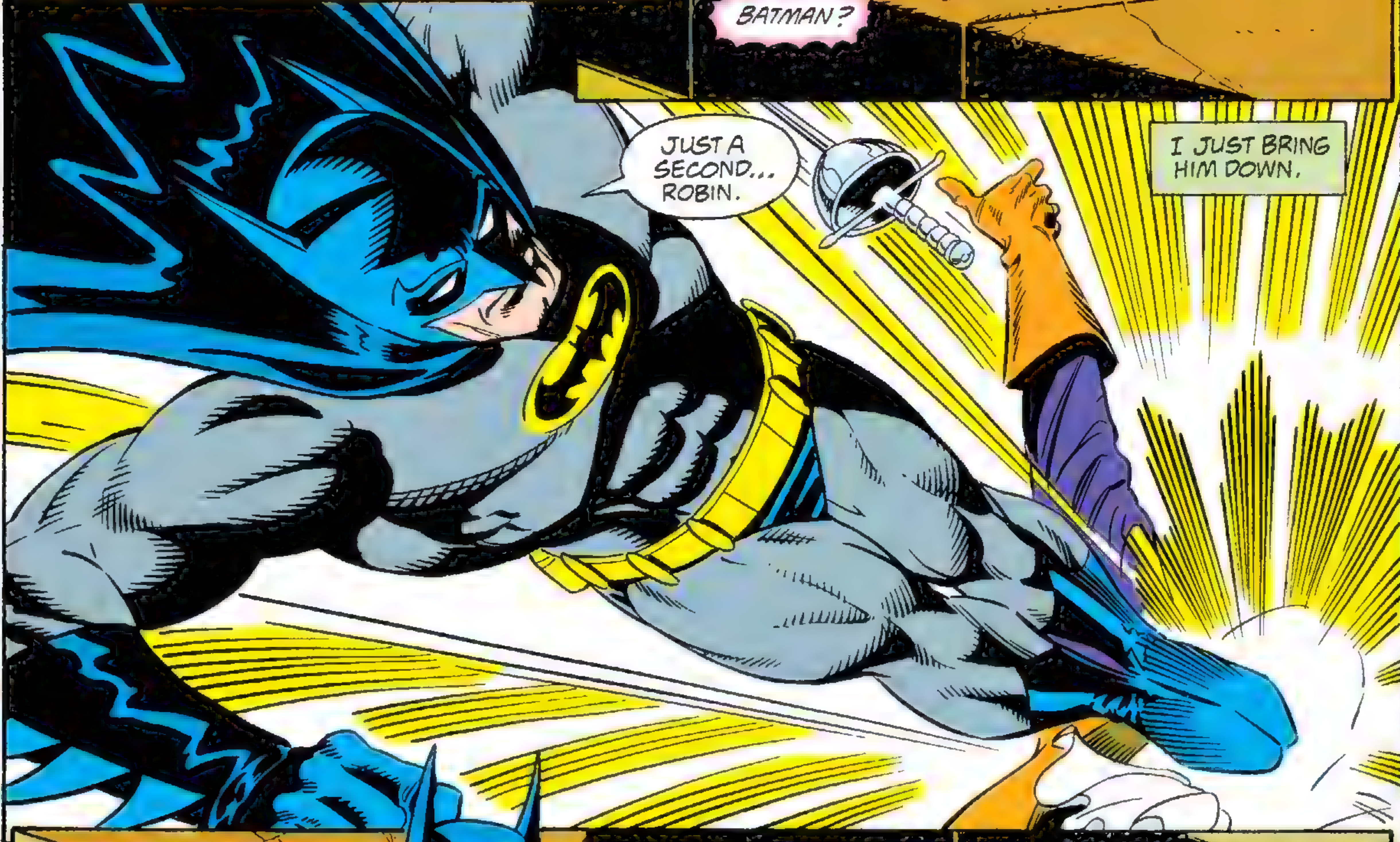
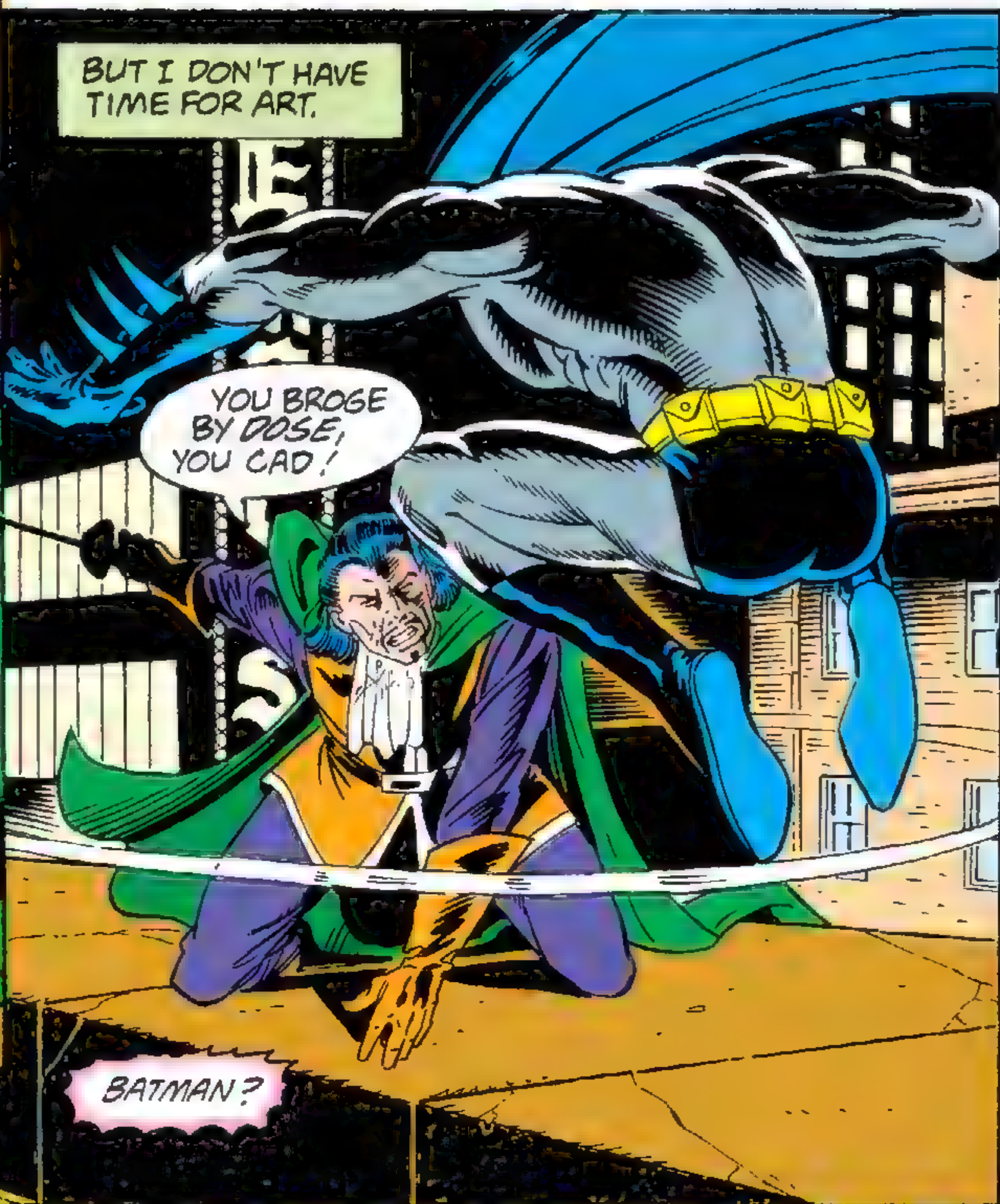
OH, YOU
KNOW... THE
KIND OF
PLACES KIDS
LOVE TO GO...

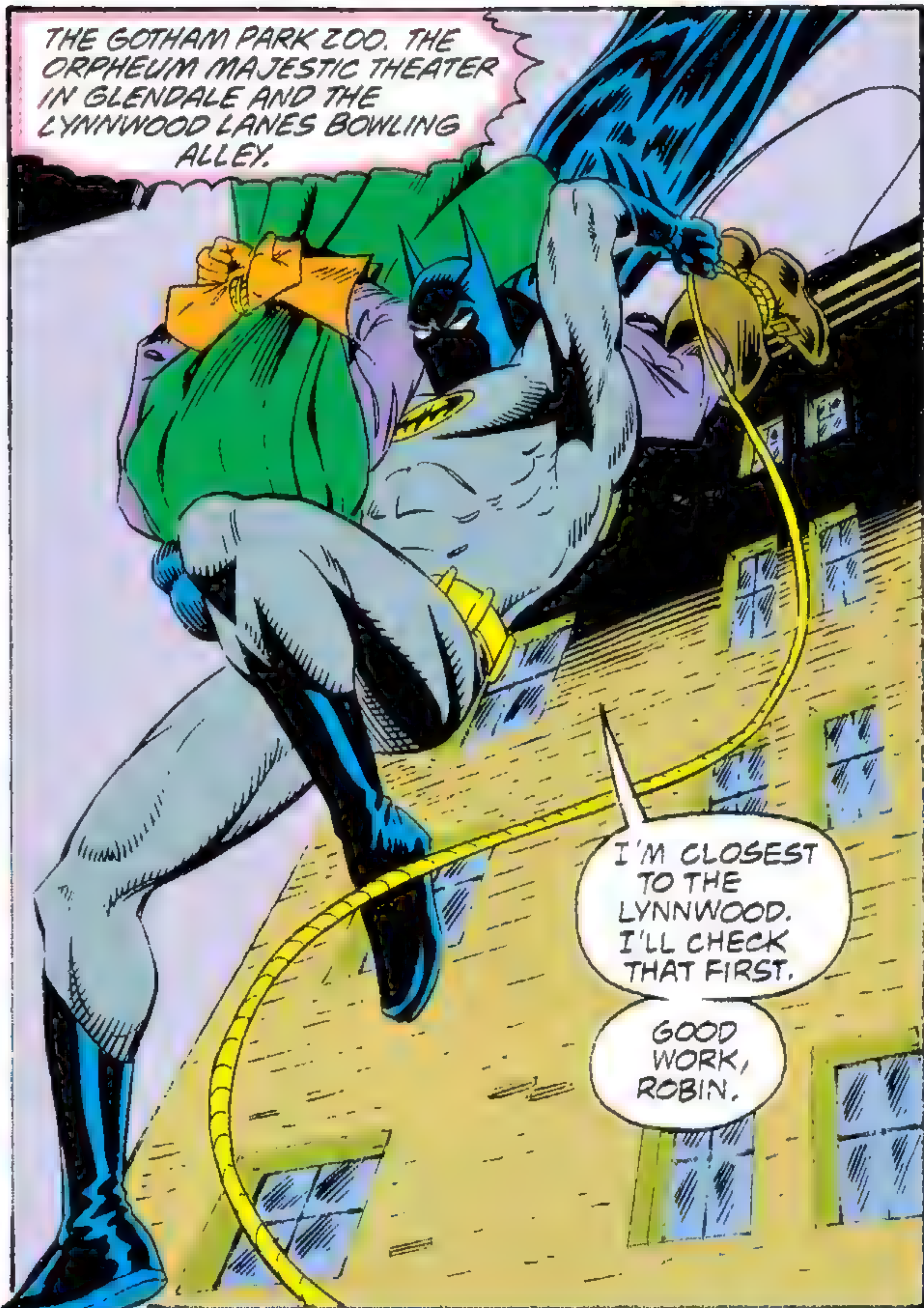


THE MAJESTIC THEATER, THE
BOWLING ALLEY IN LYNNWOOD...
THE ZOO... GARFIELD HATED
THEM FOR THEIR PROMISES...

AMAZING
WHAT AN ANONYMOUS
PHONE CALL CAN DO.

18

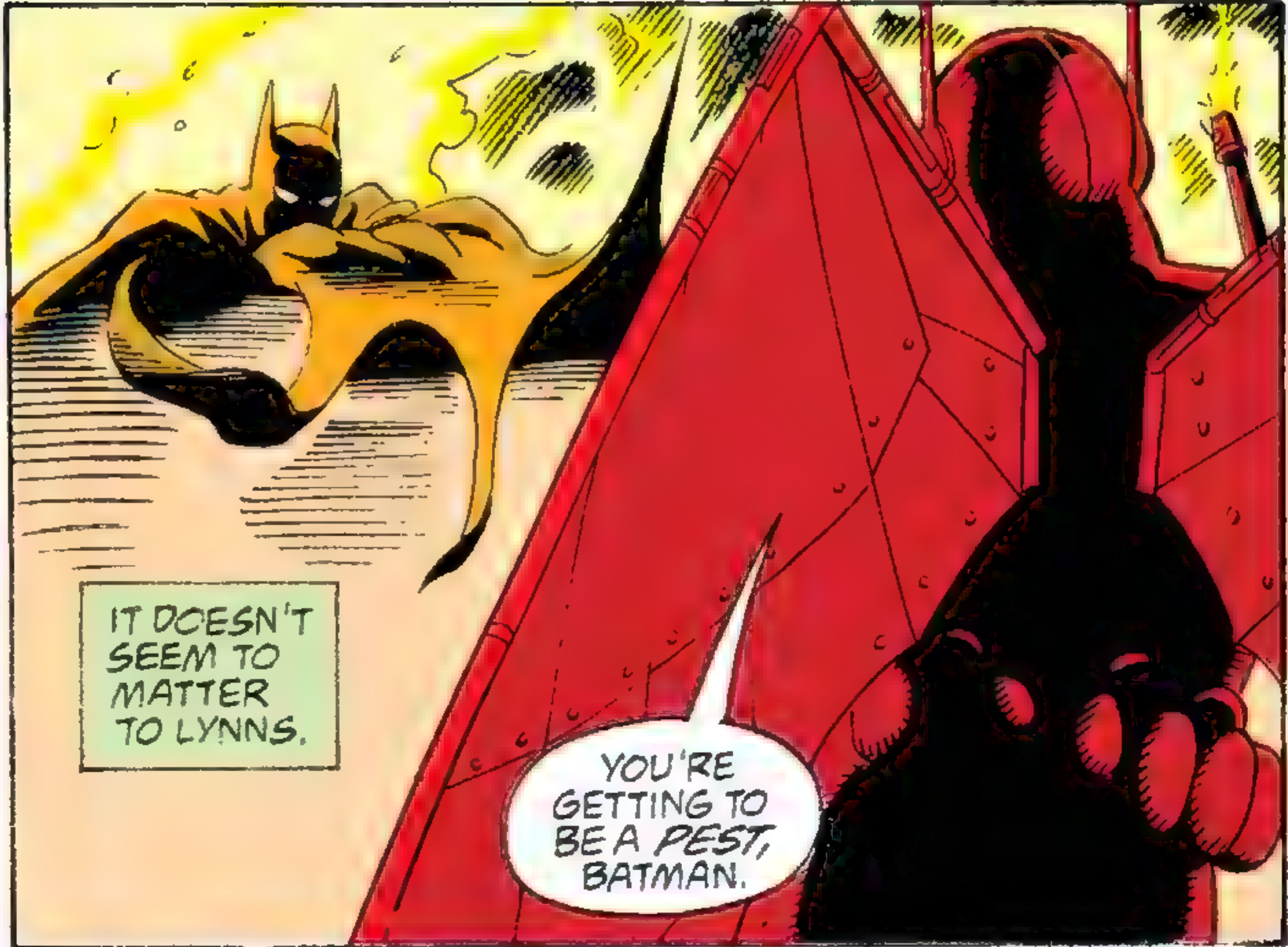






THE MAJESTIC IS NEXT. IT HASN'T BEEN A THEATER FOR YEARS. THESE DAYS IT'S A FURNITURE WAREHOUSE.

BURN...
BURN...
BURN!



IT DOESN'T
SEEM TO
MATTER
TO LYNNS.

YOU'RE
GETTING TO
BE A PEST,
BATMAN.



I'M NOT ONE
OF THOSE ARKHAM
INMATES WHO
OBSESSED
OVER YOU DAY
AND NIGHT.

IN FACT, I'LL
GET ALONG QUITE
NICELY WITH-
OUT YOUR
INTERFERENCE.



BUT IF YOU SPOIL
MY FUN ONE MORE
TIME I MAY BE FORCED
TO CHANGE MY MIND
ABOUT THAT!

YOU REALLY
ARE A WET
BLANKET,
BATTY.

ROOF IS AS HOT AS A
SKILLET UNDER MY FEET.

THE SAME HEAT
WILL CARRY HIM
AWAY AGAIN.

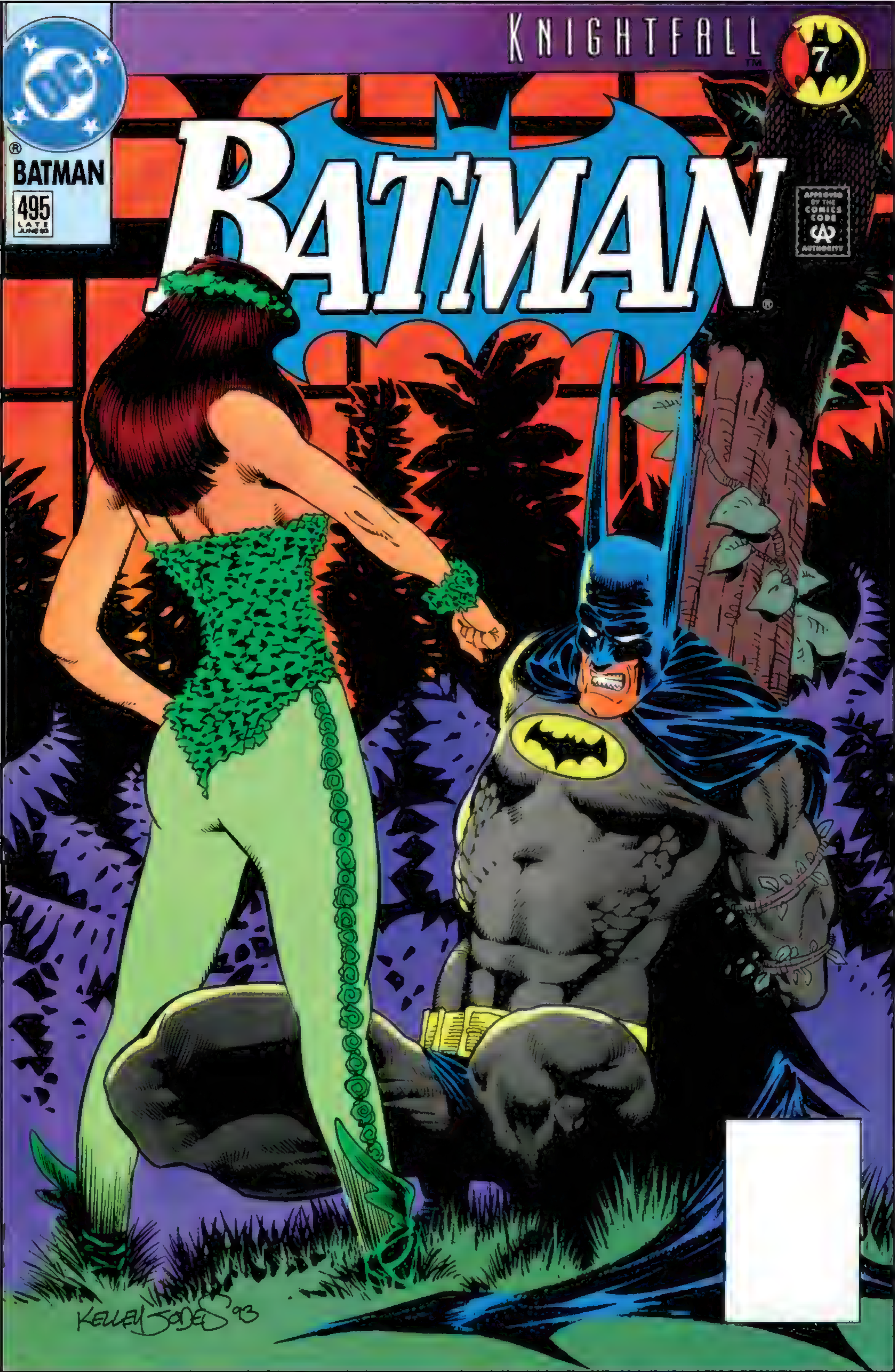
DON'T THINK.
JUST ACT.

NO!

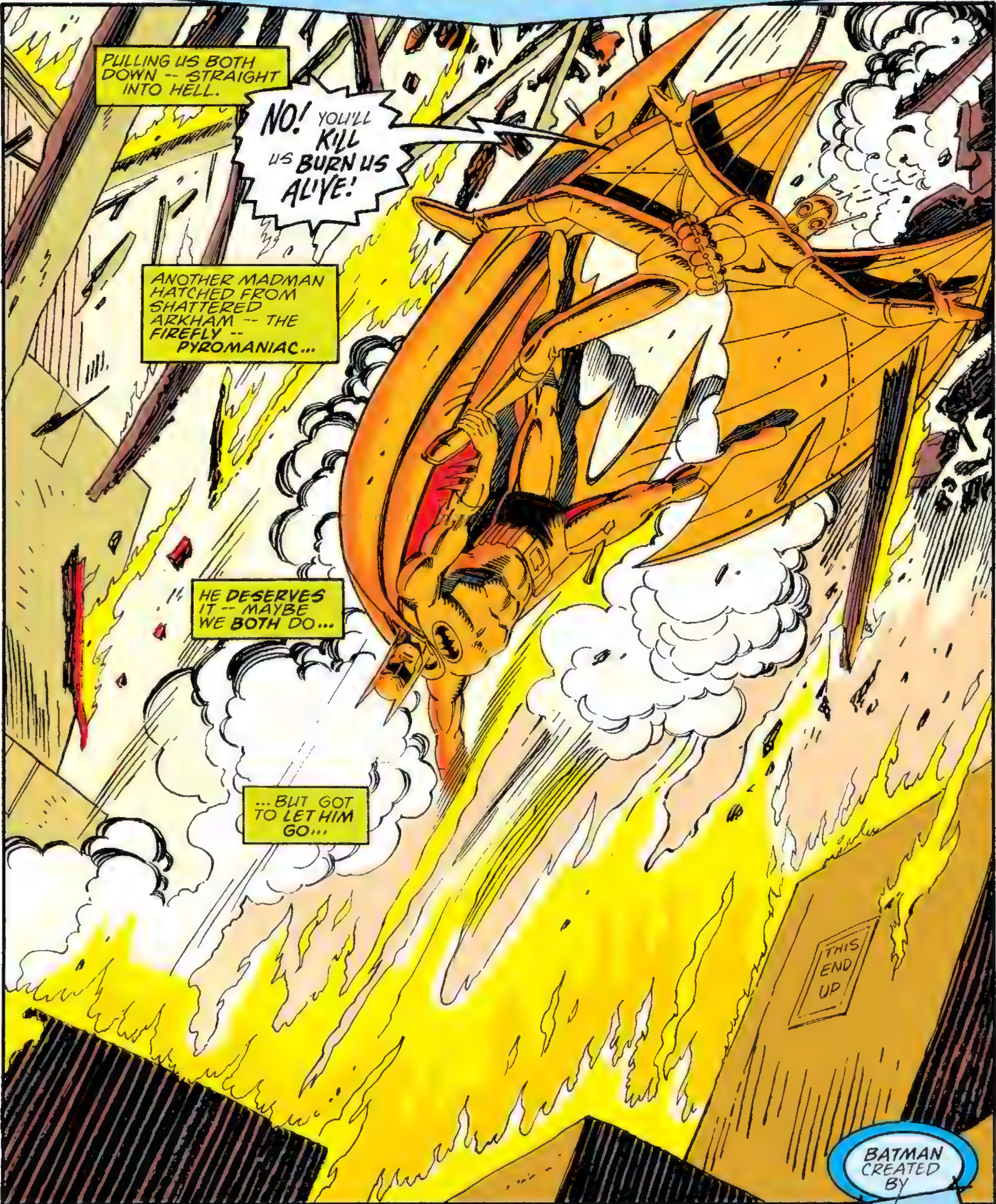
YOU'LL KILL
US BOTH!

THE INFERNO
COMES UP TO
MEET US,
EMBRACE US.

LOOKS LIKE MY
WORLD WILL END
IN FIRE.



STRAFE DEAD FELLOWS



PULLING US BOTH
DOWN -- STRAIGHT
INTO HELL.

NO! YOU'LL
KILL
US BURN US
ALIVE!

ANOTHER MADMAN
HATCHED FROM
SHATTERED
ARKHAM -- THE
FIREFLY --
PYROMANIAC...

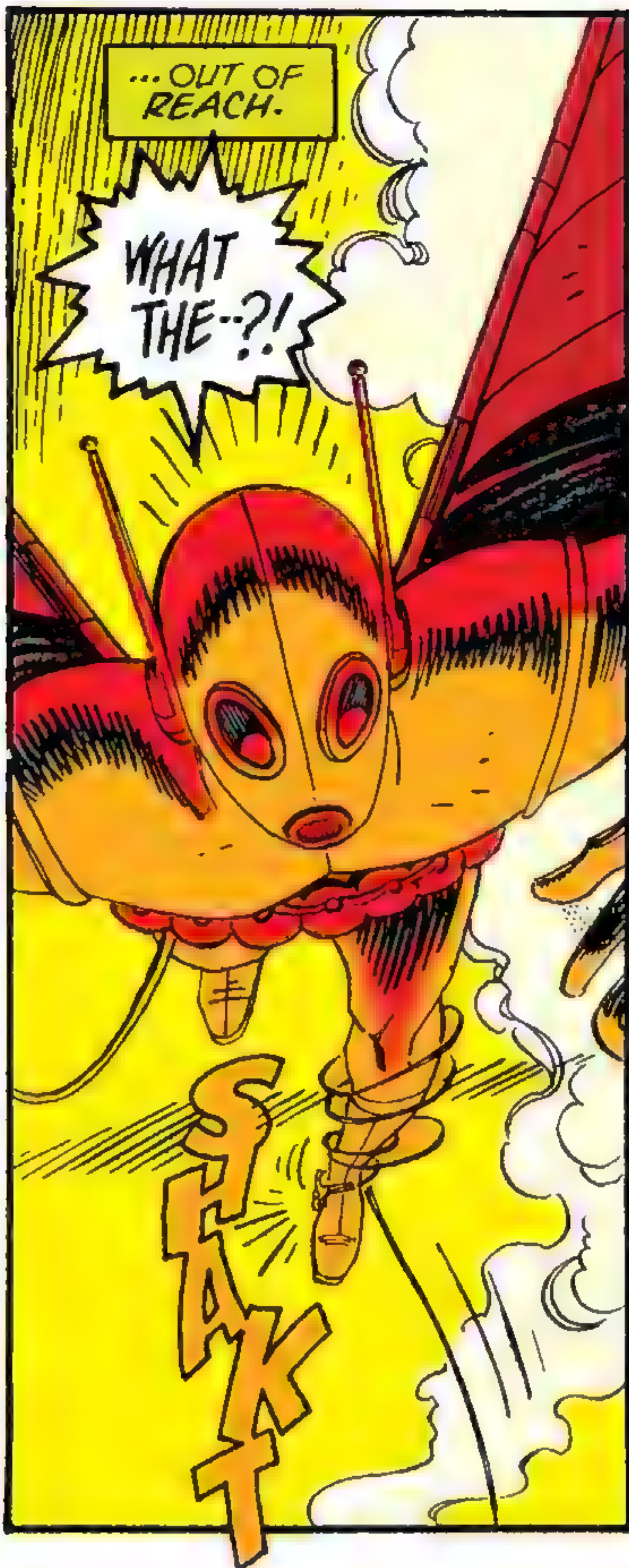
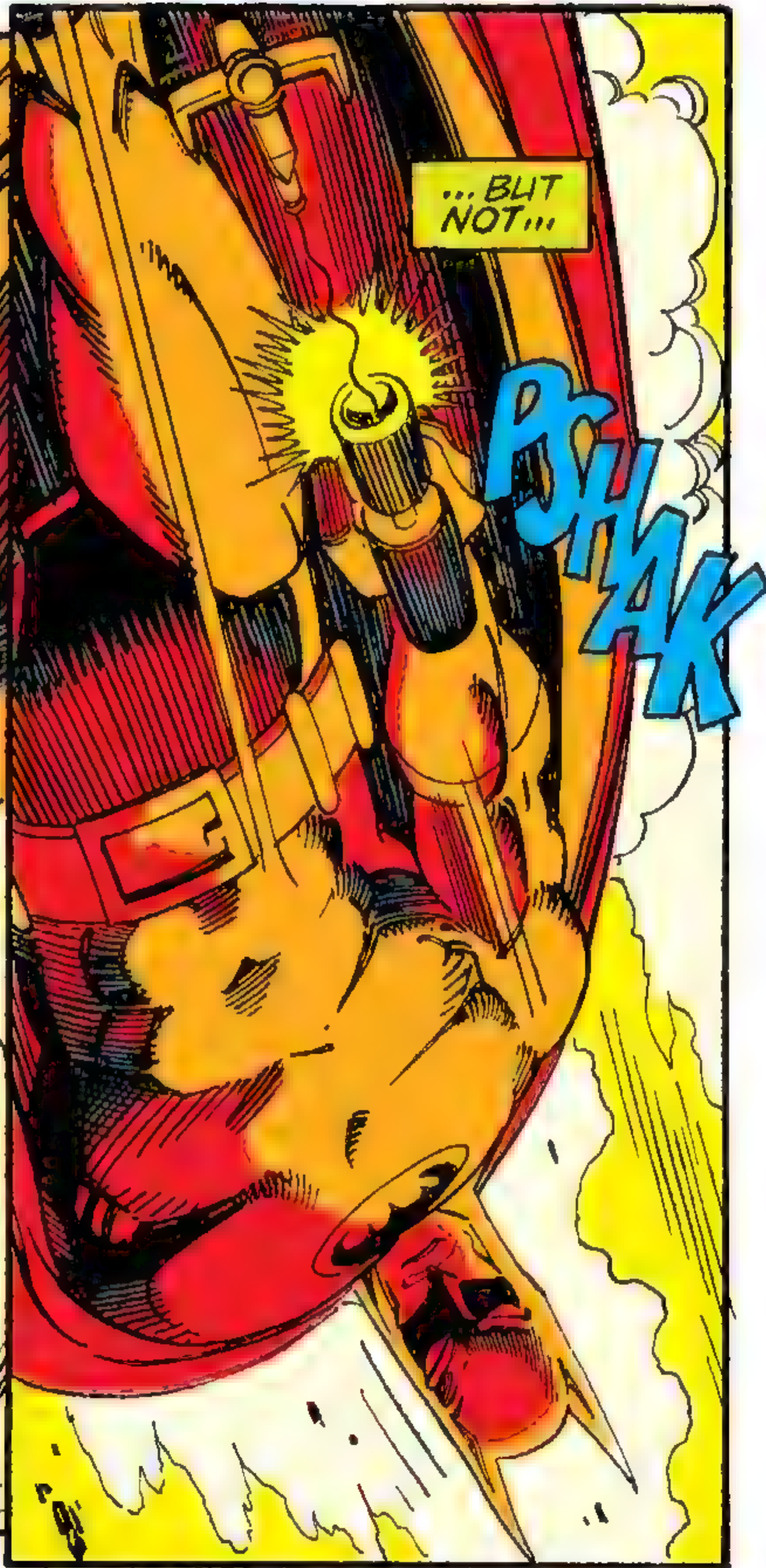
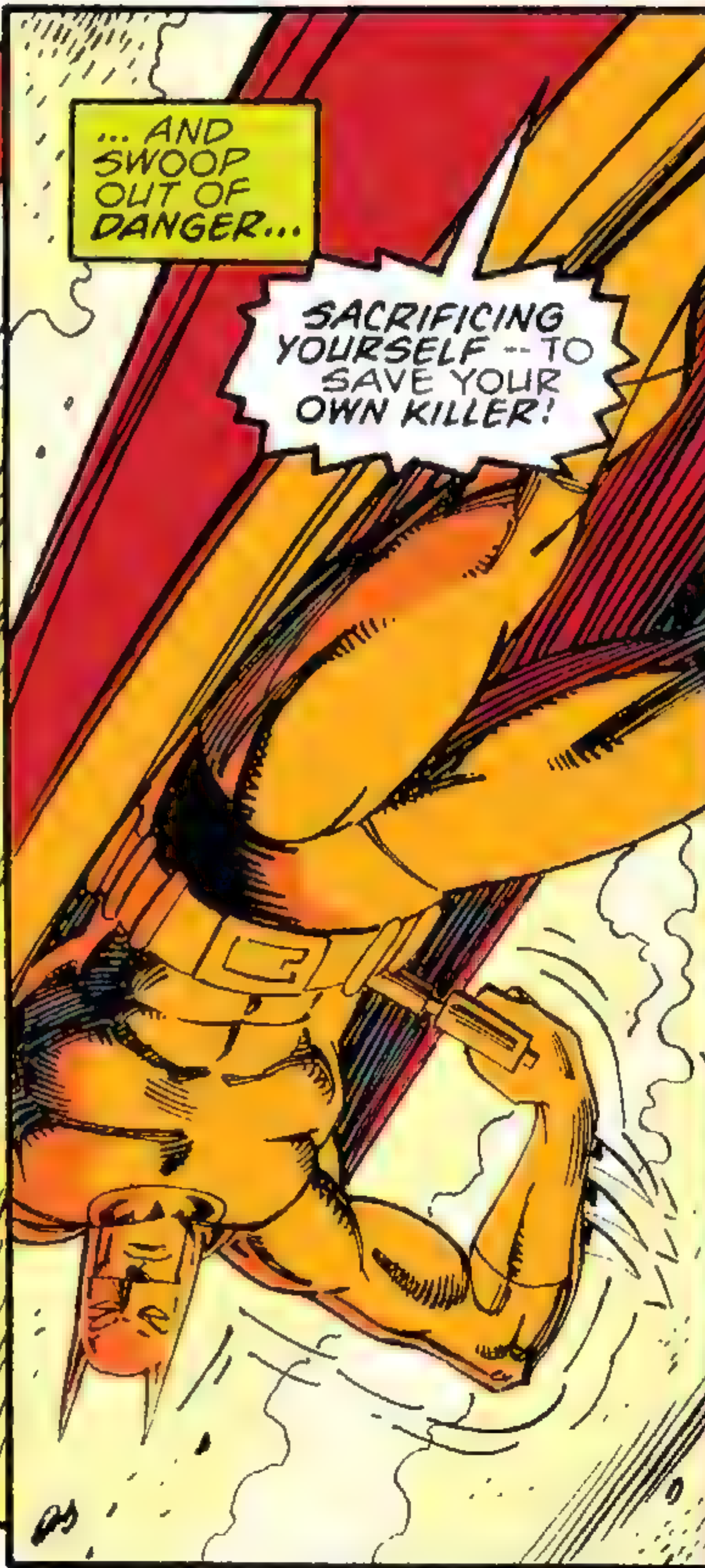
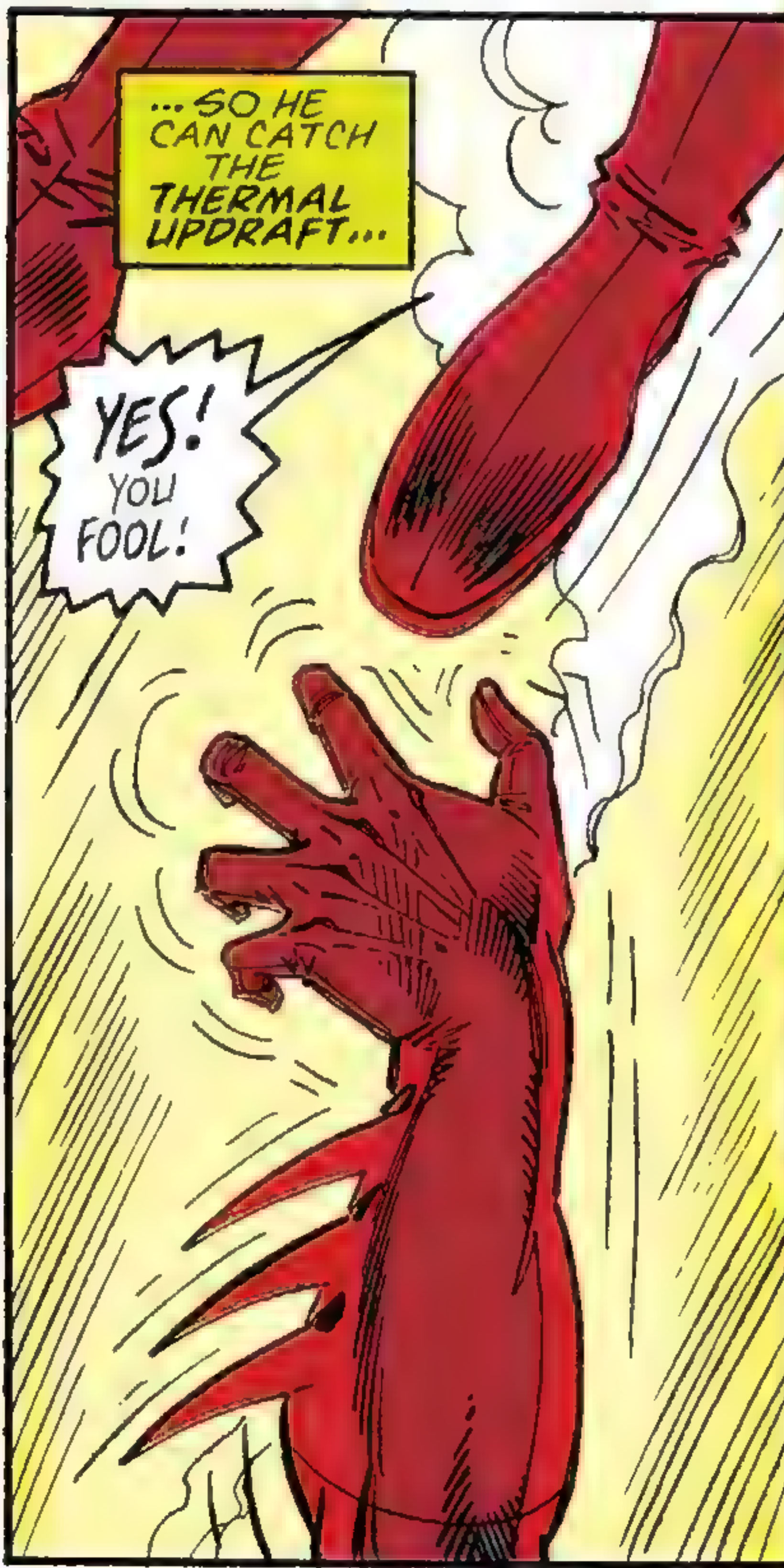
HE DESERVES
IT -- MAYBE
WE BOTH DO...

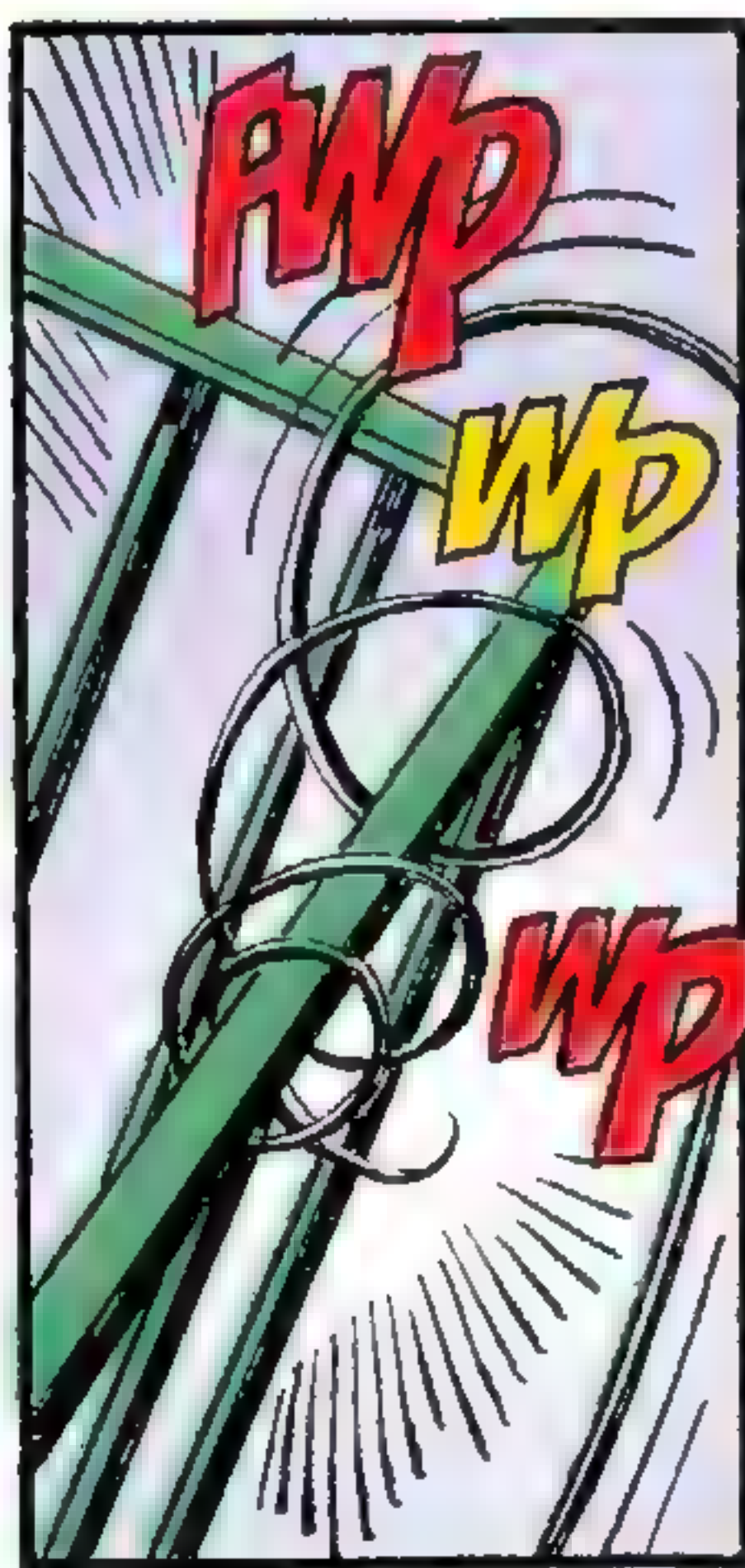
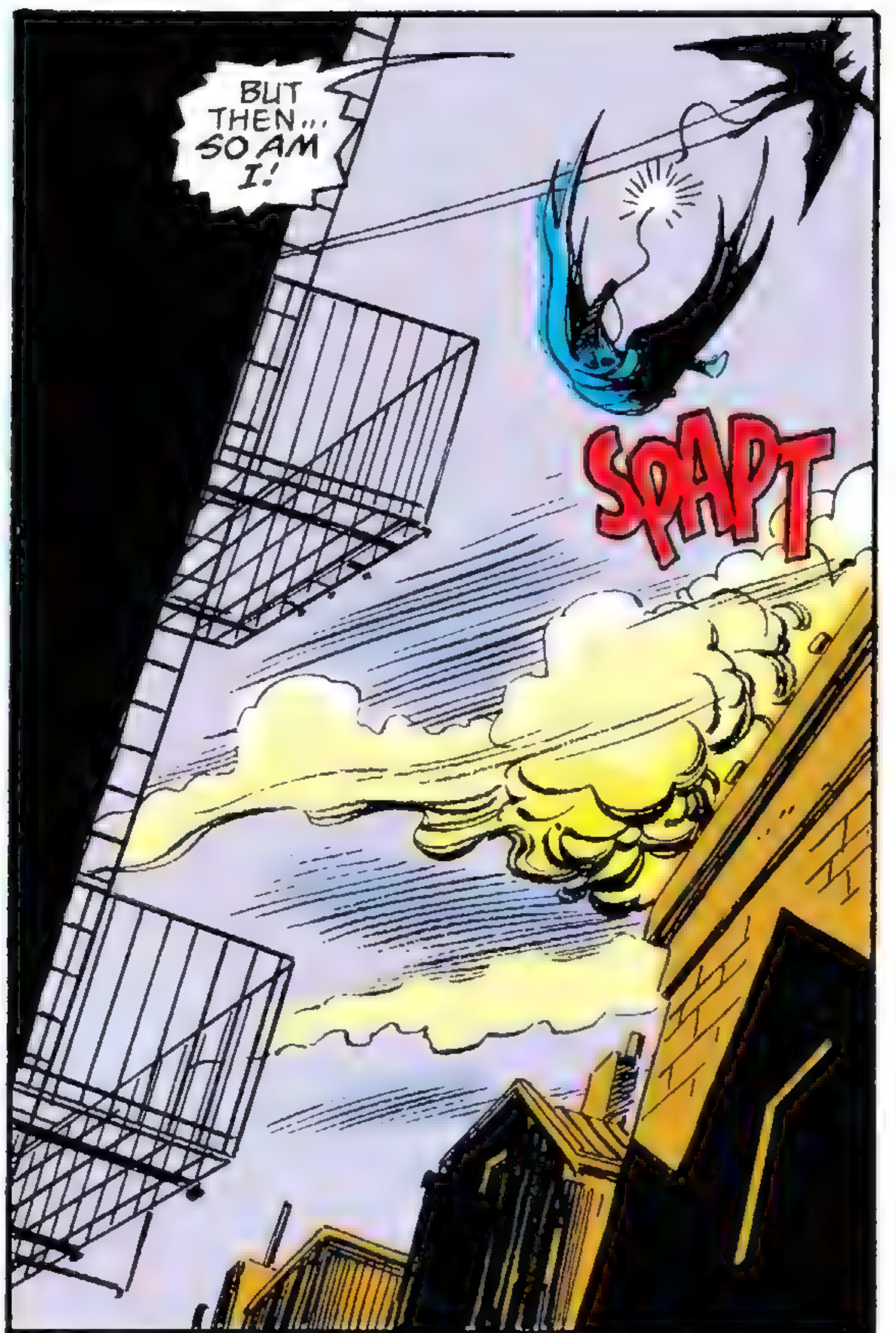
...BUT GOT
TO LET HIM
GO...

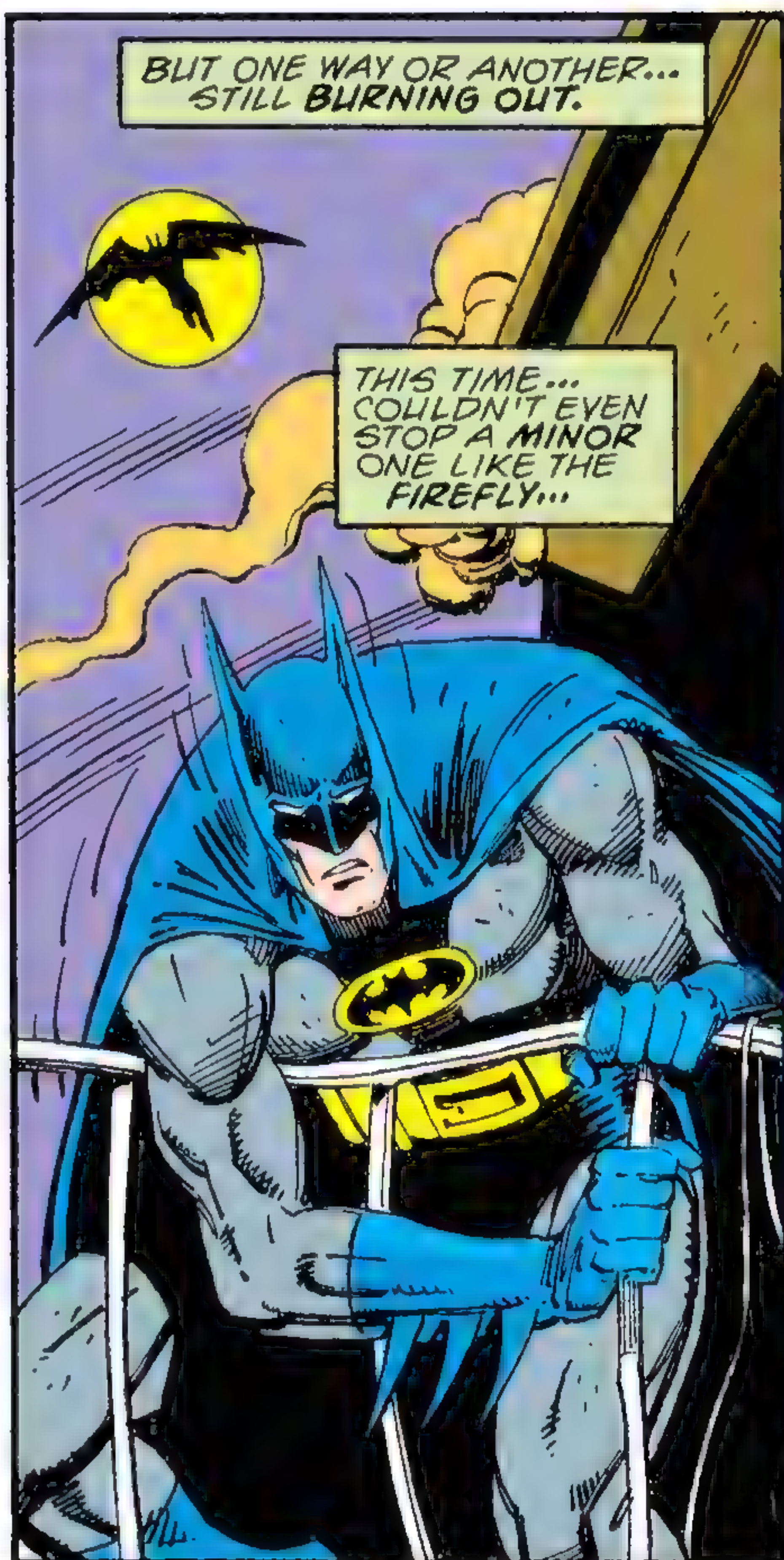
THIS
END
UP

BATMAN
CREATED
BY
**BOB
KANE**

DOUG MOENCH WRITER	JIM APARO PENCILLER	BOB WIACEK INKER	ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST	RICHARD STARKINGS LETTERER	JORDAN B. GORFINKEL ASST. EDITOR	DENNIS O'NEIL EDITOR	BOB KANE
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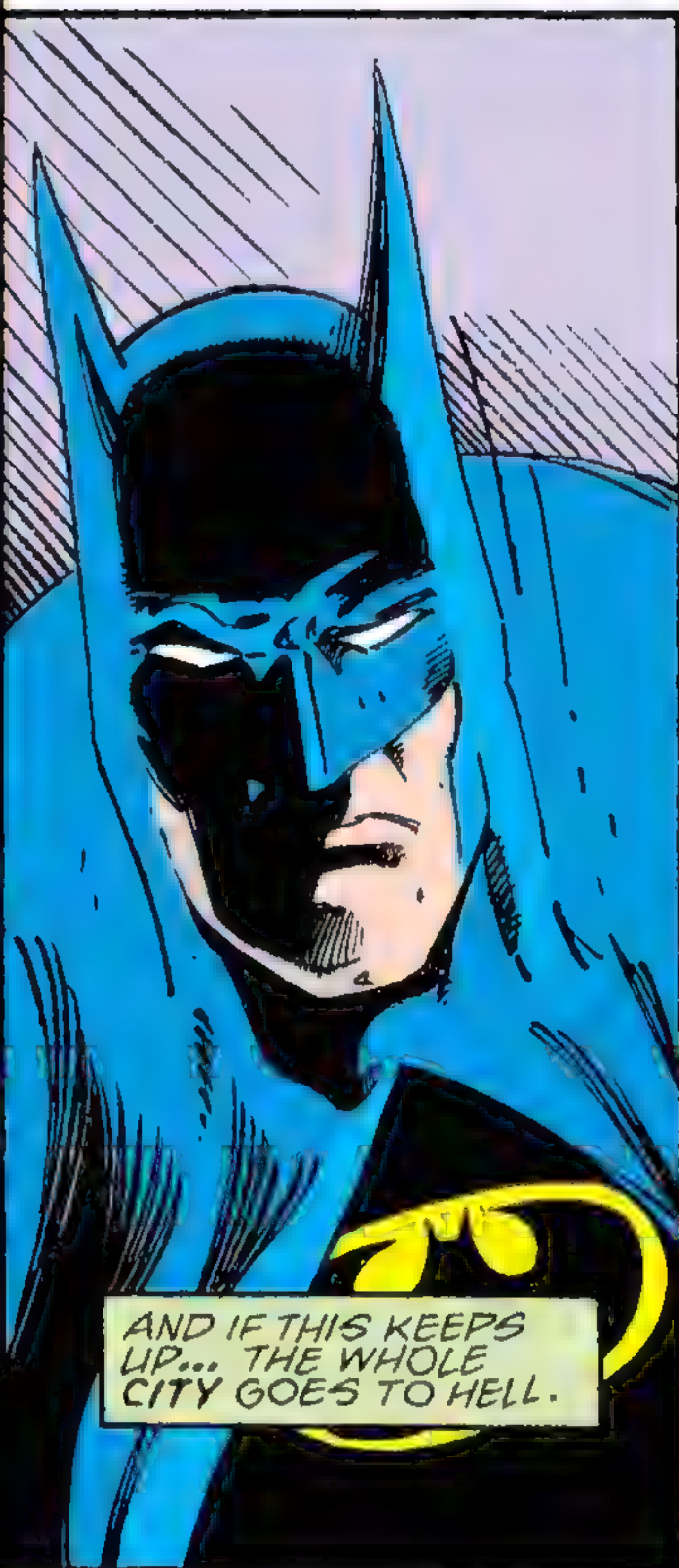






BUT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER...
STILL BURNING OUT.

THIS TIME...
COULDN'T EVEN
STOP A MINOR
ONE LIKE THE
FIREFLY...



AND IF THIS KEEPS
UP... THE WHOLE
CITY GOES TO HELL.



STILL FEEL
LIKE HELL, EVEN
AFTER WEEKS
OF THOUSAND-
PUSHUP
DAYS...



BUT
THE PROBLEM,
OF COURSE,
IS HARDLY
PHYSICAL.

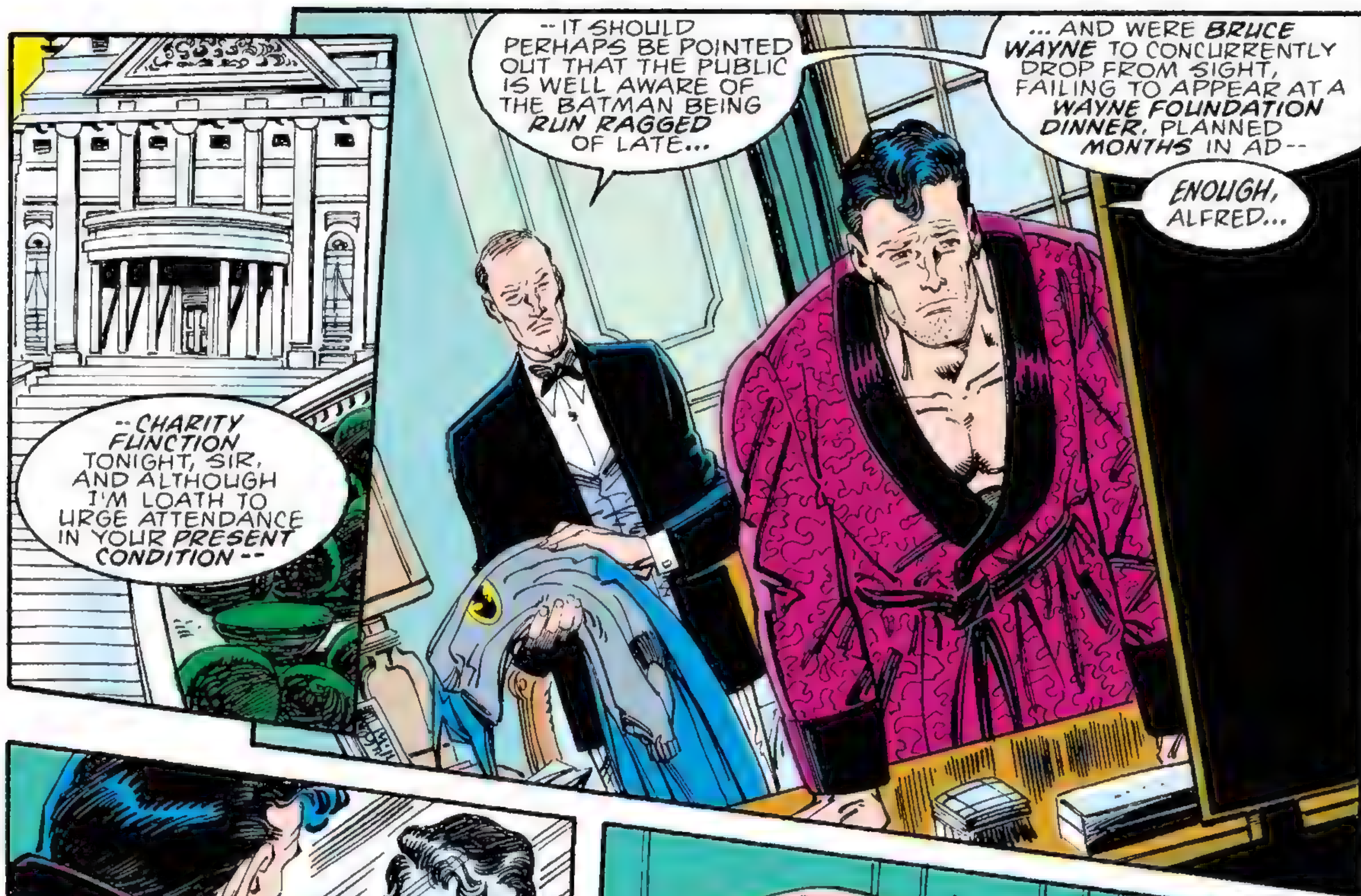
AFTER THAT
DISASTROUS
ENCOUNTER WITH
KILLER CROC, I'VE
GOT TO REDEEM
MYSELF... PROVE
MYSELF
WORTHY...

CHAK!



... EVEN
IF ONLY
WORTHY OF
THIS IMITATION
COSTUME,
NEITHER
AZRAEL NOR
BATMAN.

AND
SINCE
CALISTHENICS
PROVE NOTHING,
IT'S TIME TO
TEST MYSELF
BY "FIRE" ---
FOR REAL AND
WITHOUT
ROBIN.



-- IT SHOULD PERHAPS BE POINTED OUT THAT THE PUBLIC IS WELL AWARE OF THE BATMAN BEING RUN RAGGED OF LATE...

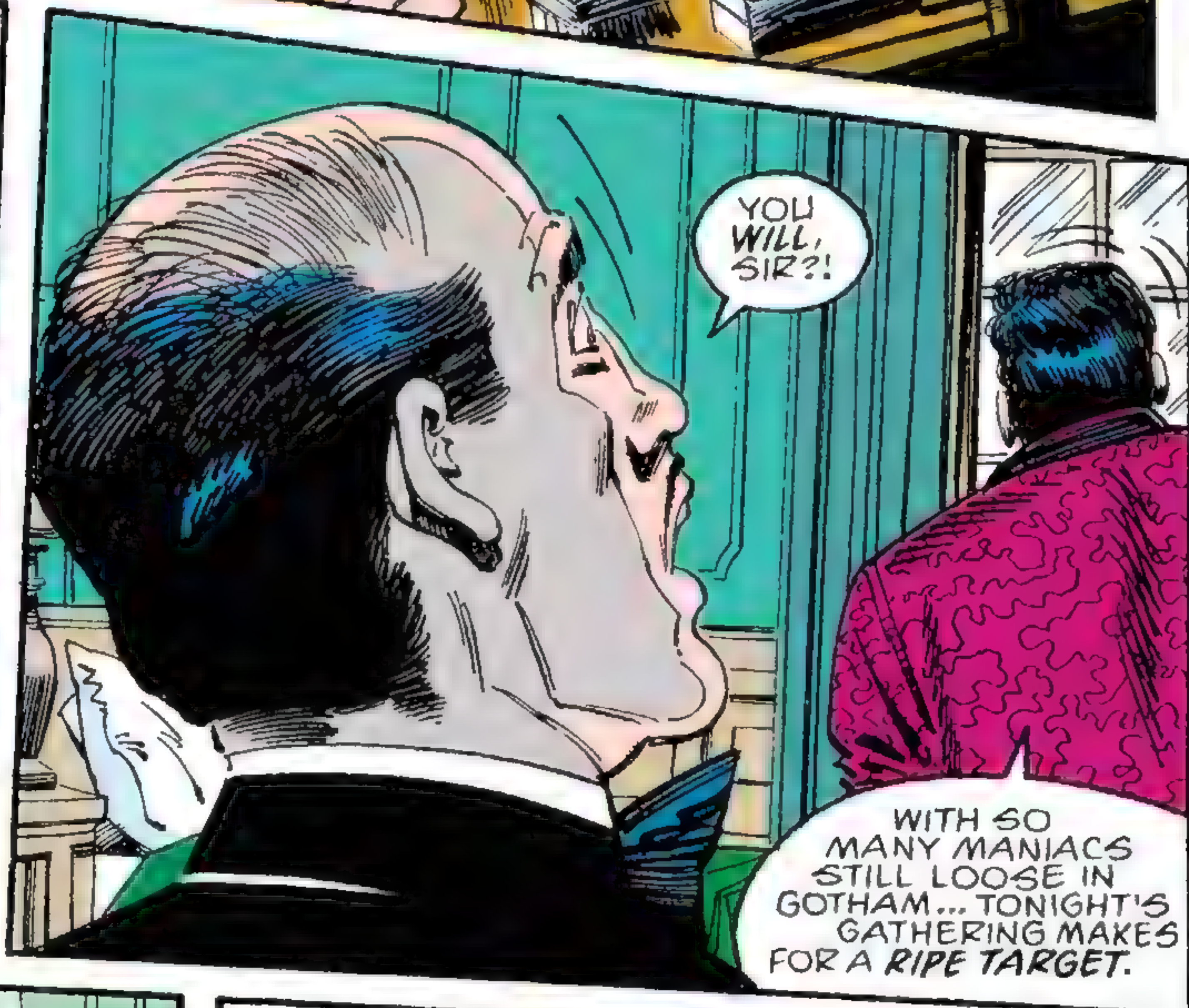
... AND WERE **BRUCE WAYNE** TO CONCURRENTLY DROP FROM SIGHT, FAILING TO APPEAR AT A **WAYNE FOUNDATION DINNER**, PLANNED MONTHS IN AD--

ENOUGH, ALFRED...

-- **CHARITY FLUNCTION** TONIGHT, SIR, AND ALTHOUGH I'M LOATH TO URGE ATTENDANCE IN YOUR **PRESENT CONDITION** --



AT THIS POINT, I COULDN'T CARE **LESS** ABOUT SUCH CONSIDERATIONS ... BUT I WILL ATTEND.



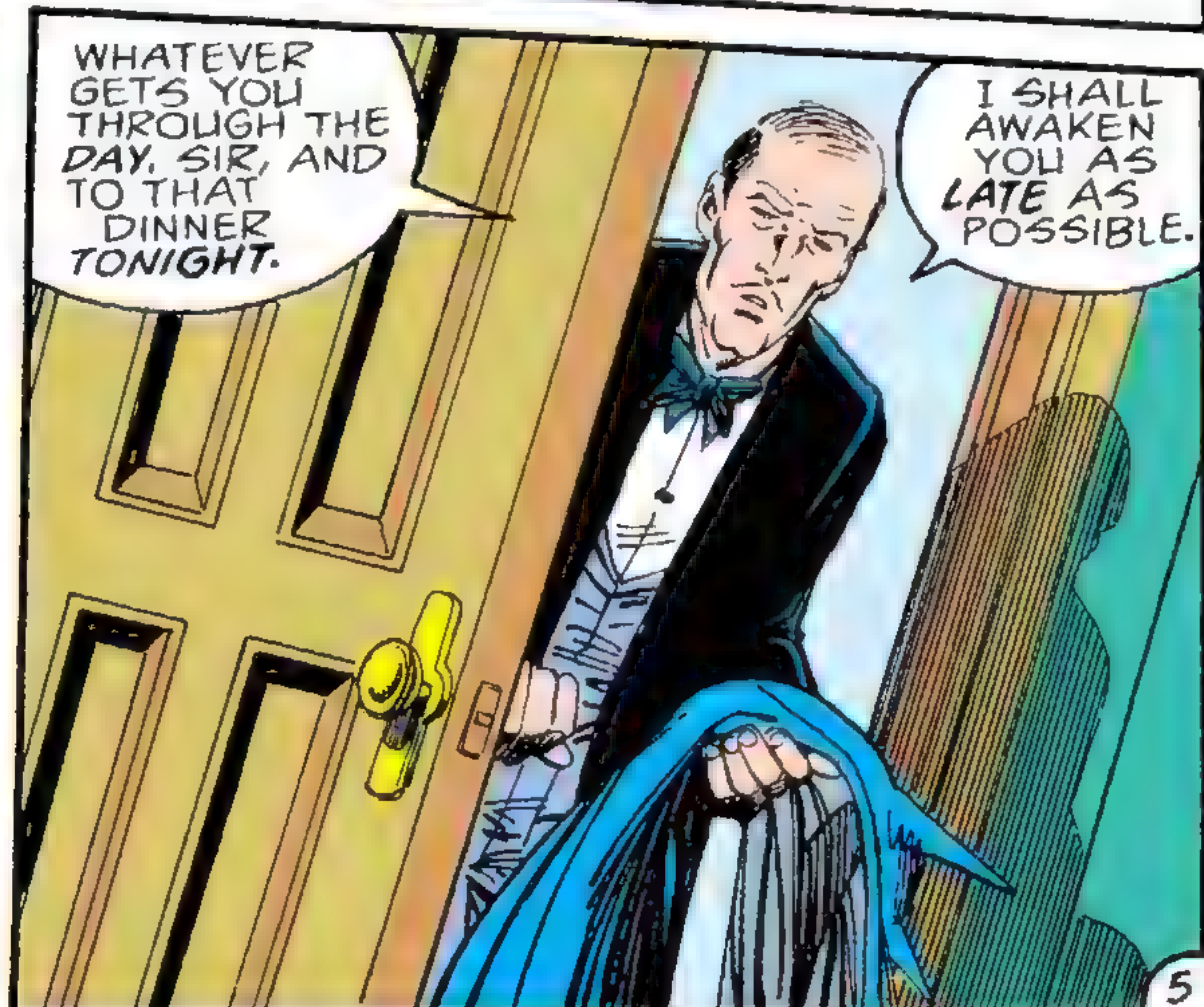
YOU WILL, SIR?!

WITH SO MANY MANIACS STILL LOOSE IN GOTHAM... TONIGHT'S GATHERING MAKES FOR A **RIPE TARGET**.



IN ONE MASK OR THE OTHER...

... I HAVE TO BE THERE.



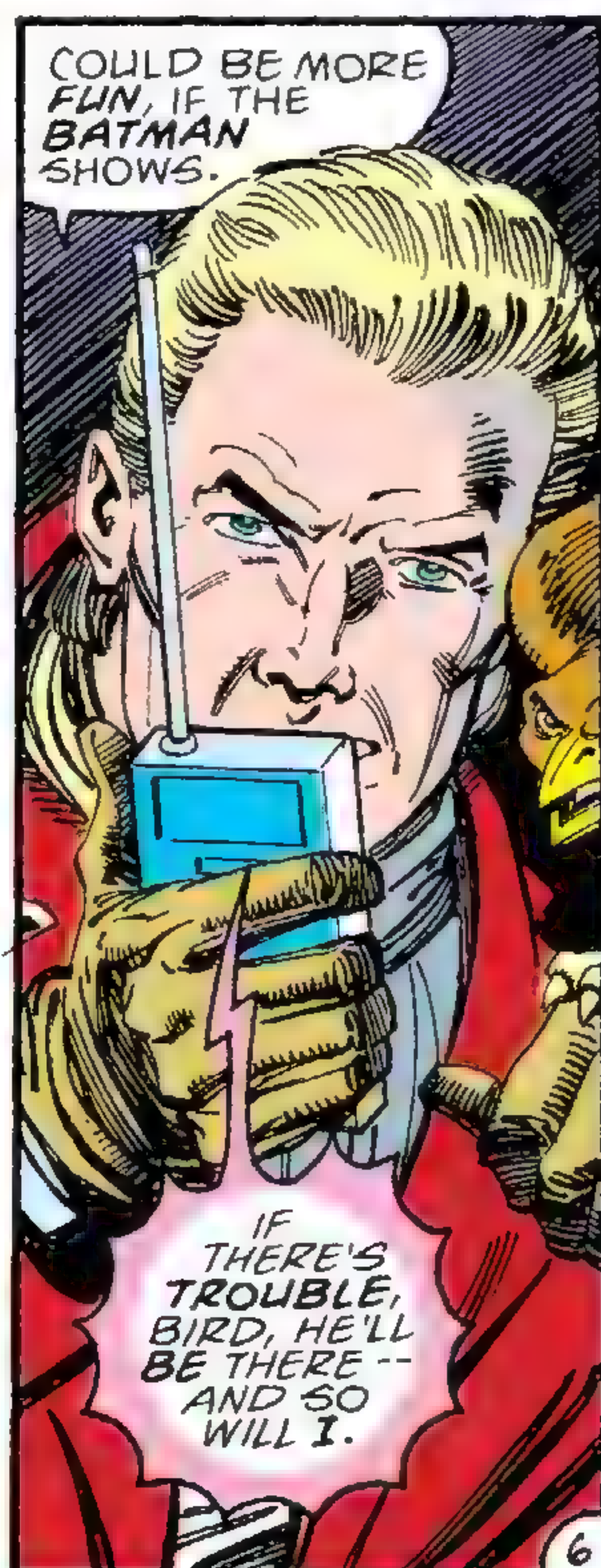
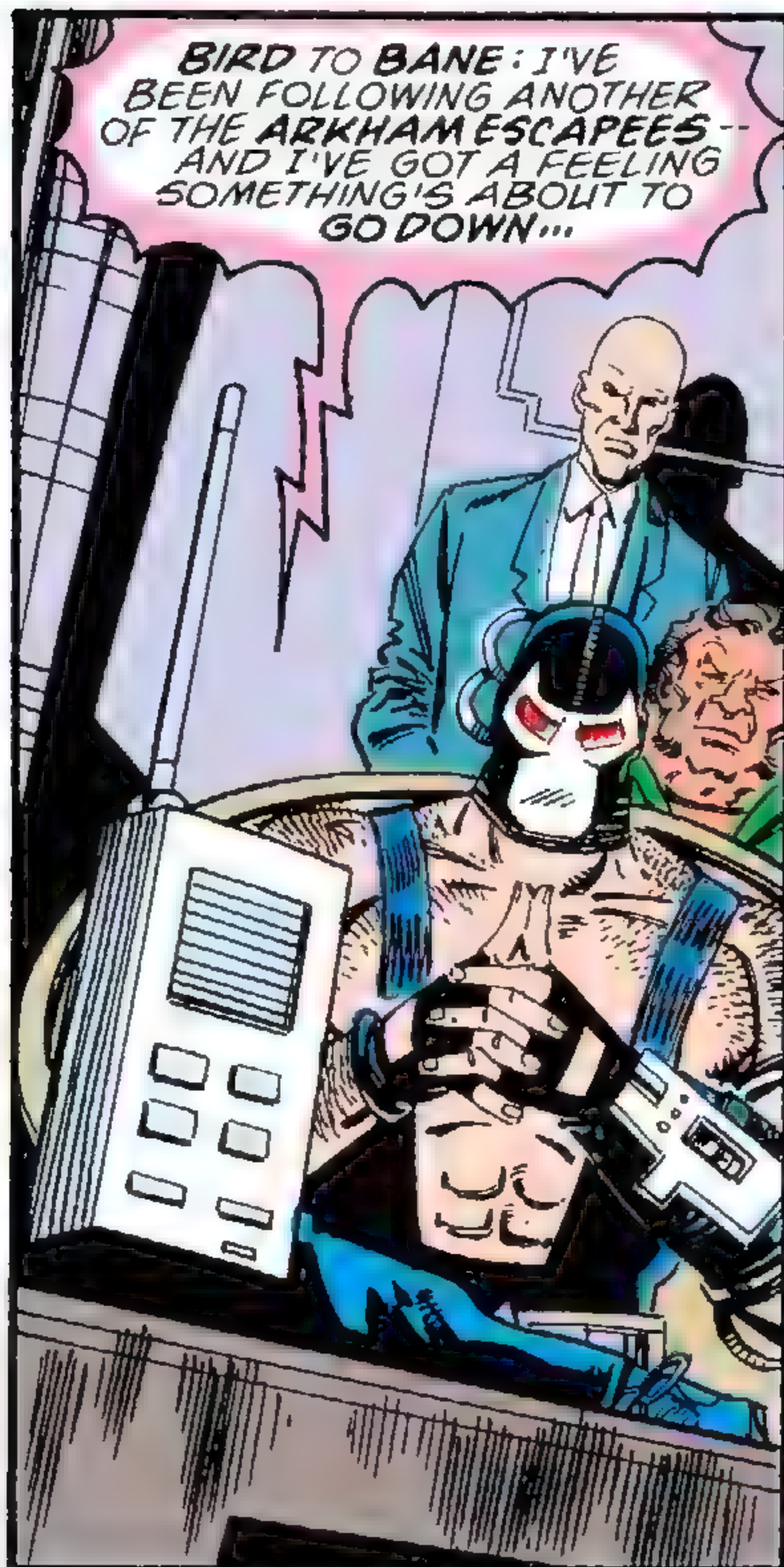
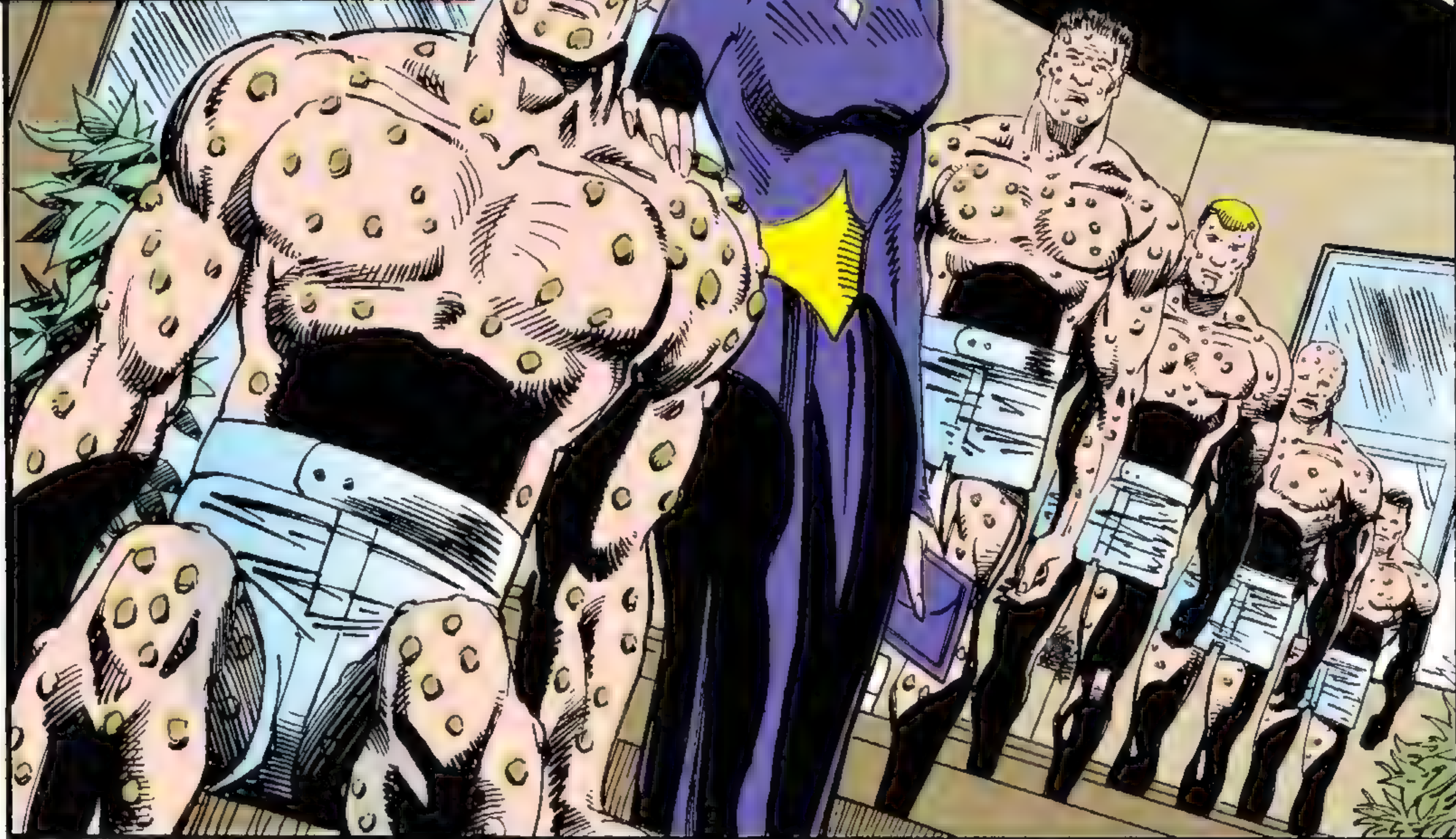
WHATEVER GETS YOU THROUGH THE DAY, SIR, AND TO THAT DINNER TONIGHT.

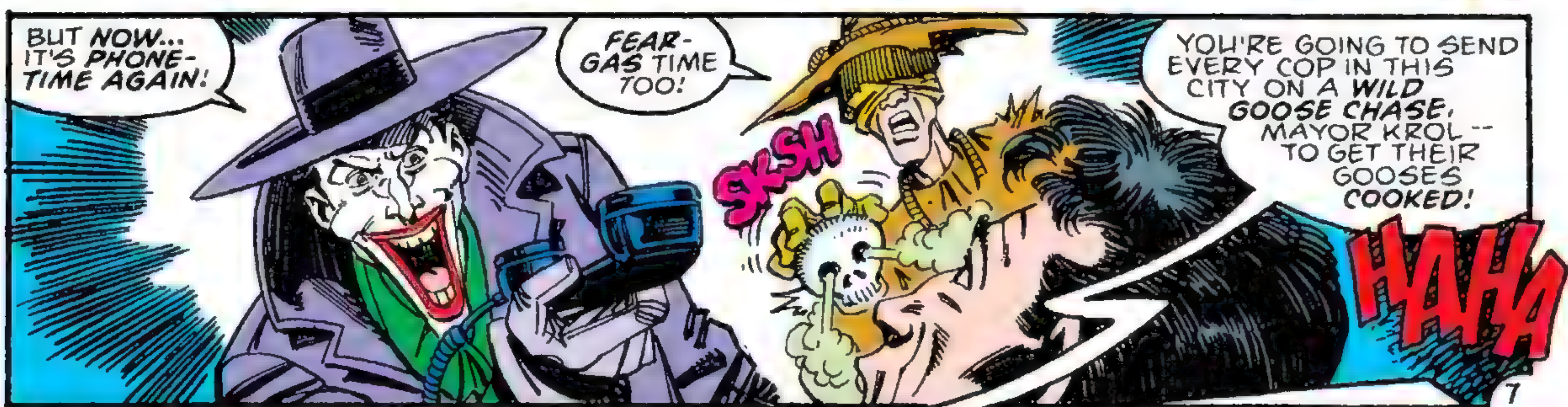
I SHALL AWAKEN YOU AS LATE AS POSSIBLE.

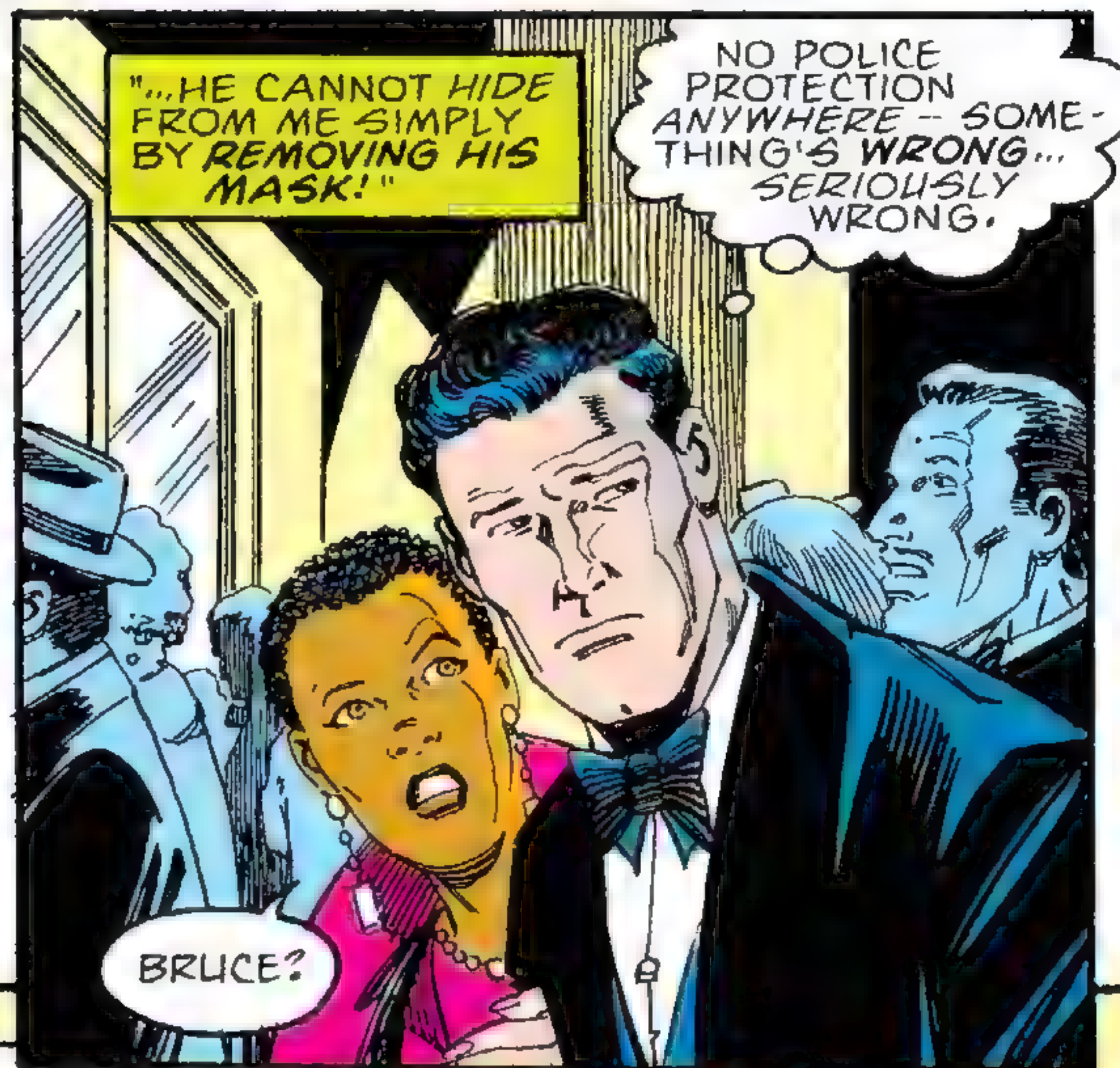
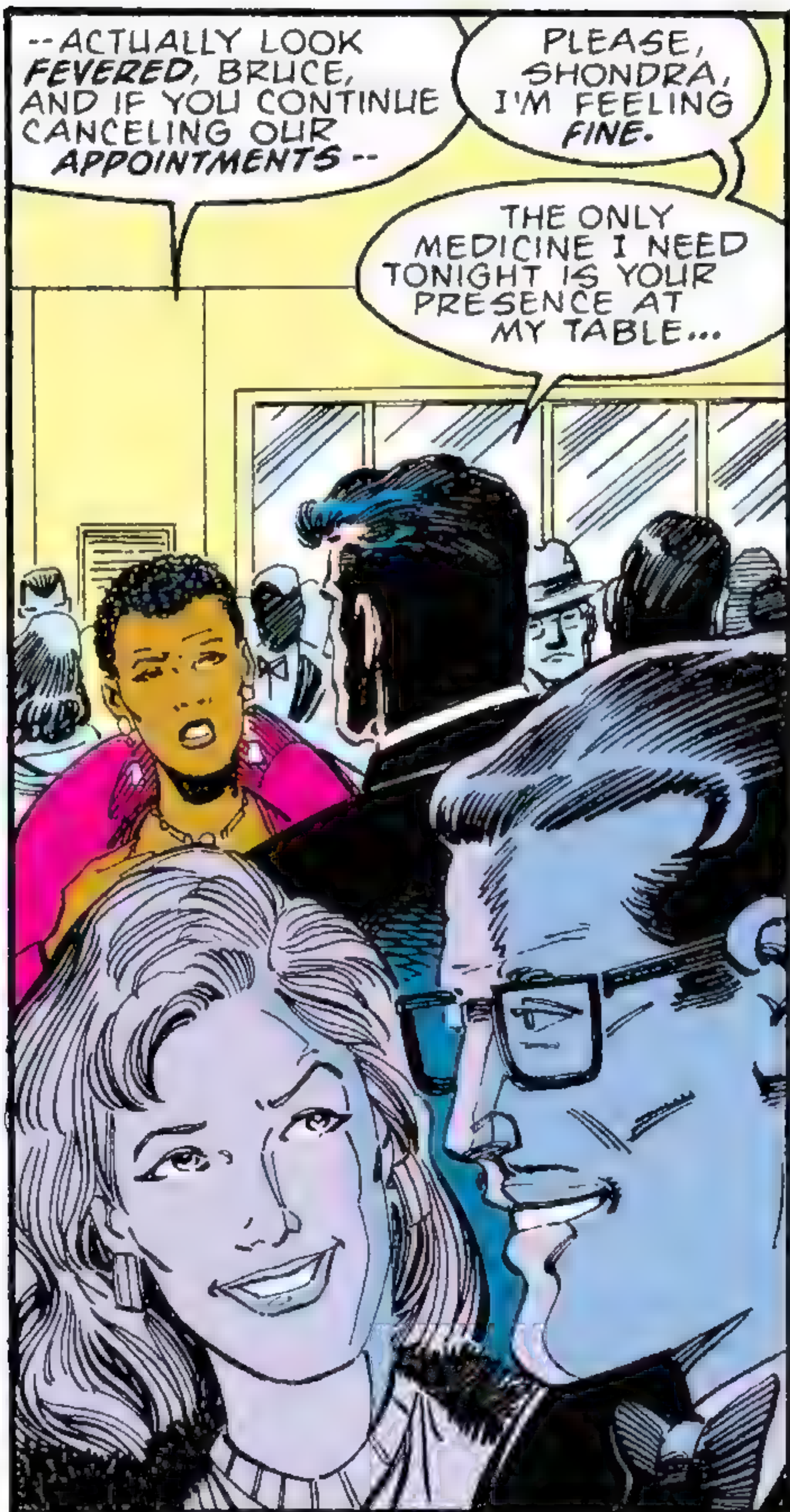


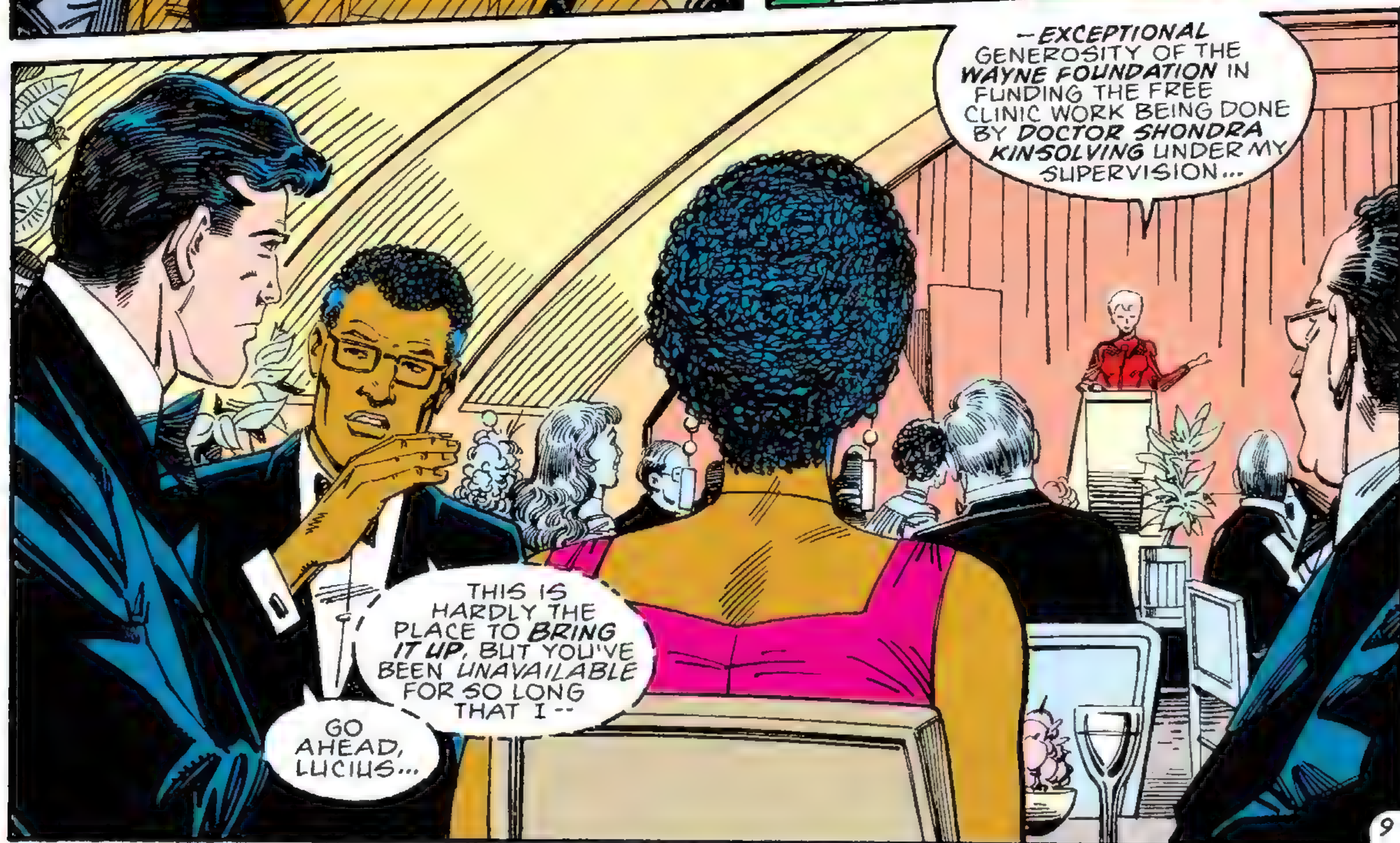
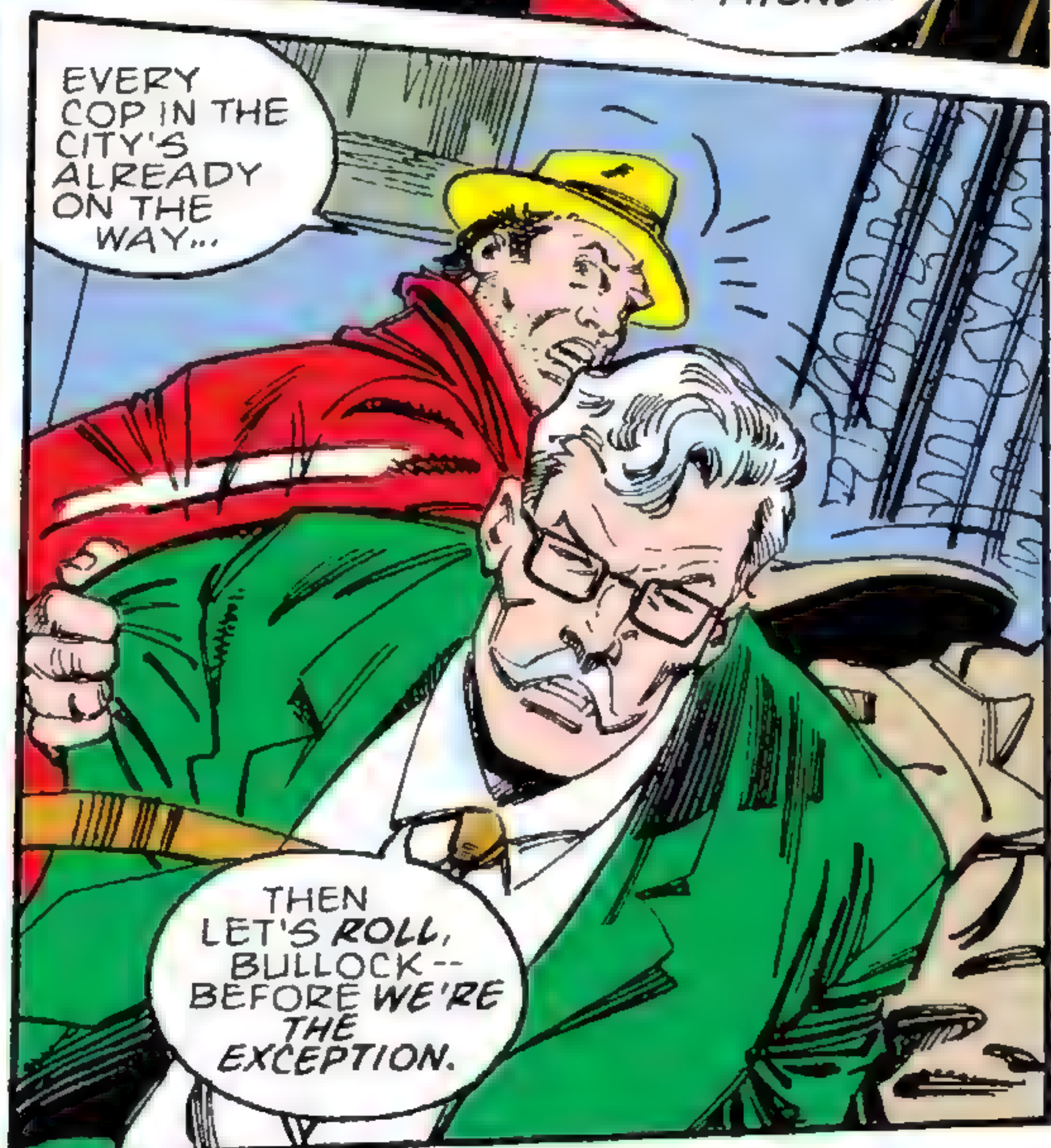
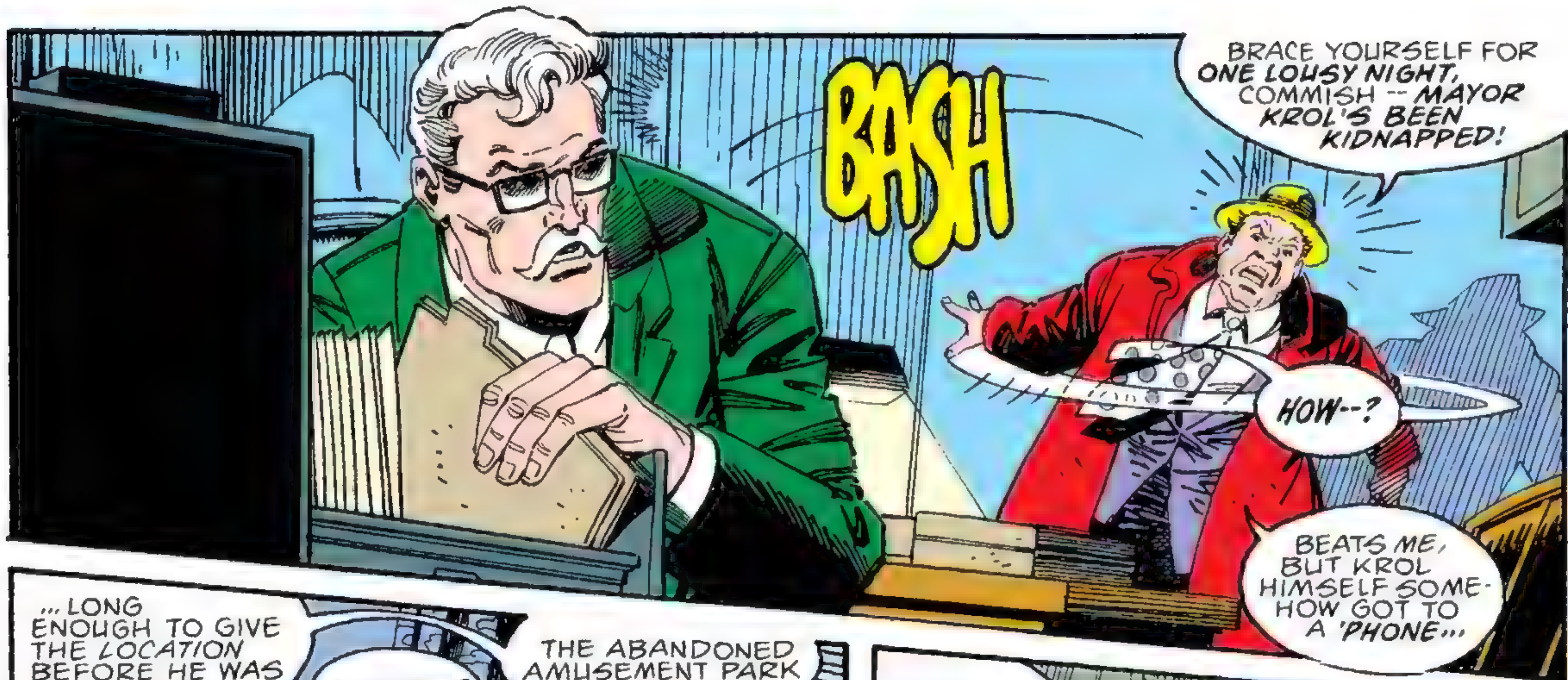
THIS
IS A MOST
IMPORTANT
NIGHT...

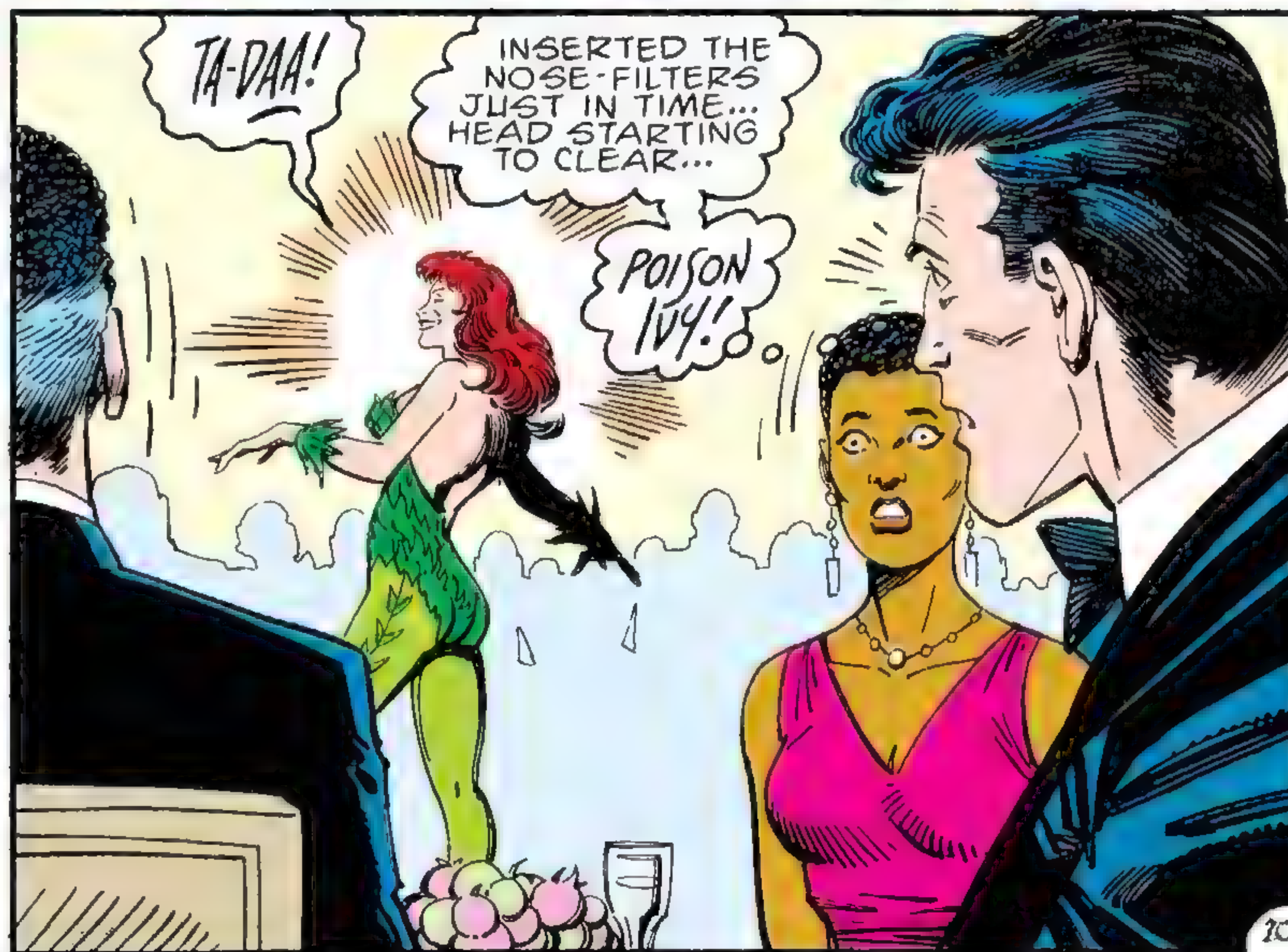
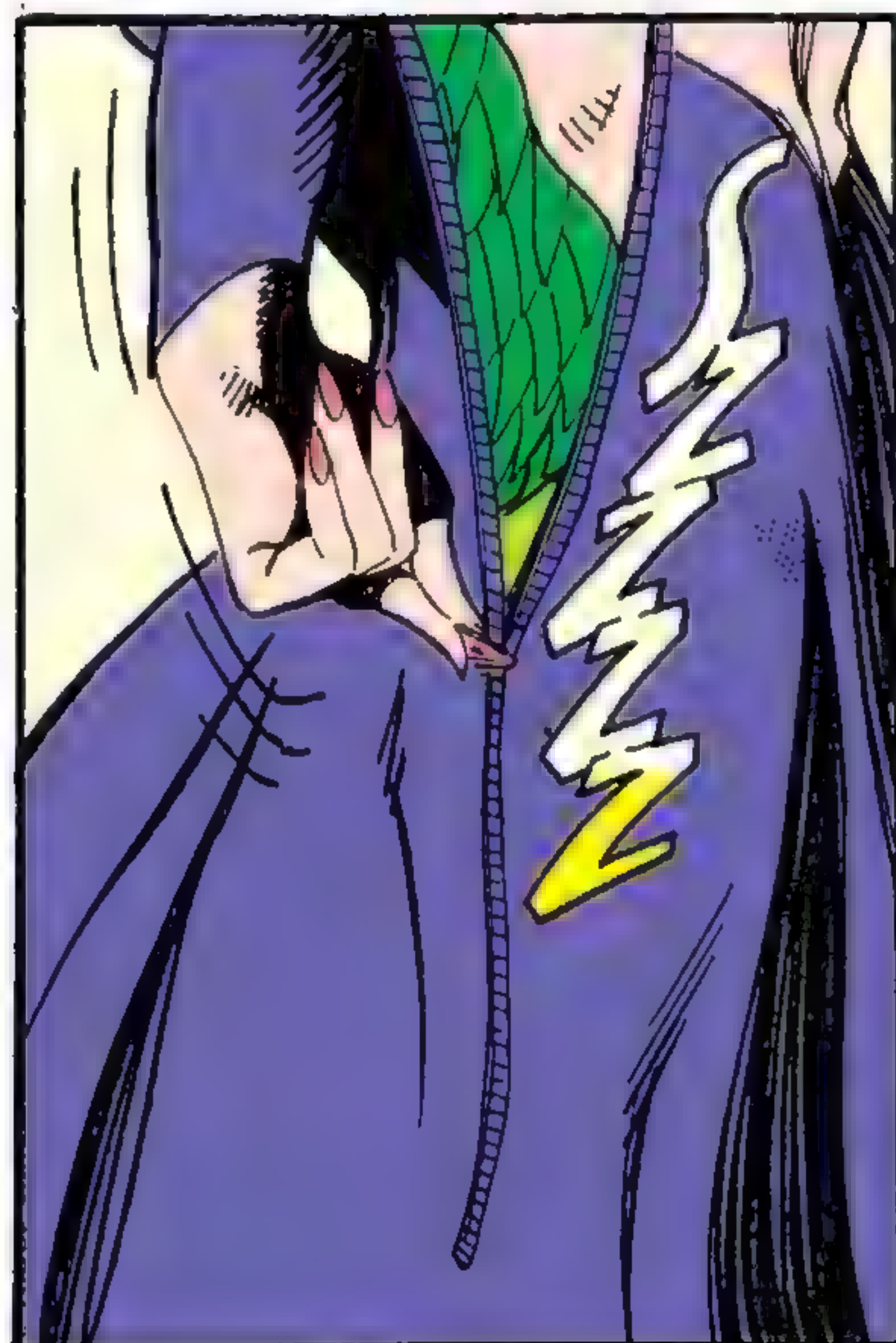
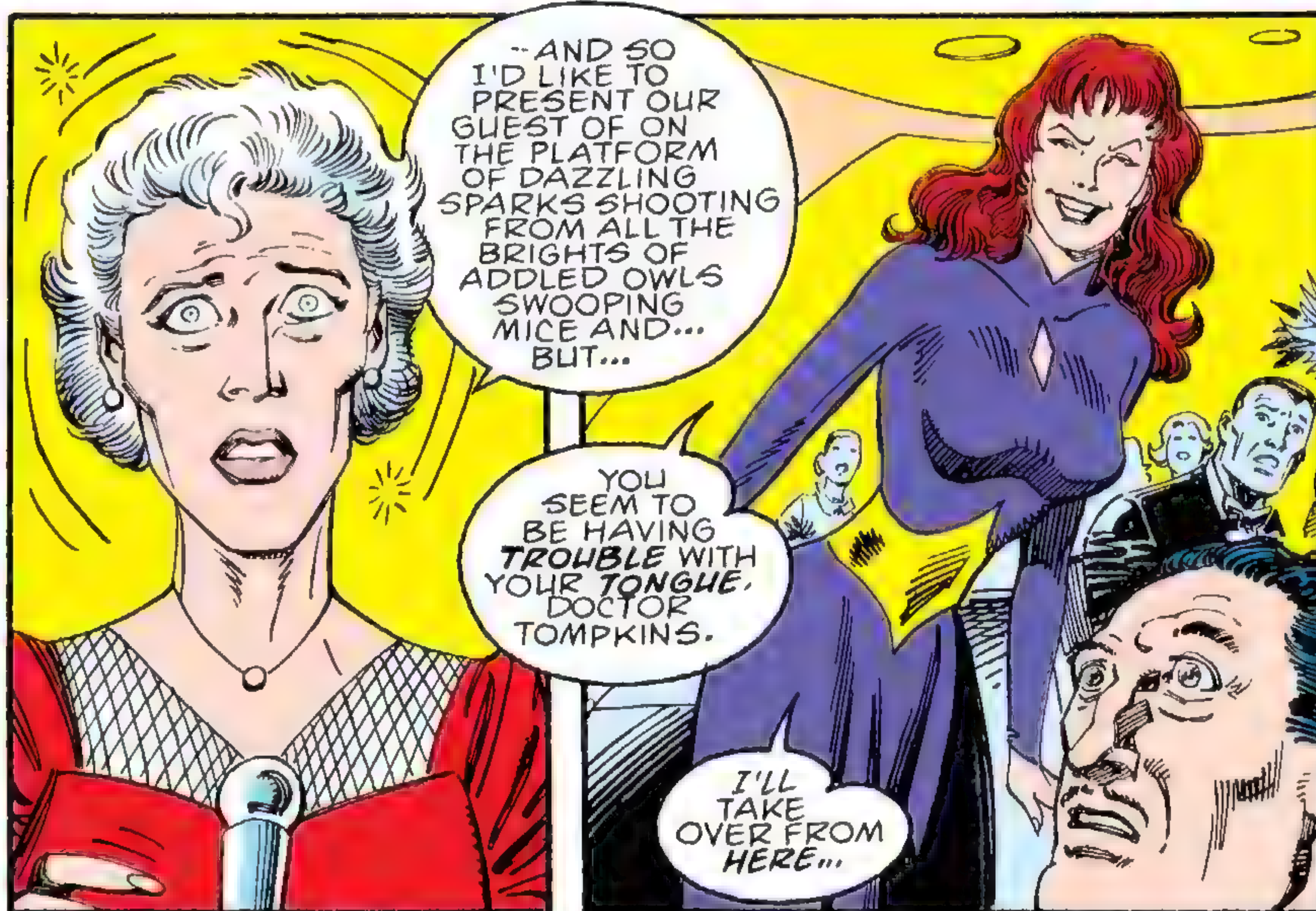
... AND
I WANT YOU
TO PREPARE
FOR MY
RETURN.













THE PLANTS -- SOME NIGHTSHADE VARIANT... BLOOMING RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DINNER, RELEASING THEIR SPORES... NO DOUBT GENETICALLY ALTERED BY IVY'S KNOWLEDGE OF BOTANY...

WE'RE MOVING THE PARTY, GENTLEMEN, TO A NEW LOCALE...



... WHICH ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THE NEW BENEFICIARY OF YOUR CHARITABLE LARGESSE.

LUCKY US, THE POLICE SEEM TO BE OCCUPIED ELSEWHERE, BUT IF YOU WILL KINDLY FILE OUT THE REAR EXIT ANYWAY -- GENTLEMEN ONLY -- YOU WILL FIND A TRUCK WAITING OUTSIDE.



AS FOR YOU LADIES... THE DIURNAL SPORE CYCLE WILL END IN SEVERAL HOURS...



UNTIL THEN, ENJOY SOME GROUP NAP THERAPY...



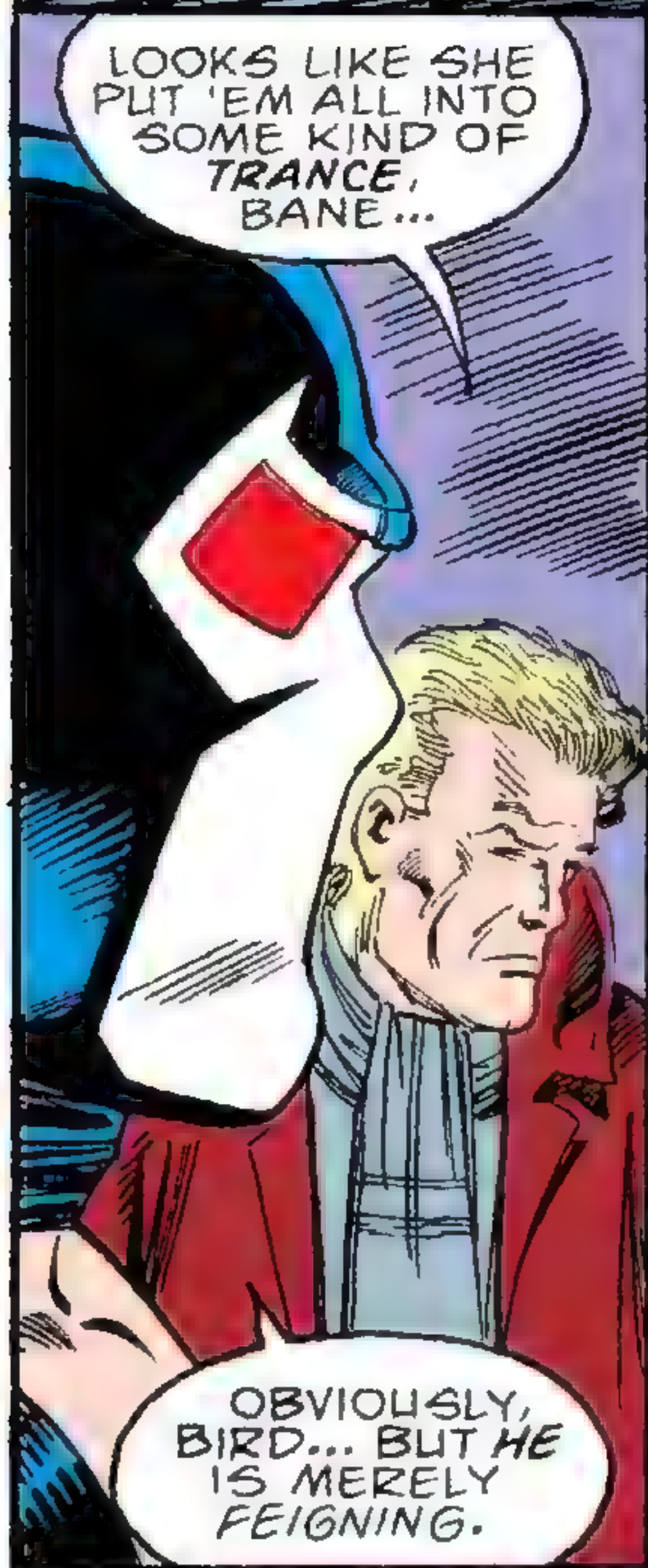
... COURTESY OF POISON IVY'S NON-PATENTED NIGHTSHADE HYBRIDS, BELOVED SCENT OF ZOMBIES EVERYWHERE.



ALL ABOARD, GENTLEMEN!

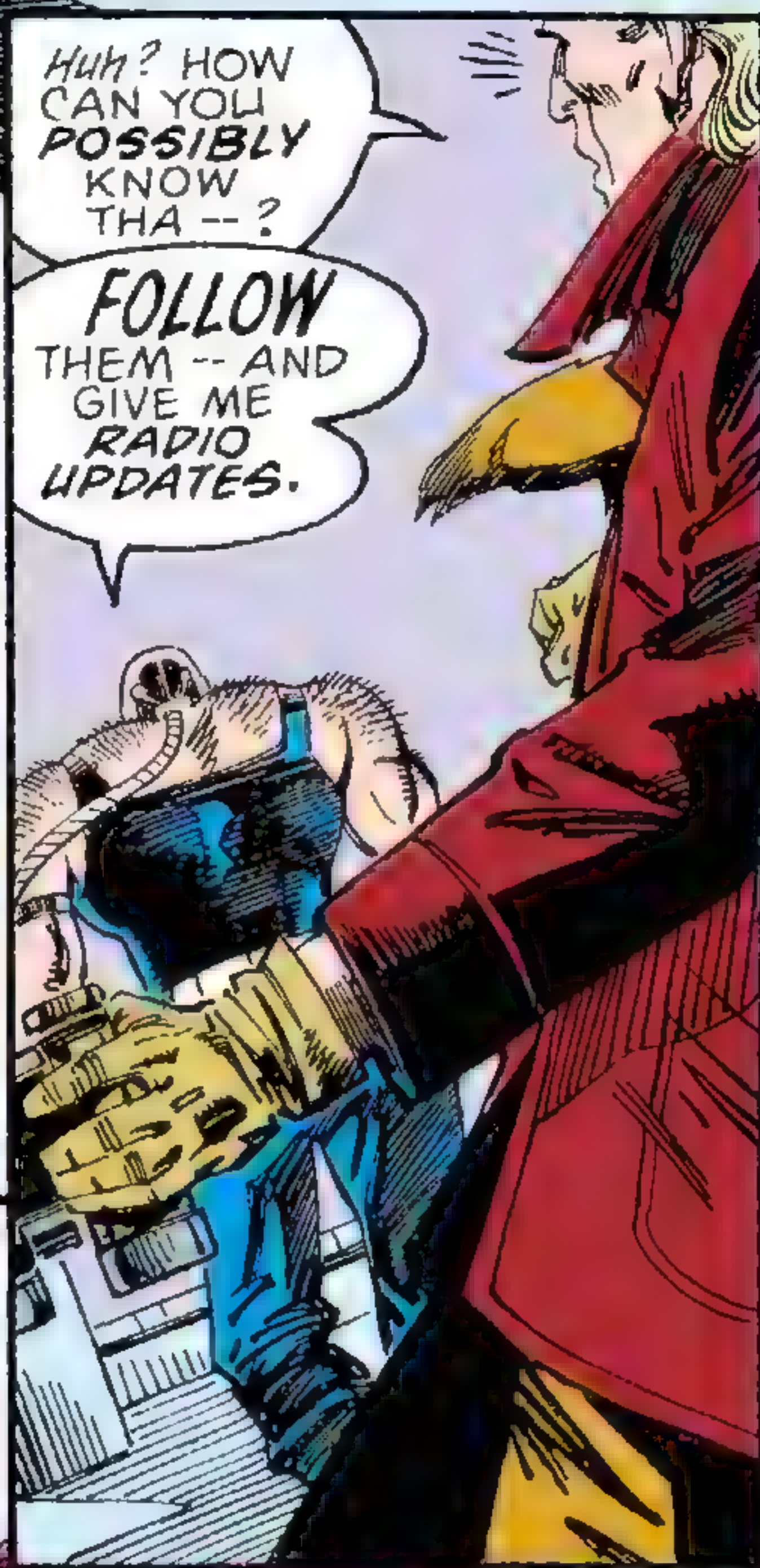
NEXT STOP-- NEO EDEN.

NEO EDEN
PLANTS & FLOWERS
FOR ALL OCCASIONS



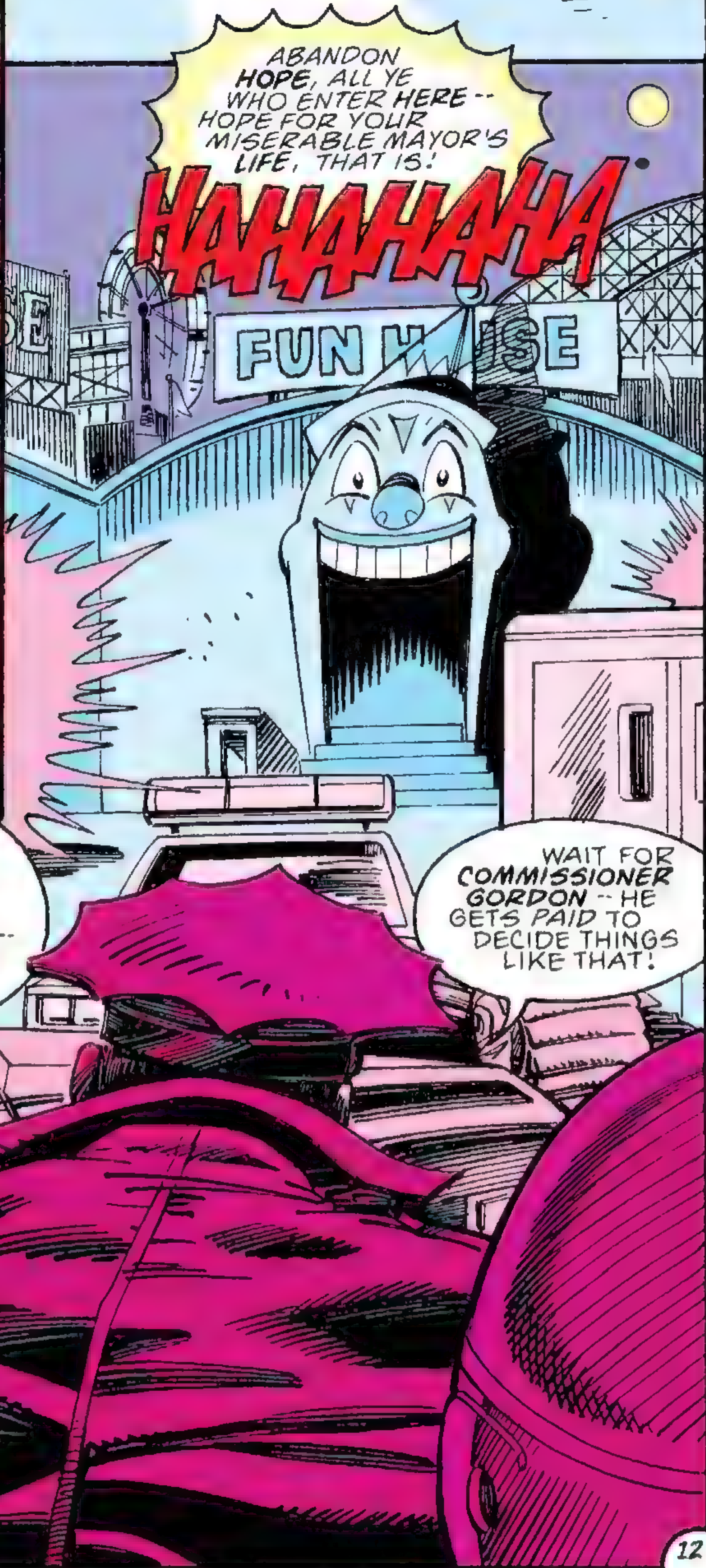
LOOKS LIKE SHE PUT 'EM ALL INTO SOME KIND OF TRANCE, BANE...

OBVIOUSLY, BIRD... BUT HE IS MERELY FEIGNING.



HUH? HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY KNOW THAT--?

FOLLOW THEM-- AND GIVE ME RADIO UPDATES.



ABANDON HOPE, ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE-- HOPE FOR YOUR MISERABLE MAYOR'S LIFE, THAT IS!

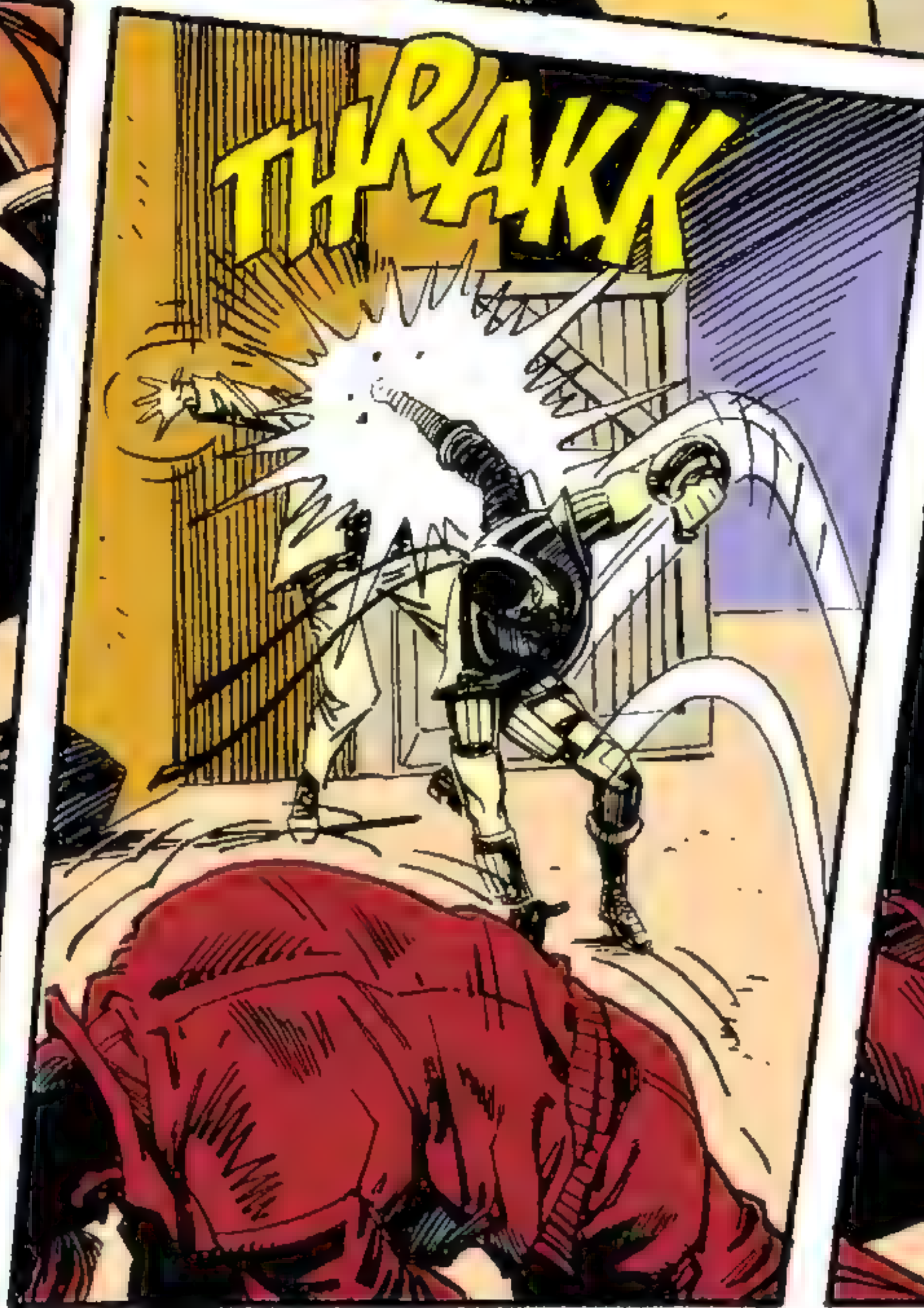
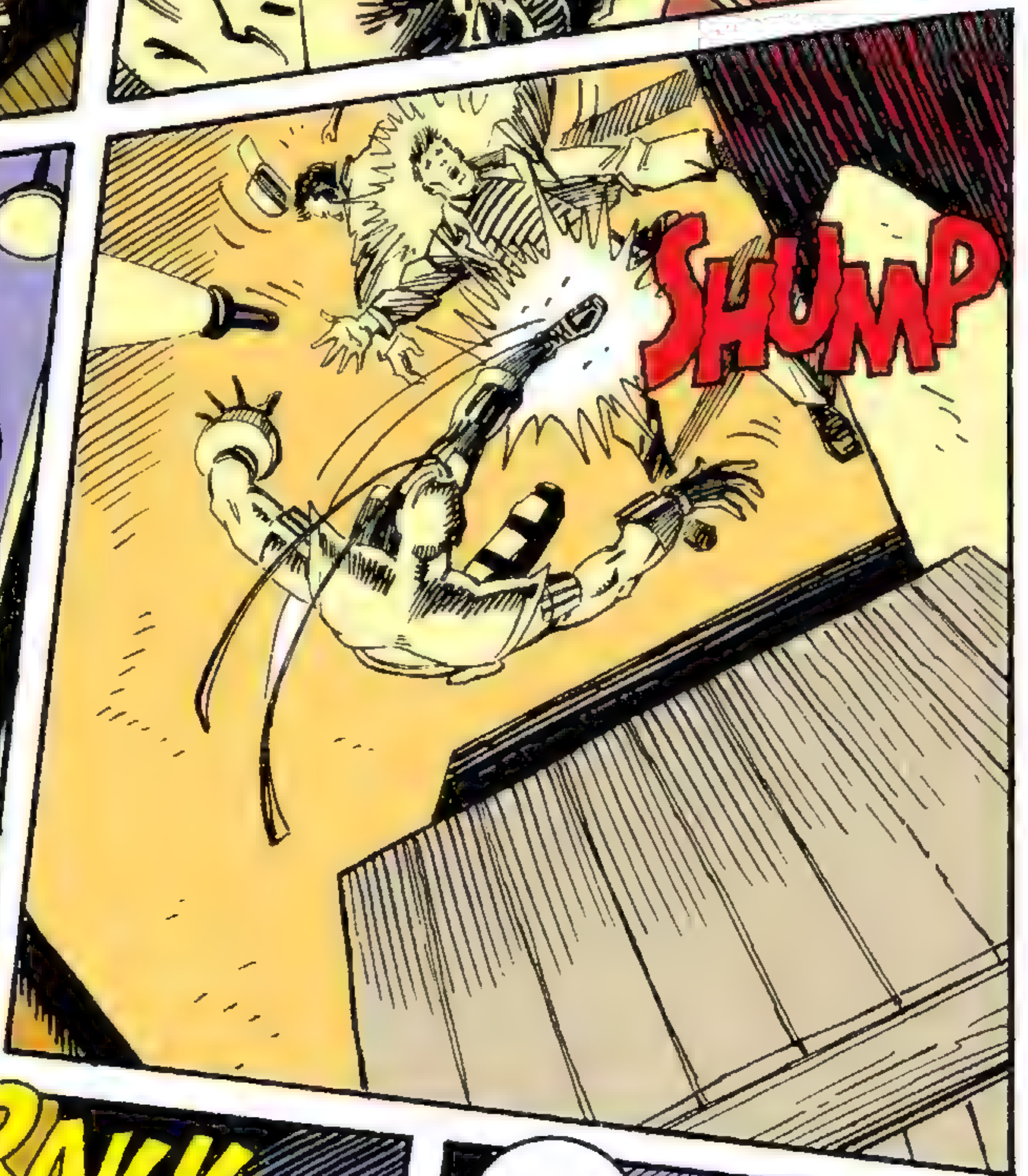
HAHAHAHAHA

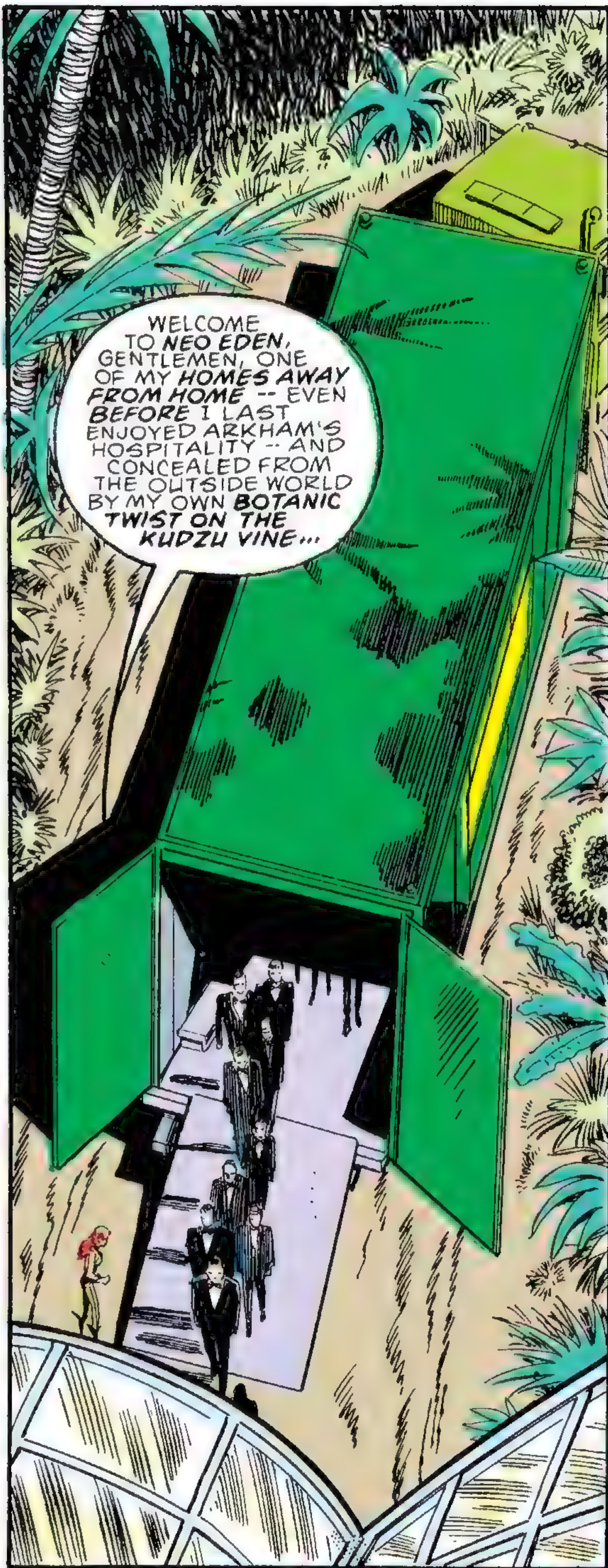
FUN WISE



THAT'S THE JOKER, ALL RIGHT-- WHAT DO WE DO?

WAIT FOR COMMISSIONER GORDON-- HE GETS PAID TO DECIDE THINGS LIKE THAT!



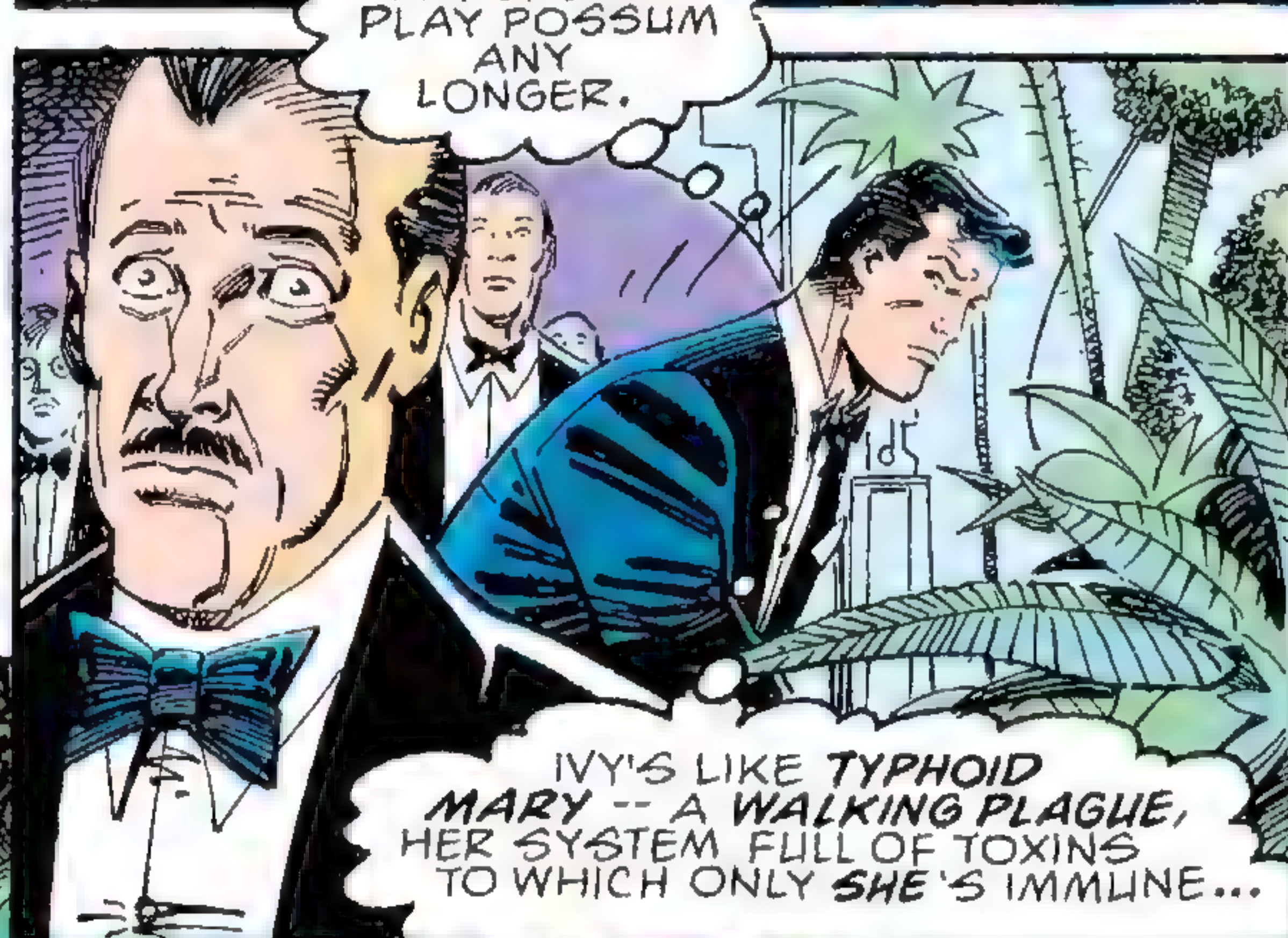


WELCOME TO NEO EDEN, GENTLEMEN, ONE OF MY HOMES AWAY FROM HOME -- EVEN BEFORE I LAST ENJOYED ARKHAM'S HOSPITALITY -- AND CONCEALED FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD BY MY OWN BOTANIC TWIST ON THE KUDZU VINE...



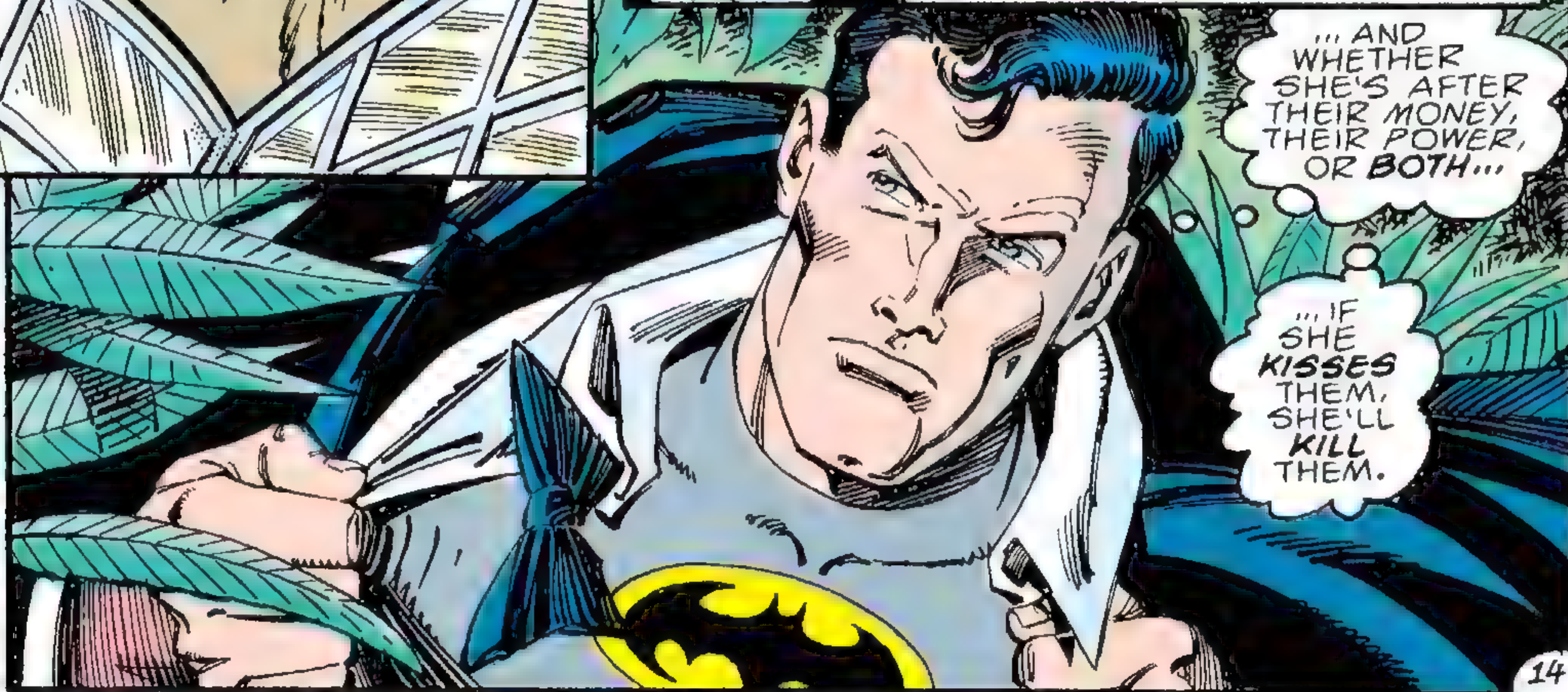
NOW, SINCE THERE'S NO REAL RUSH IN FLEEING YOU, IF YOU'LL ALL LINE UP LIKE THE DEAR SWEET WEALTHY GENTLEMEN YOU ARE...

... I JUST MIGHT FEEL INCLINED TO ADMINISTER YOUR REWARD...



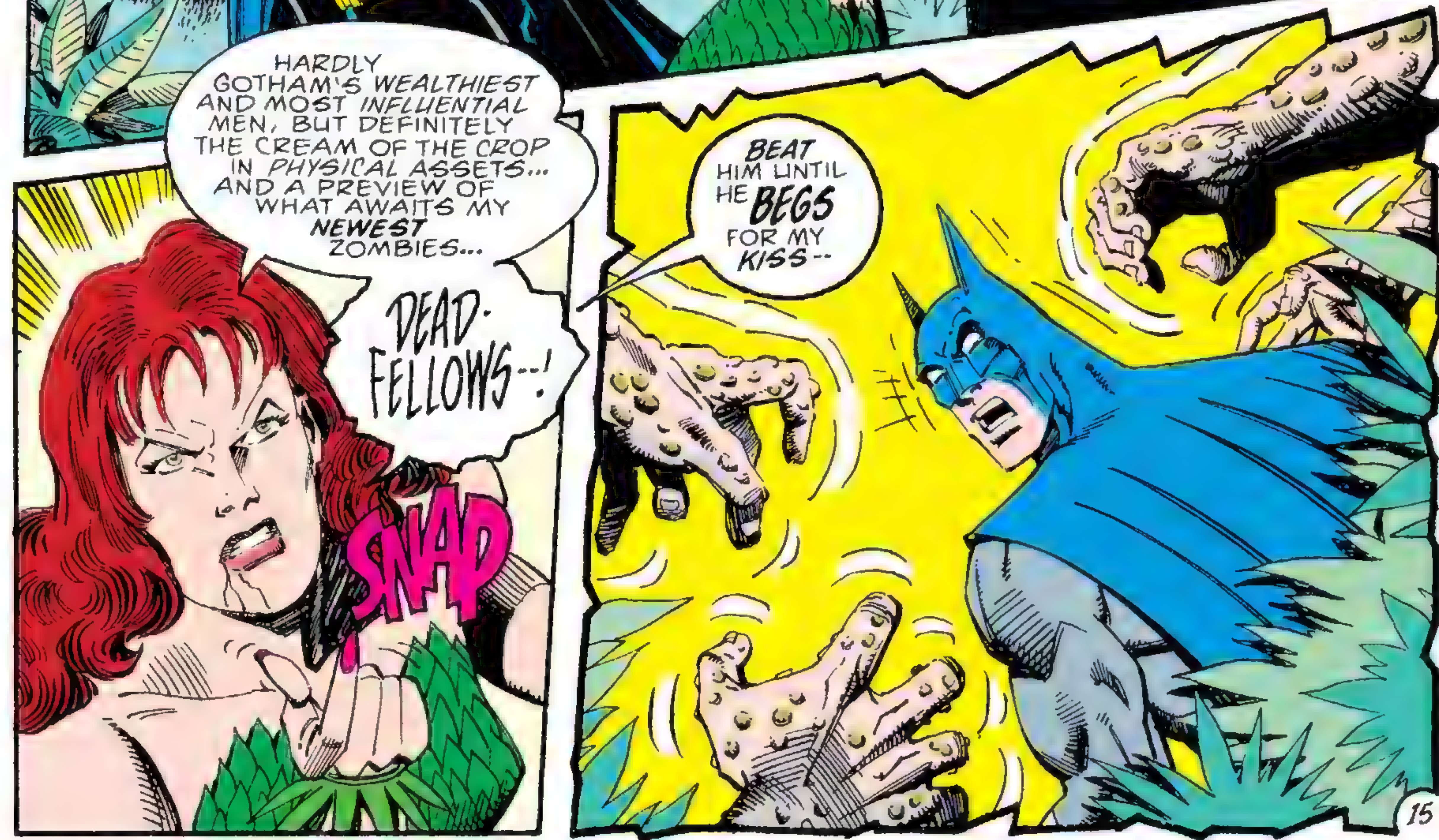
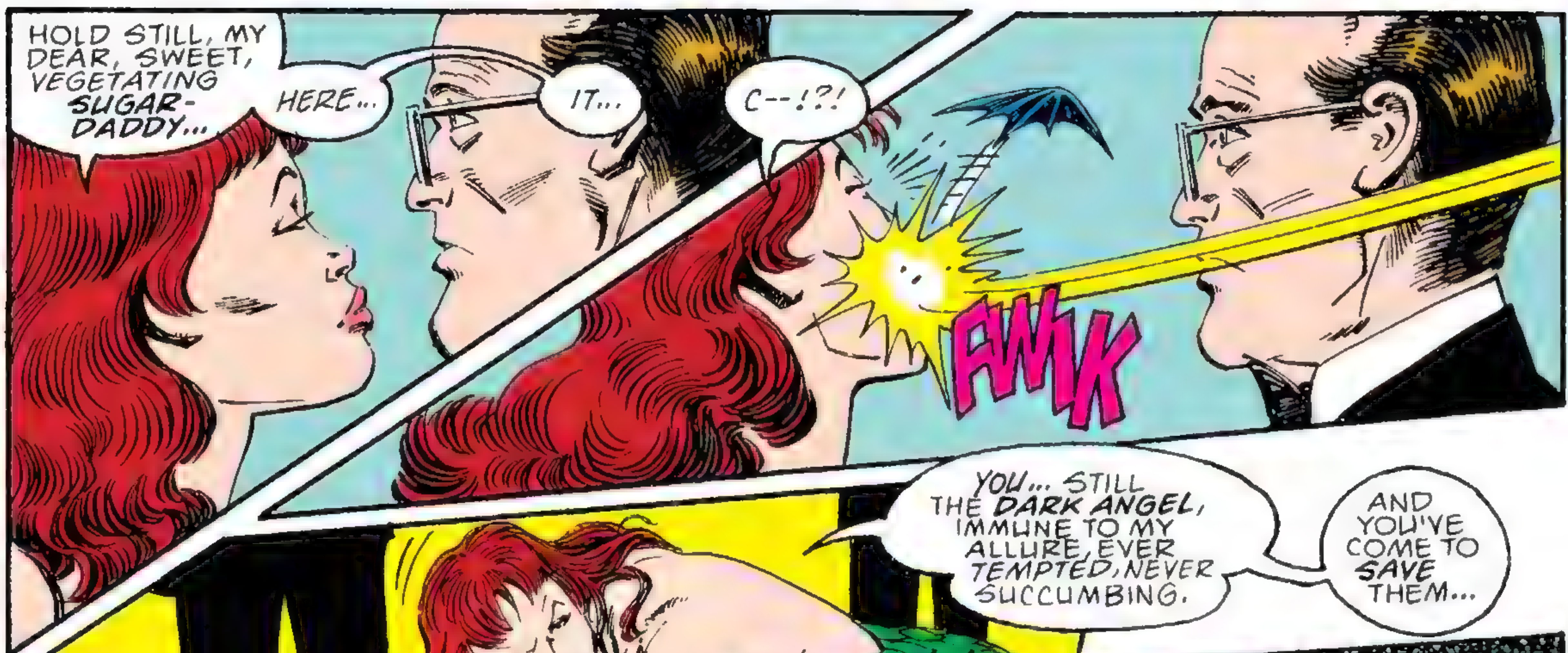
CAN'T AFFORD TO PLAY POSSUM ANY LONGER.

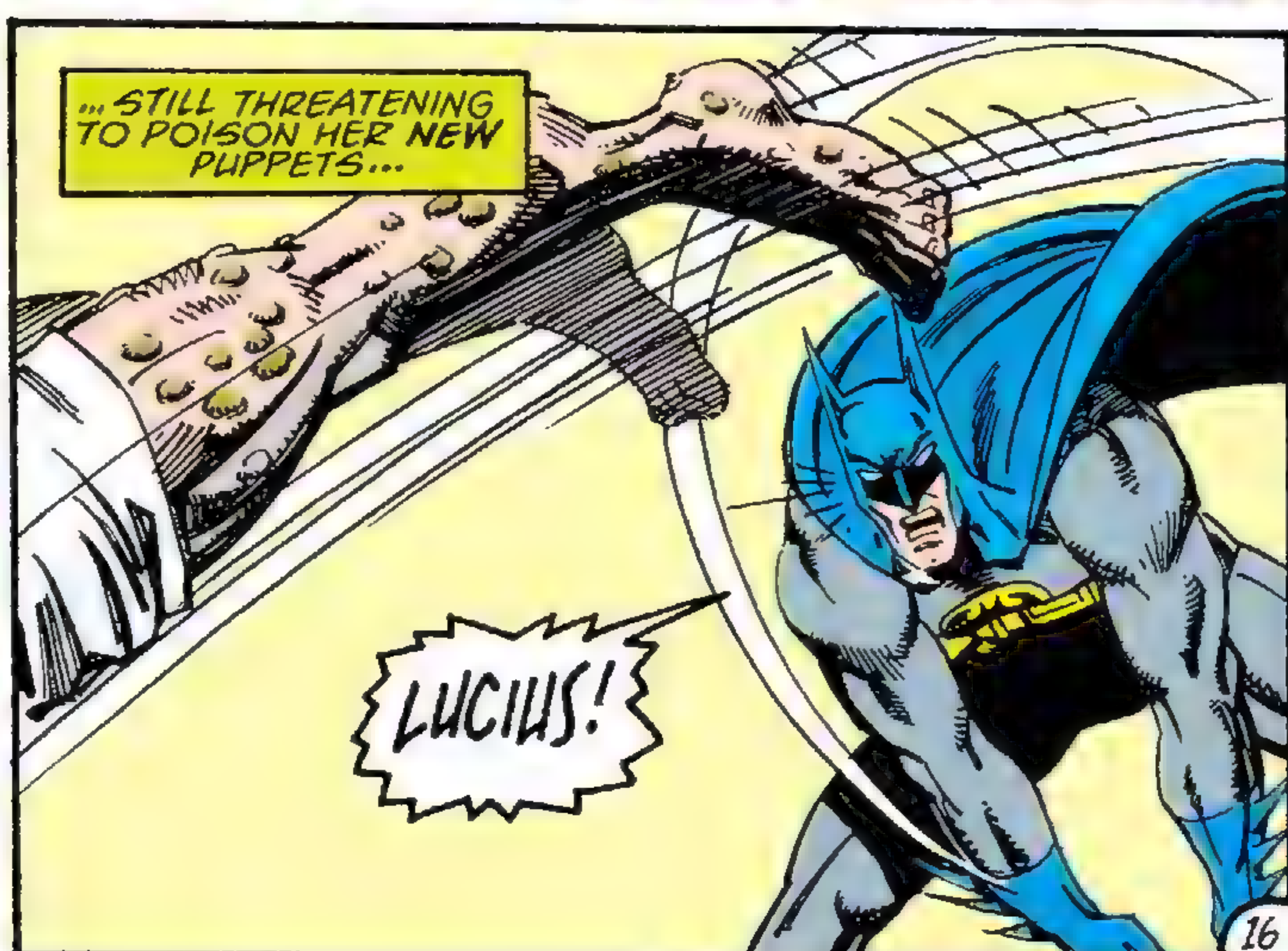
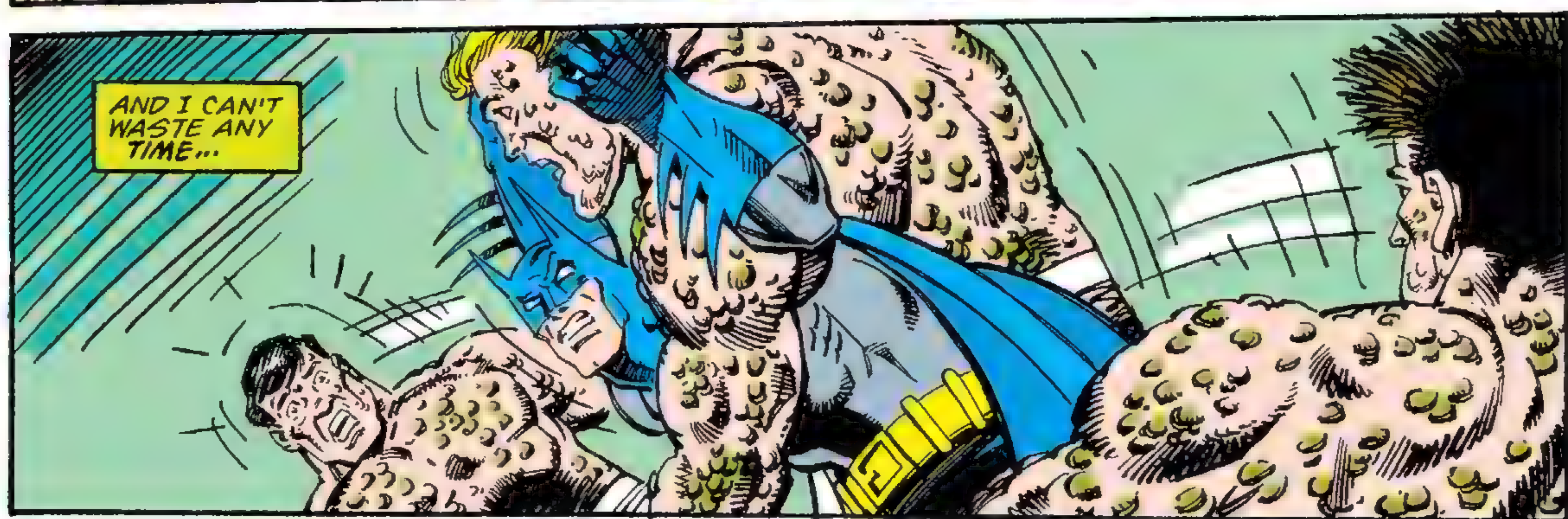
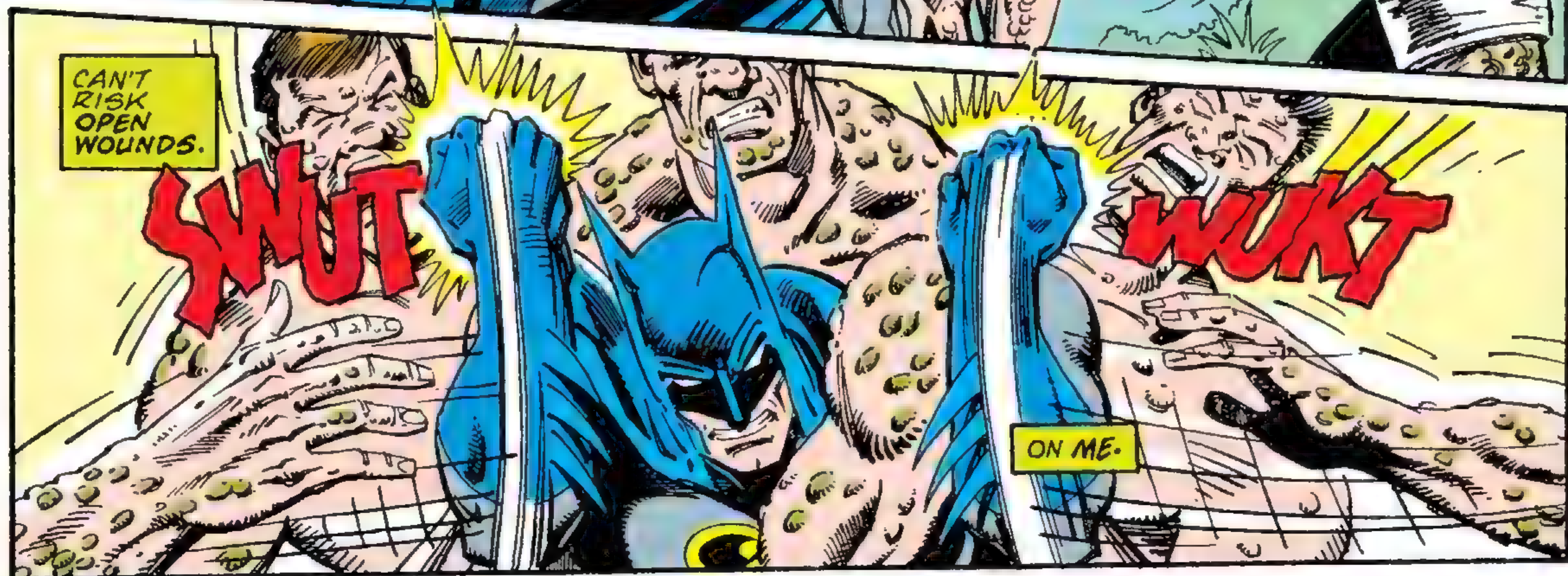
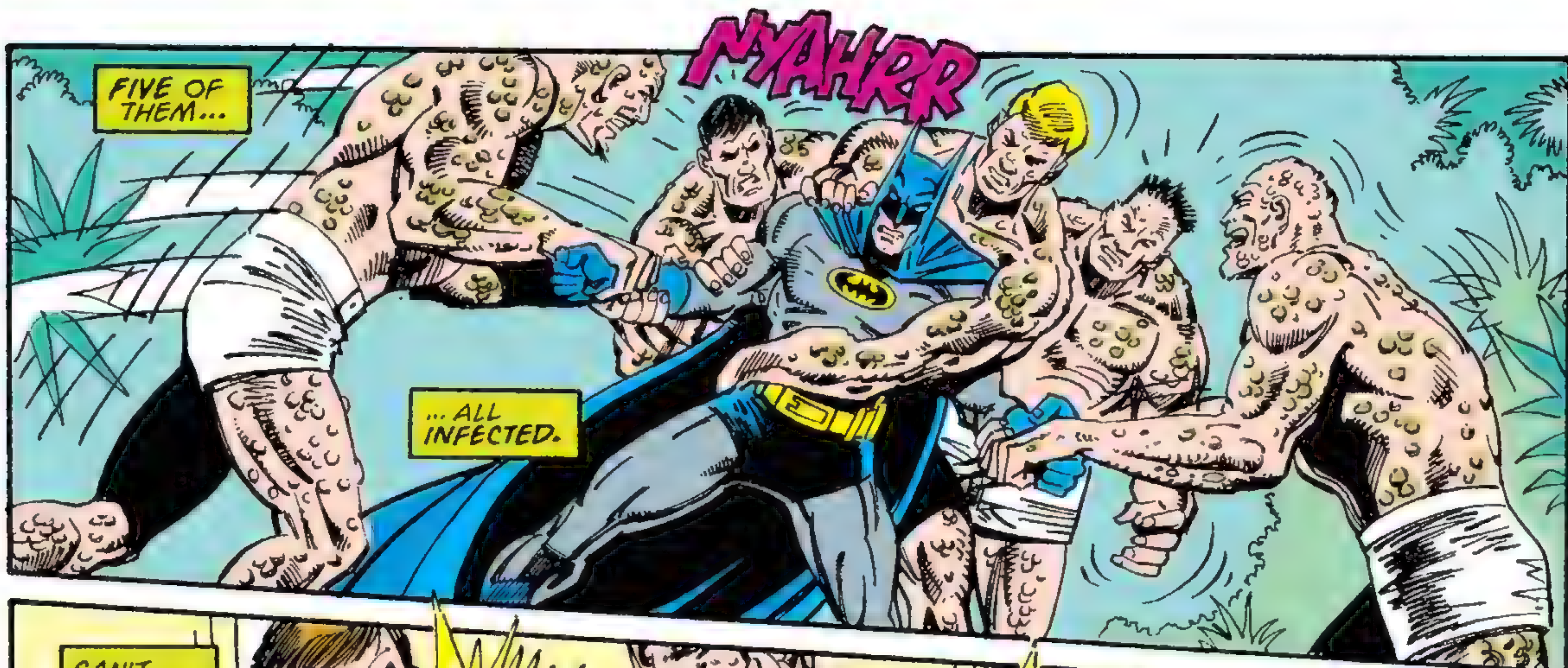
IVY'S LIKE TYPHOID MARY -- A WALKING PLAGUE, HER SYSTEM FULL OF TOXINS TO WHICH ONLY SHE'S IMMUNE...

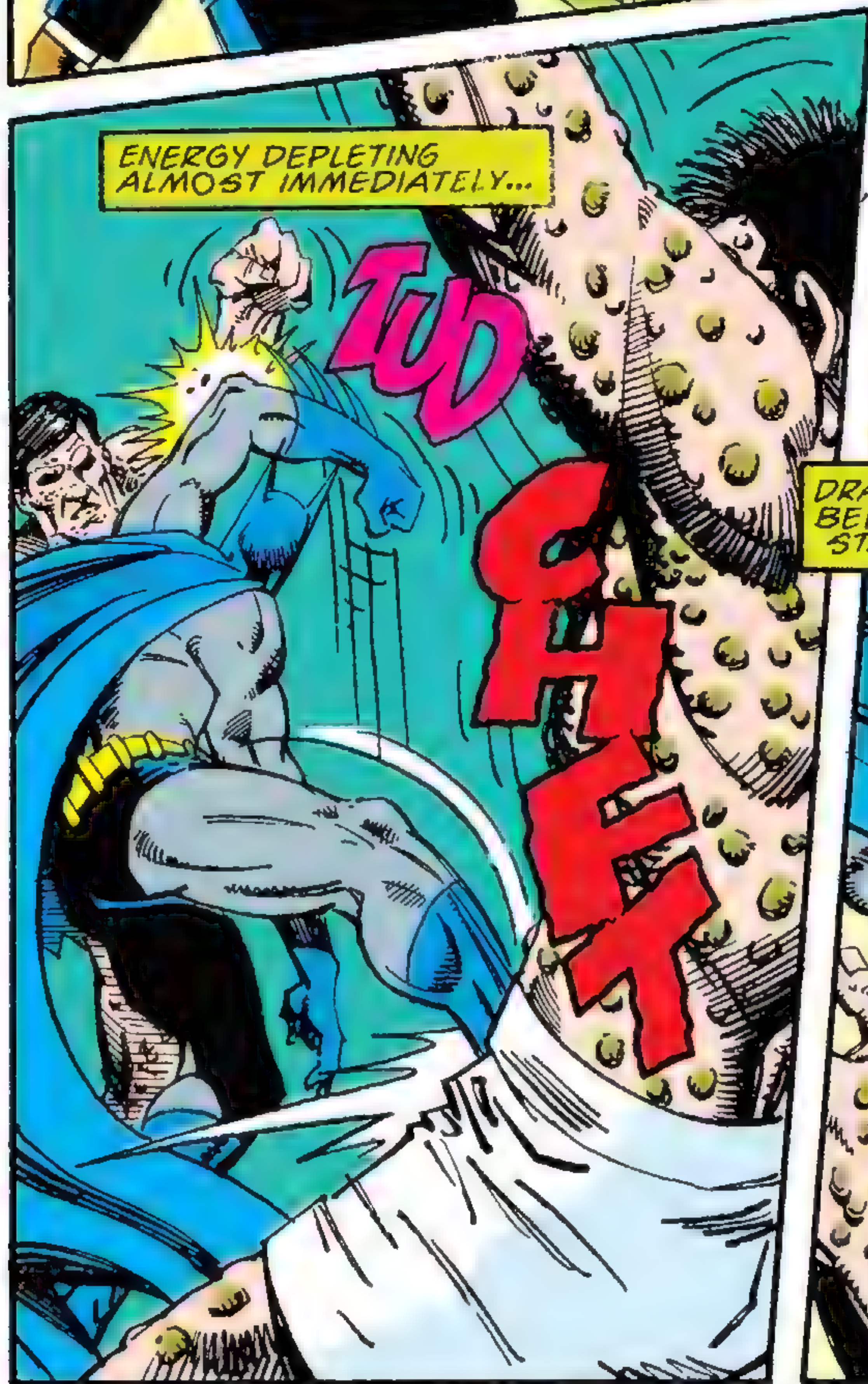
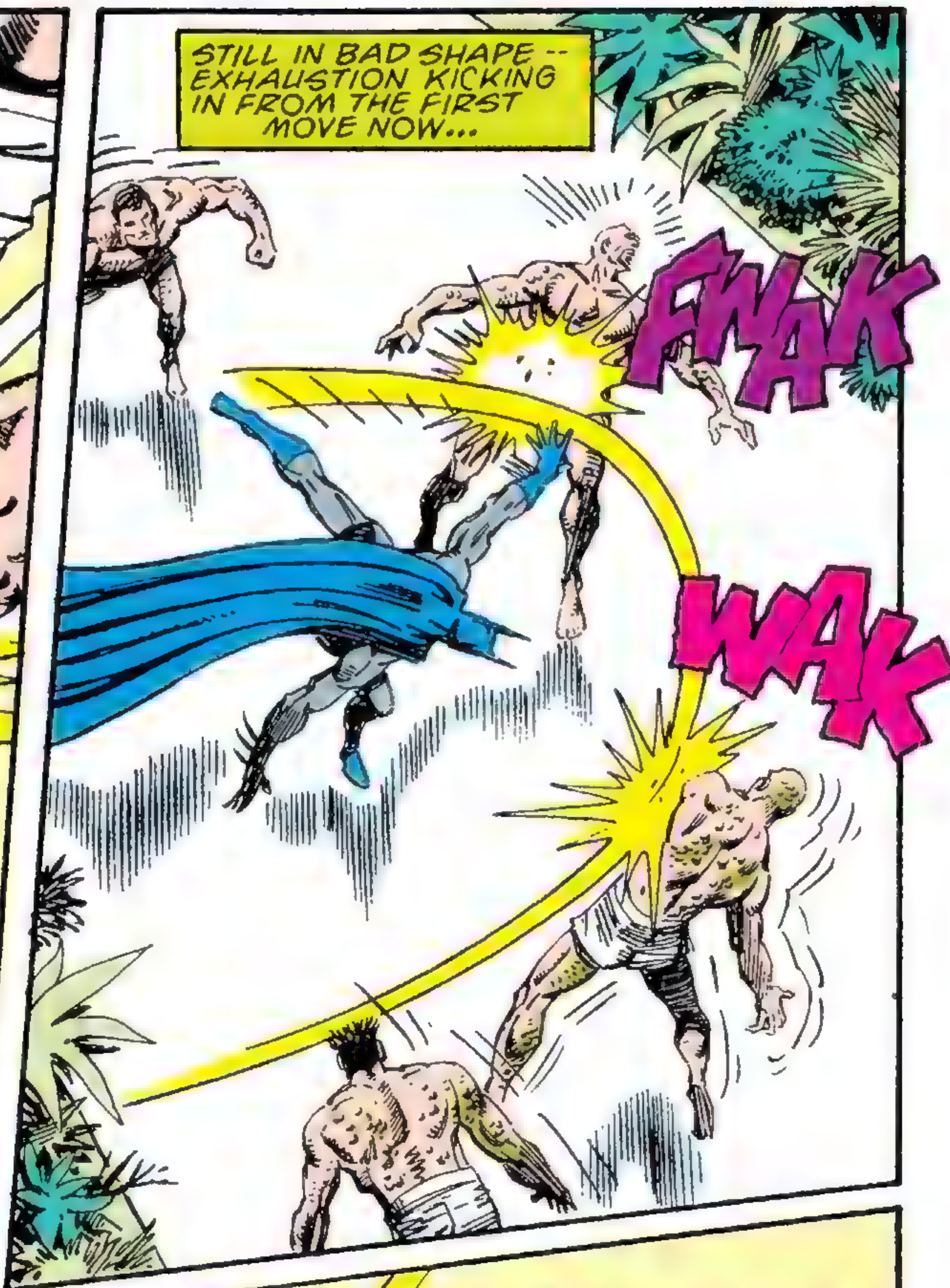
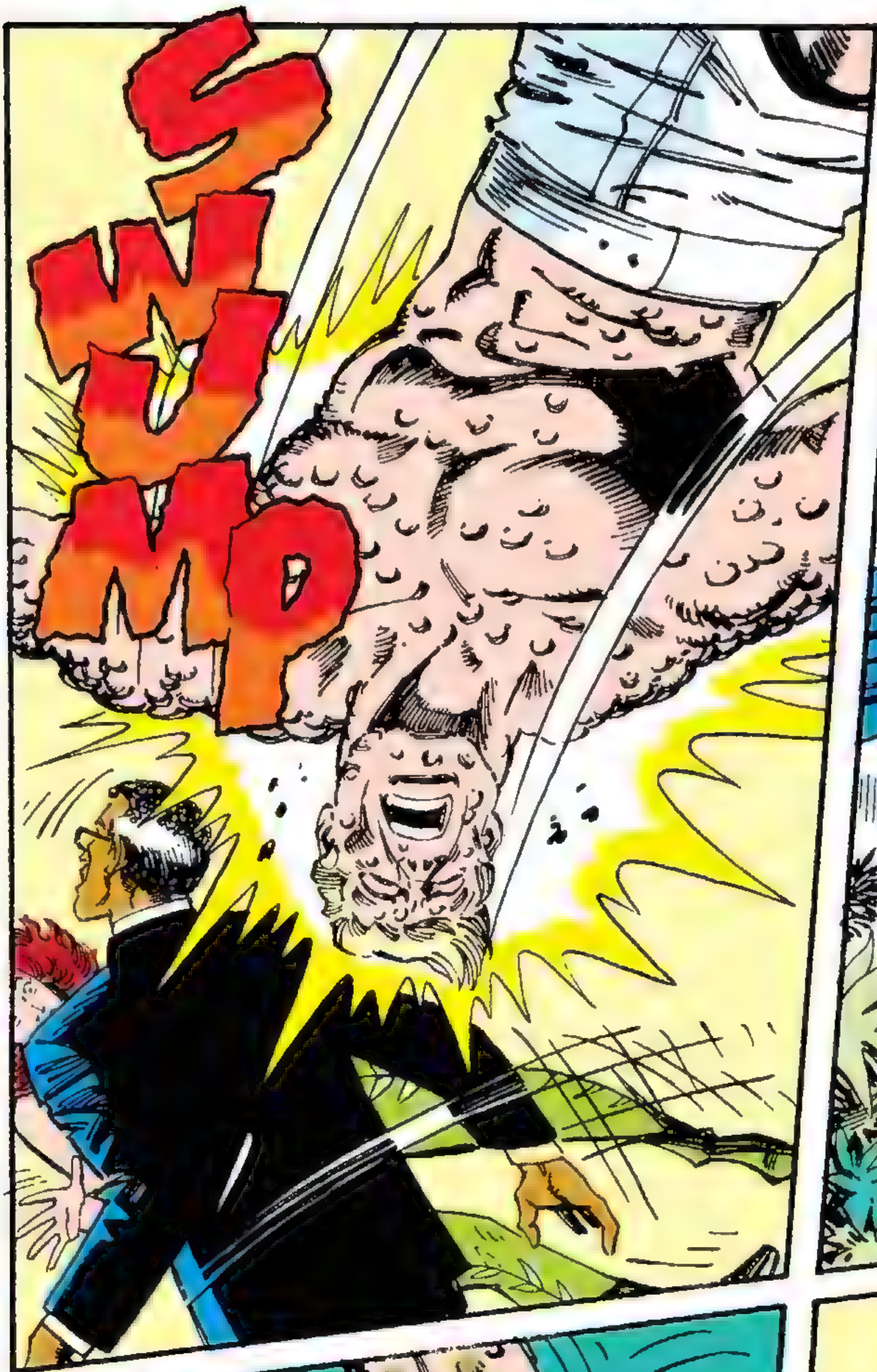


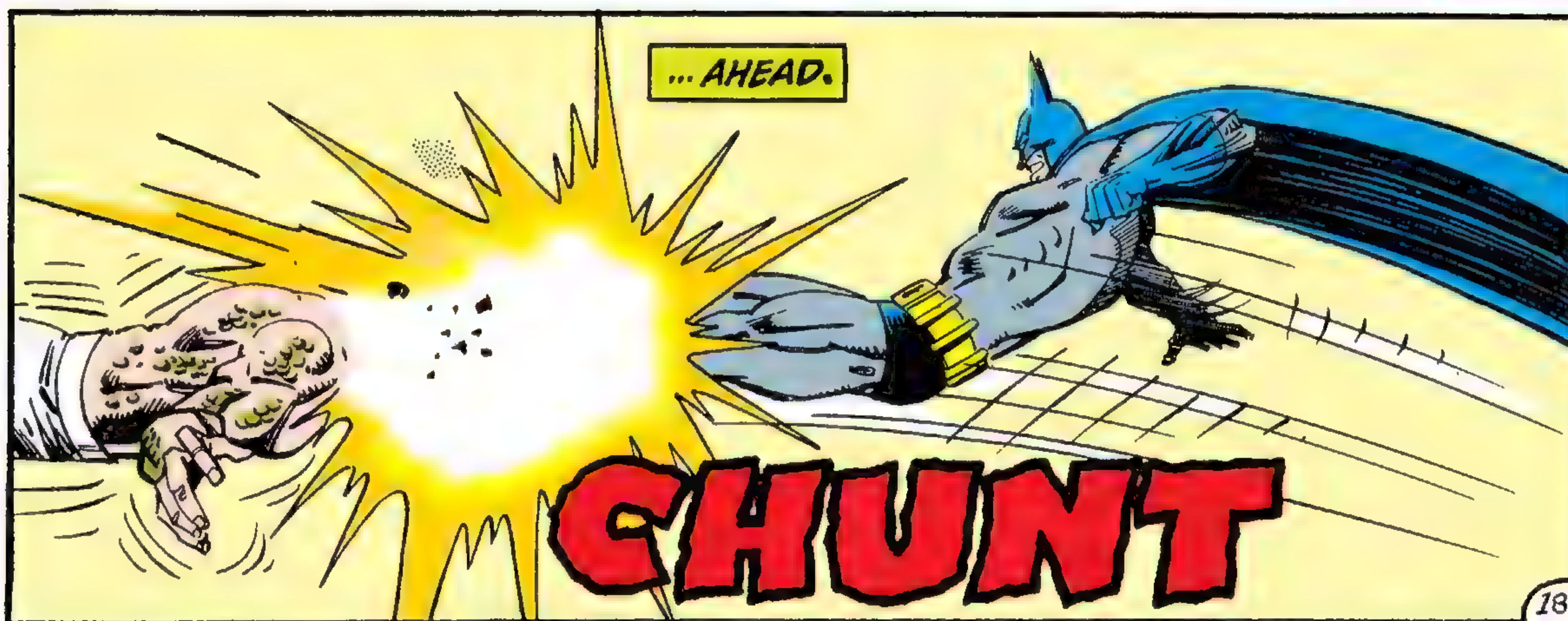
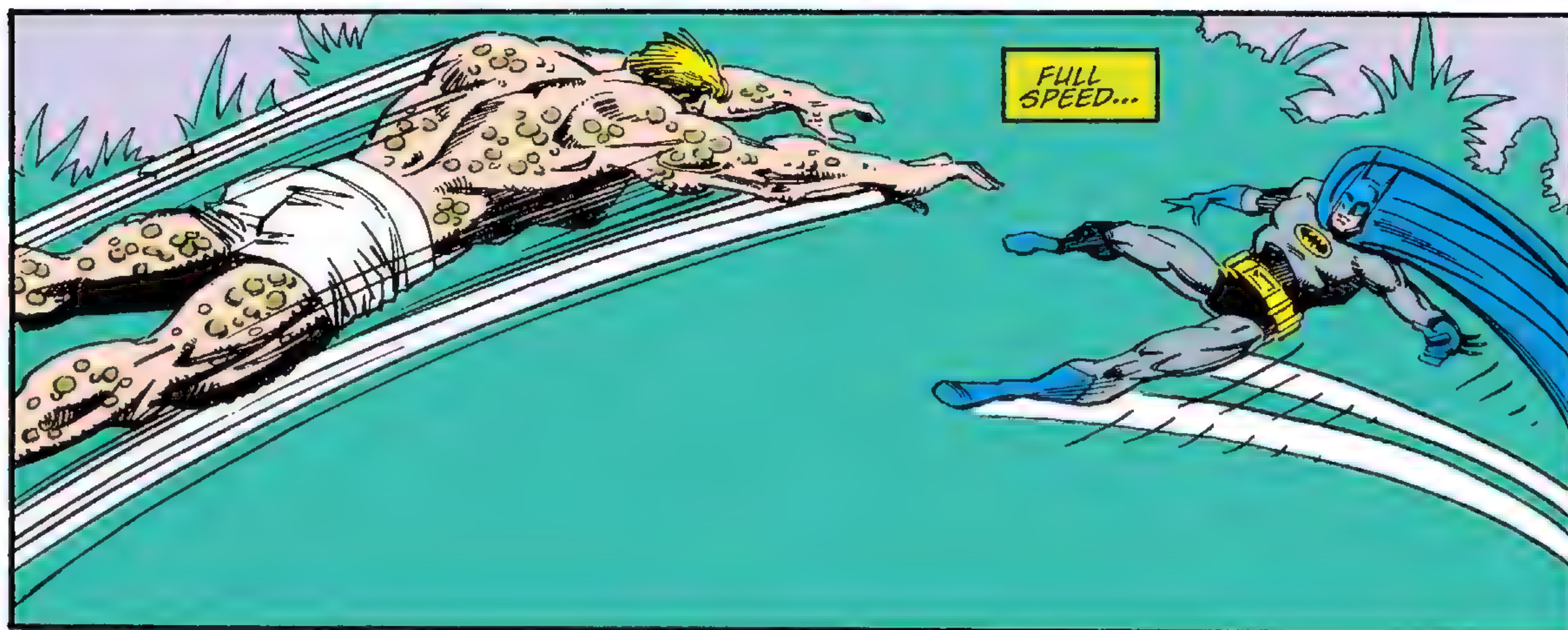
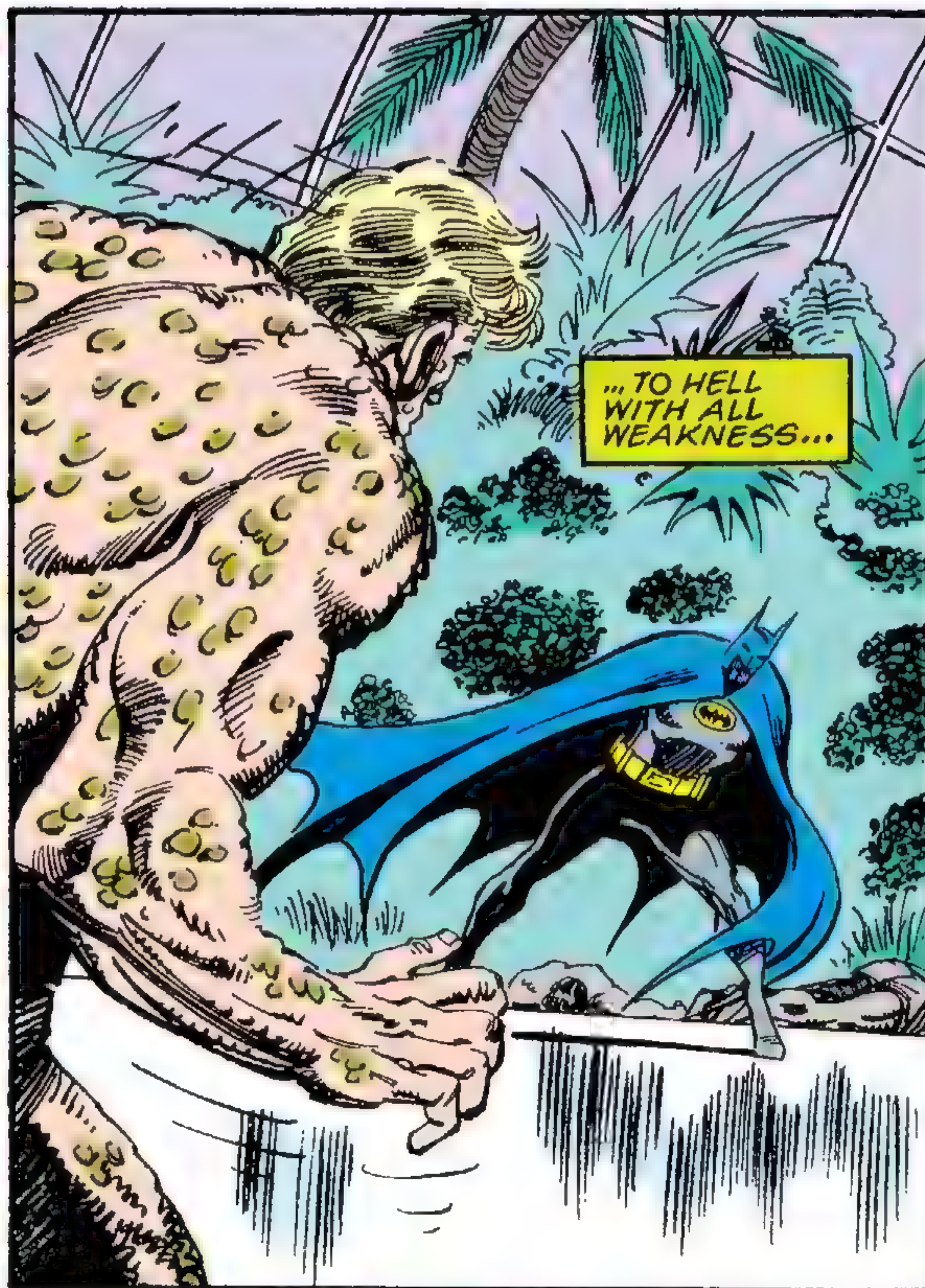
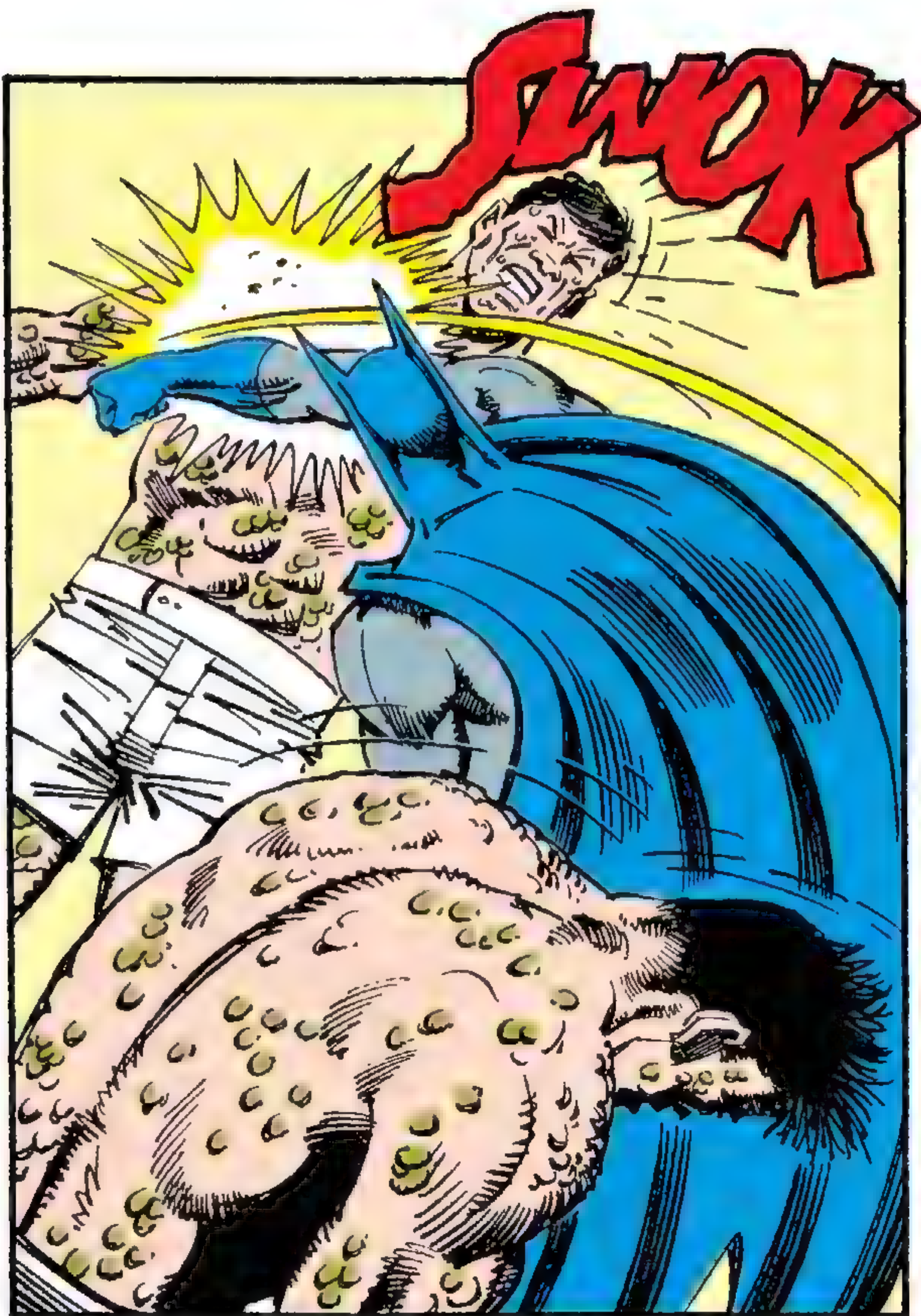
... AND WHETHER SHE'S AFTER THEIR MONEY, THEIR POWER, OR BOTH...

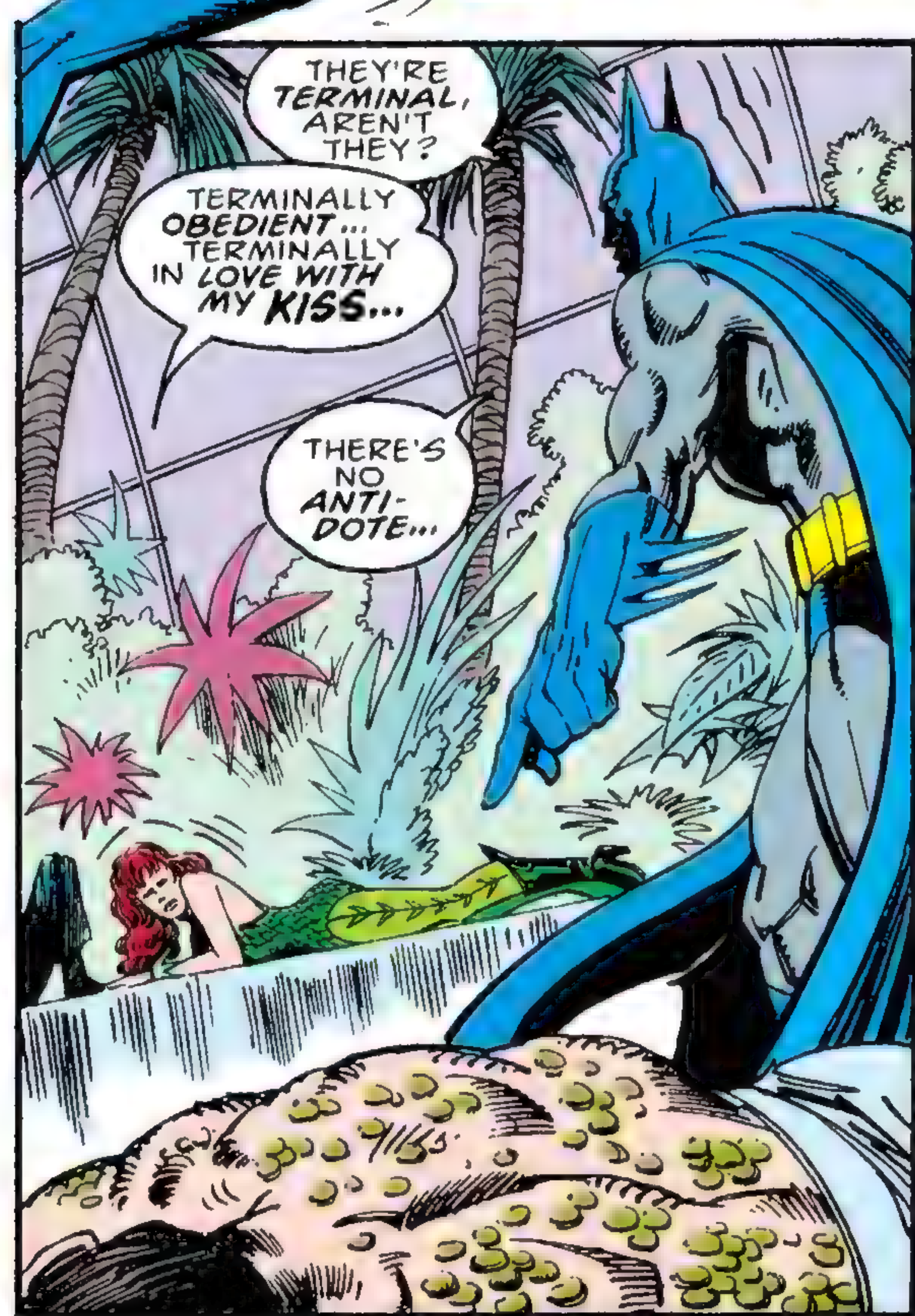
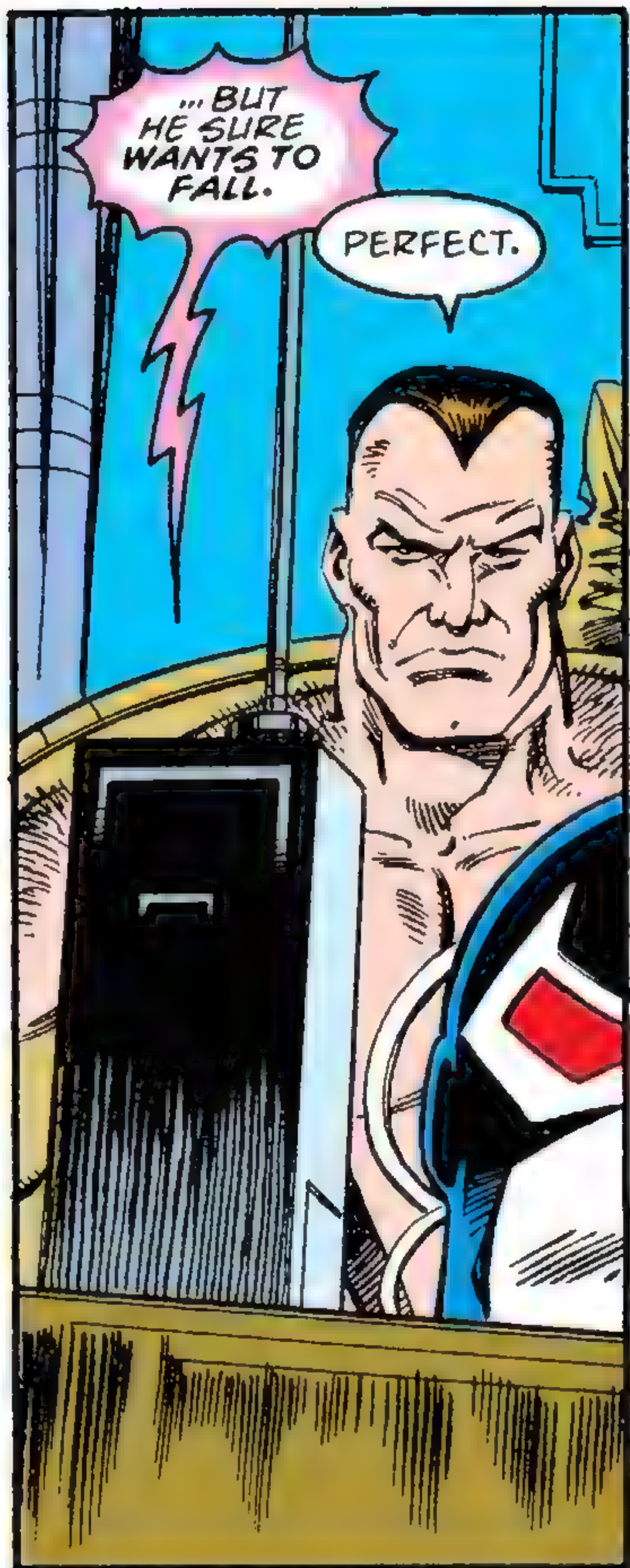
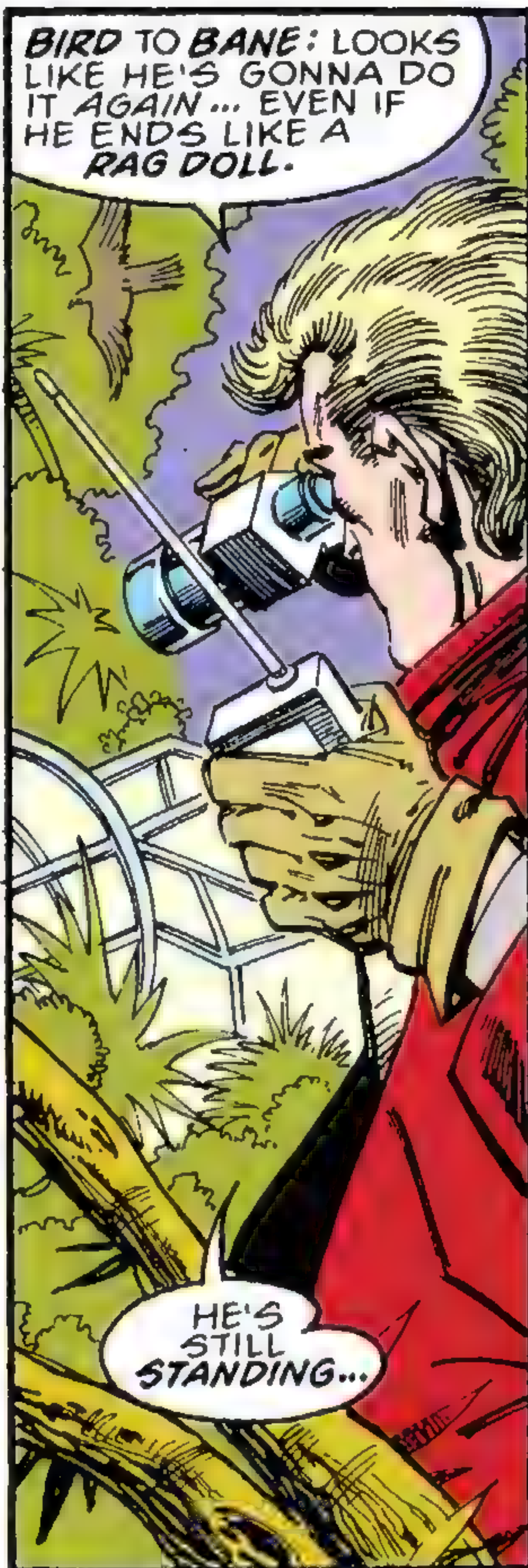
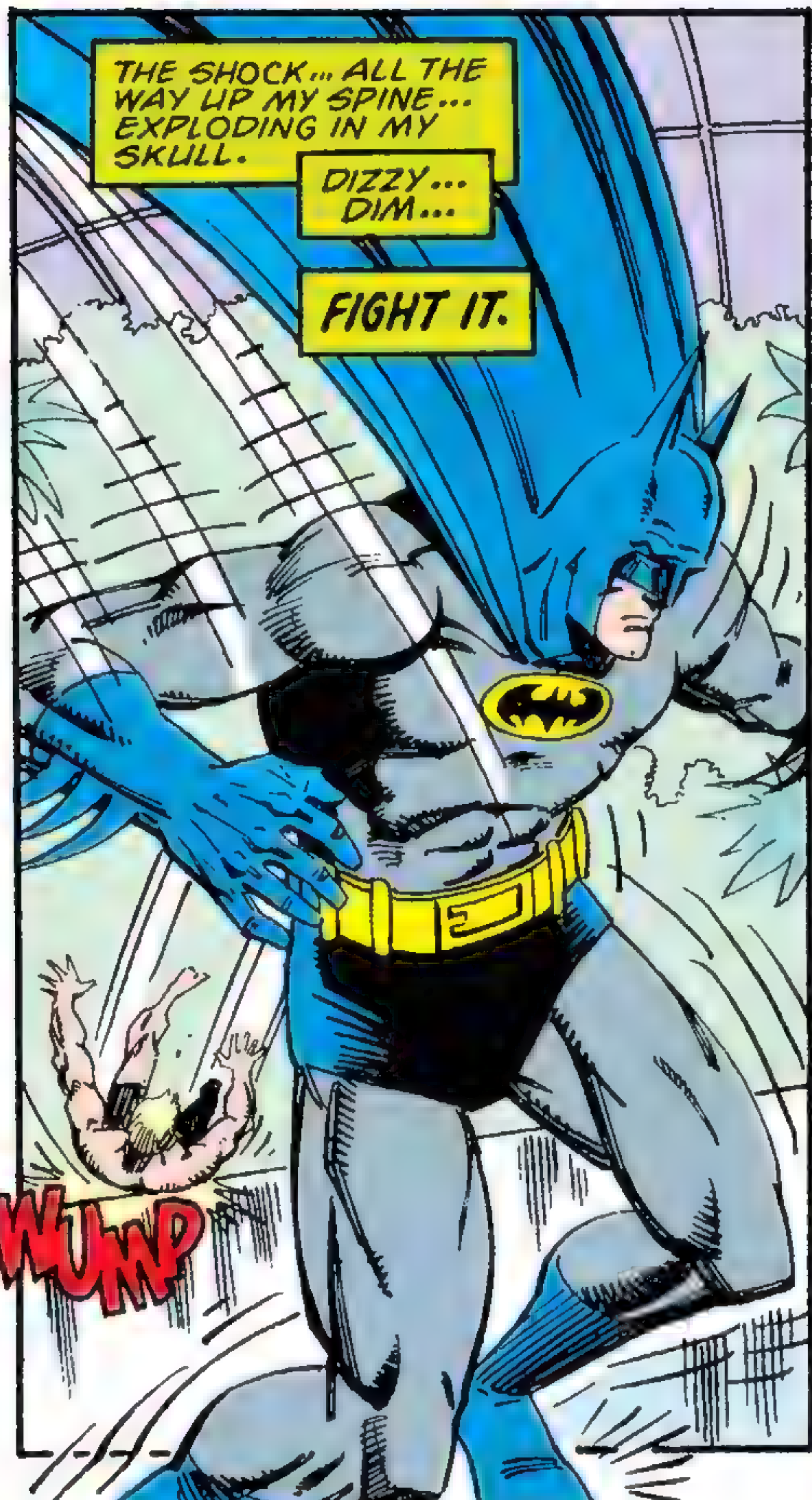
... IF SHE KISSES THEM, SHE'LL KILL THEM.

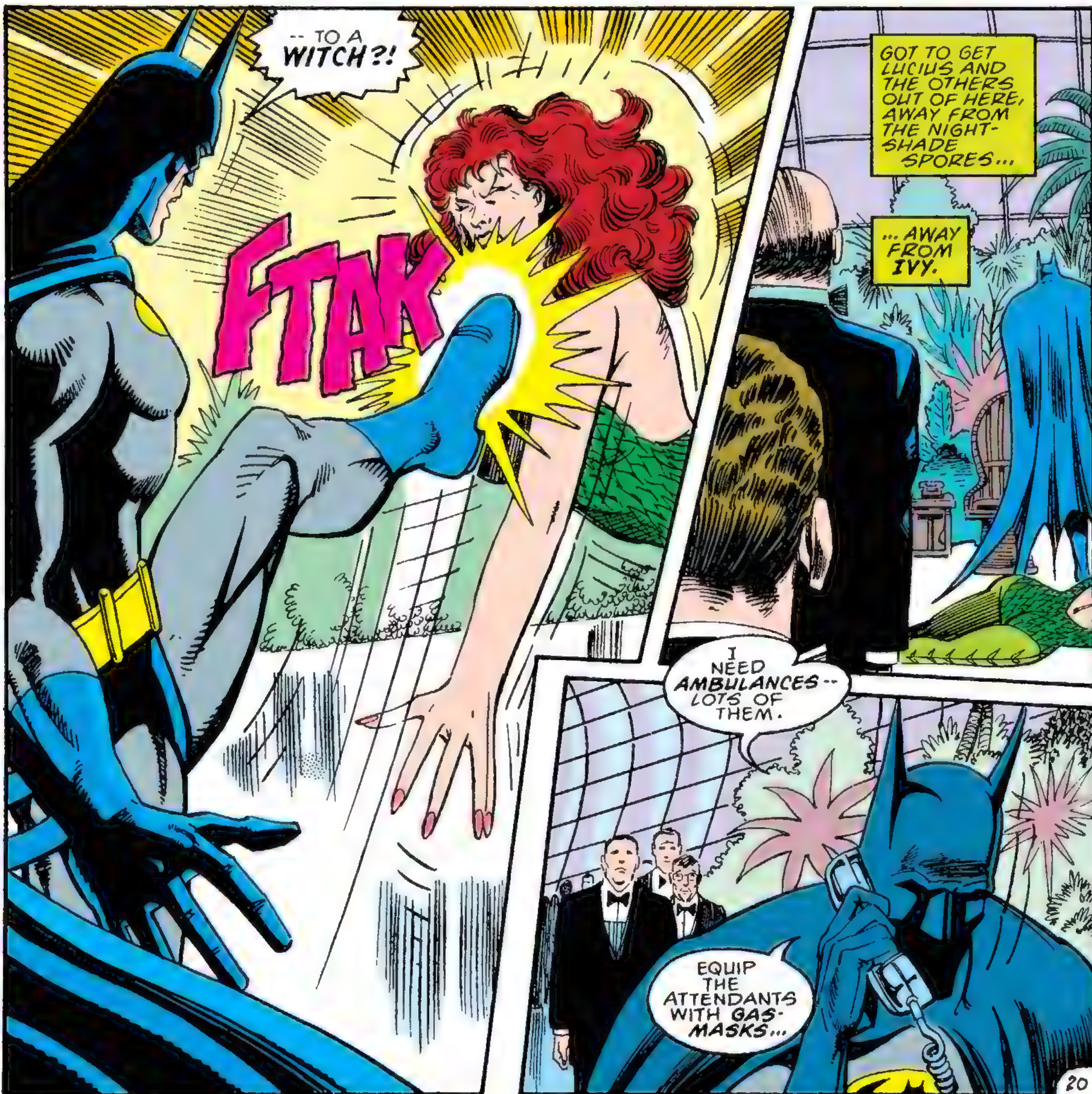
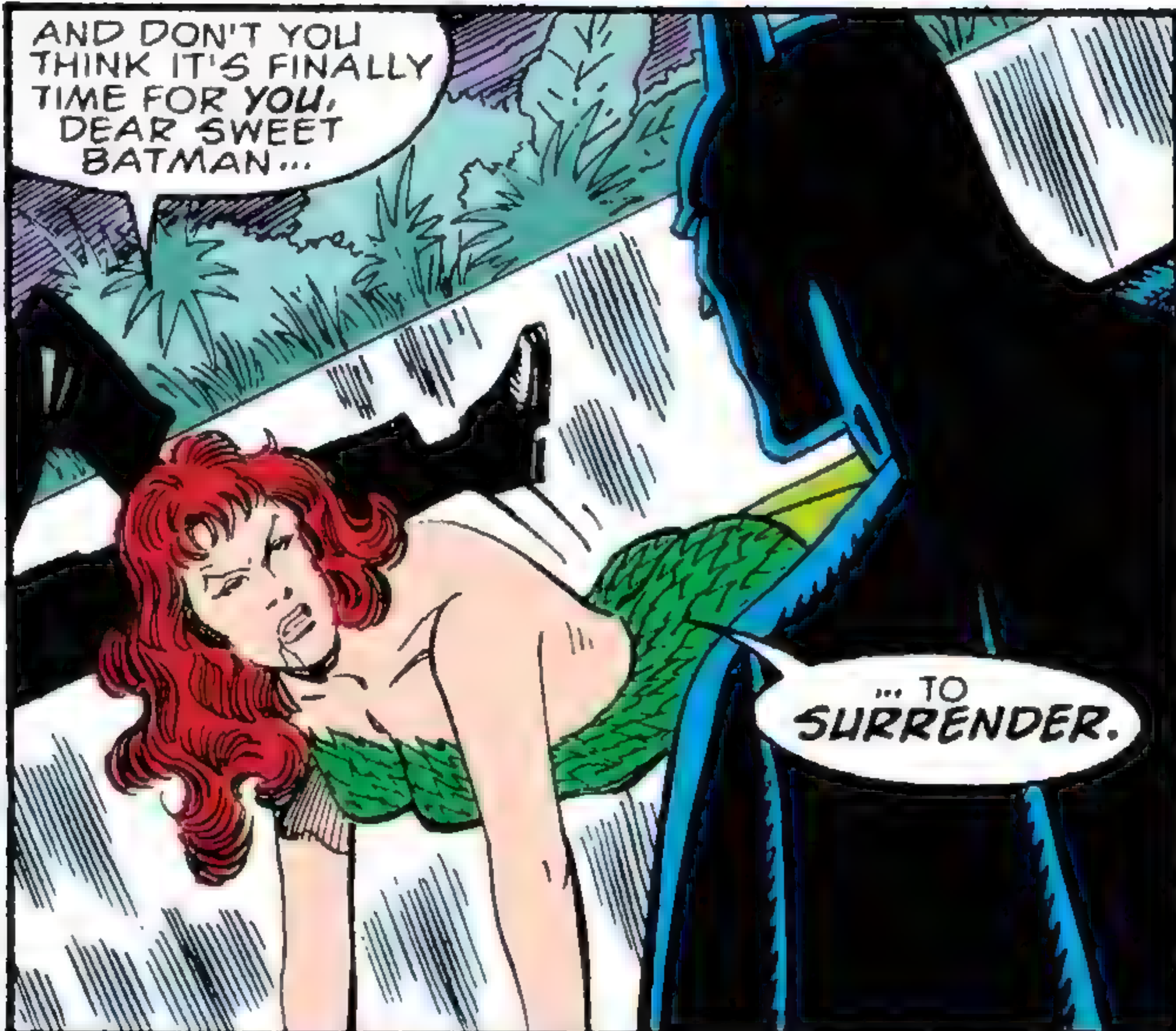


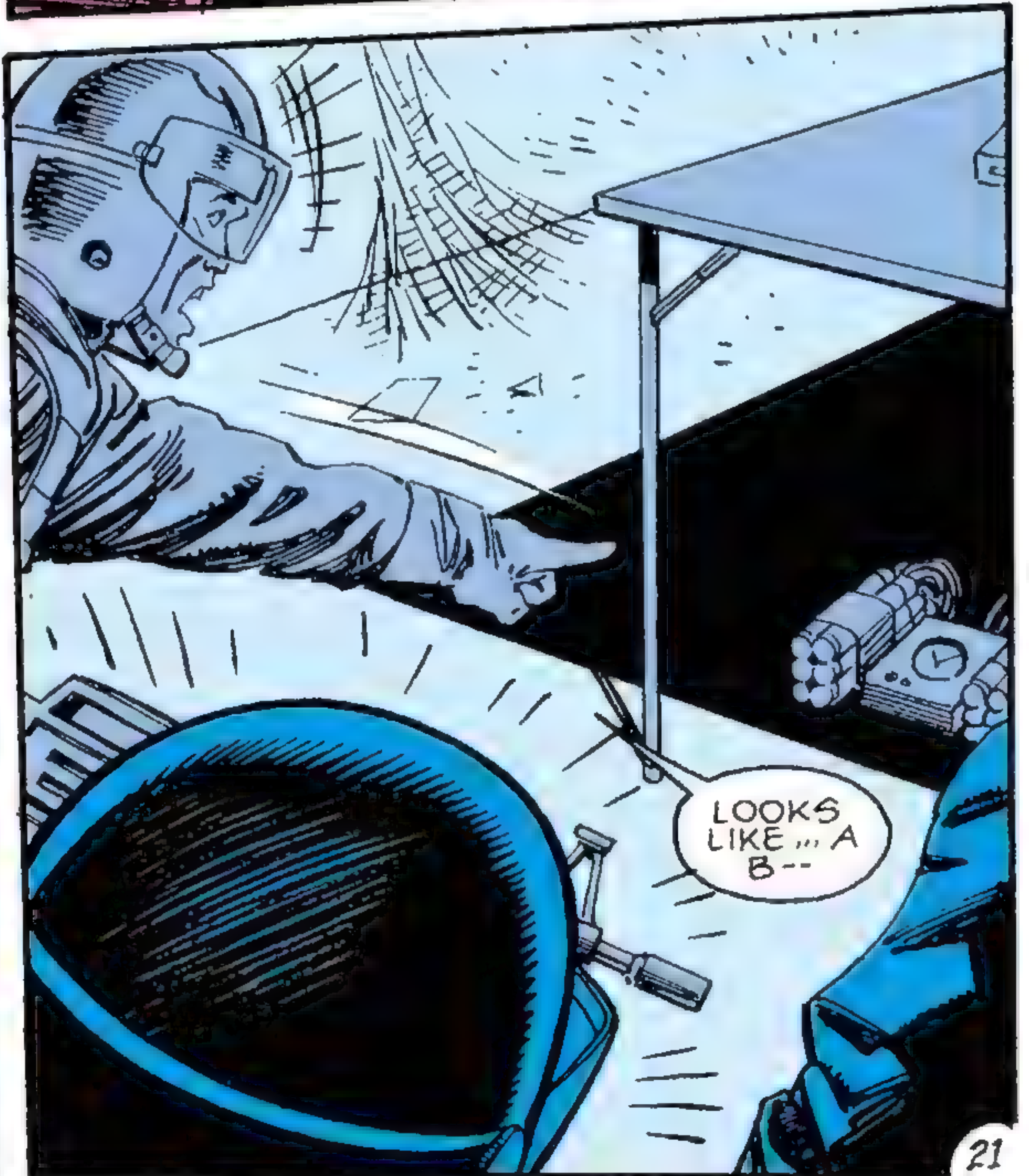
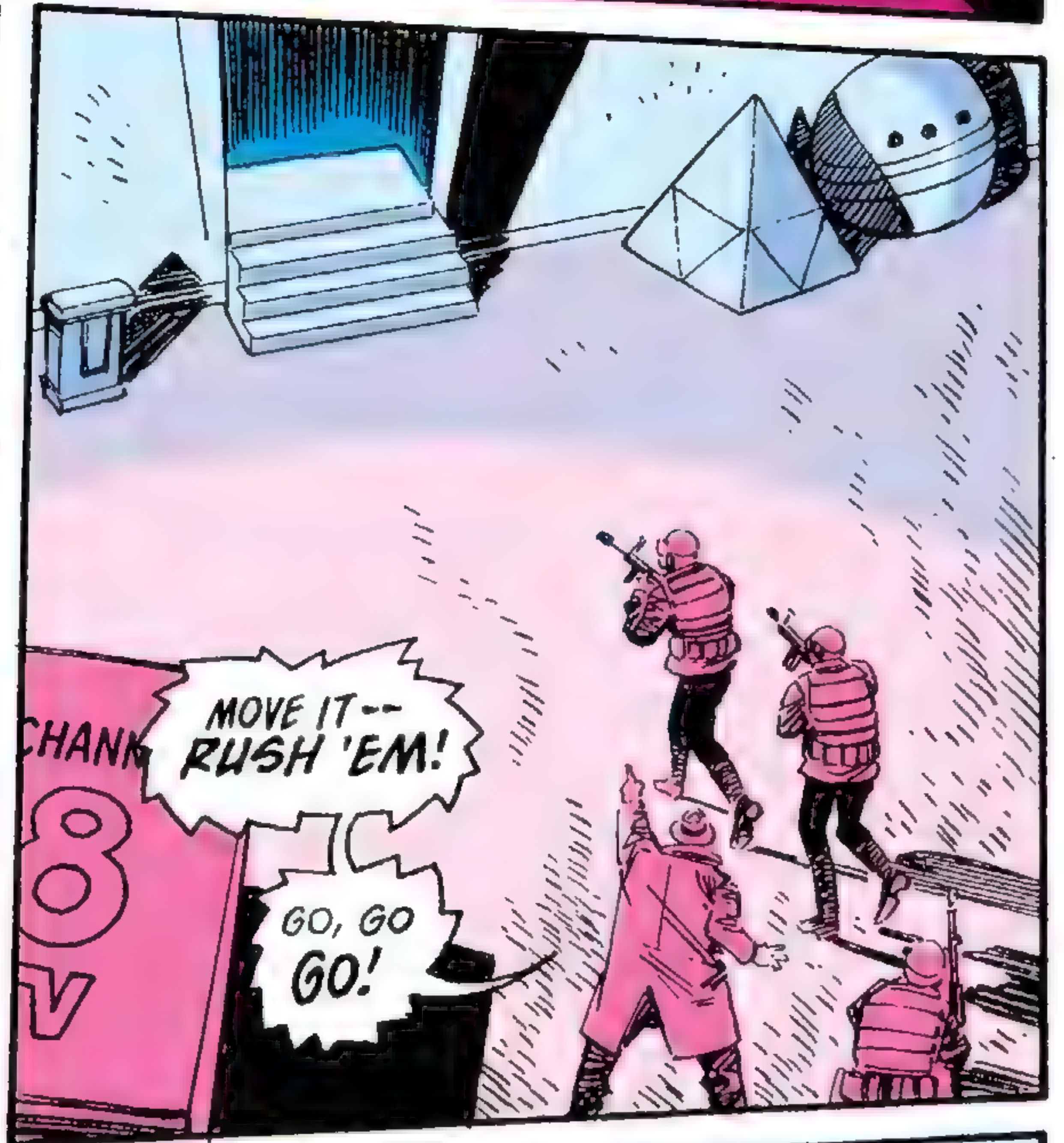


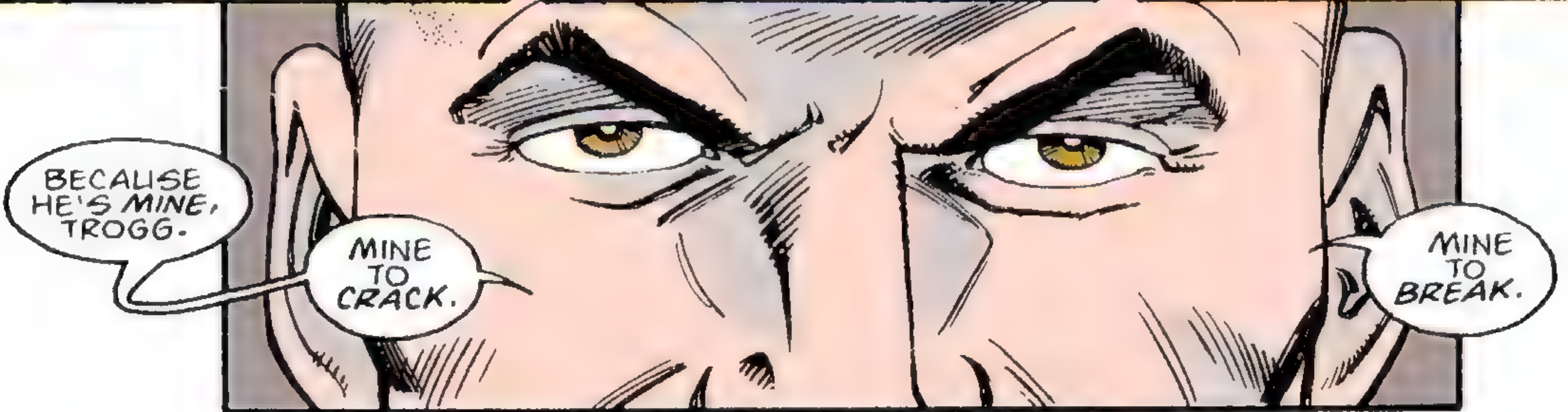
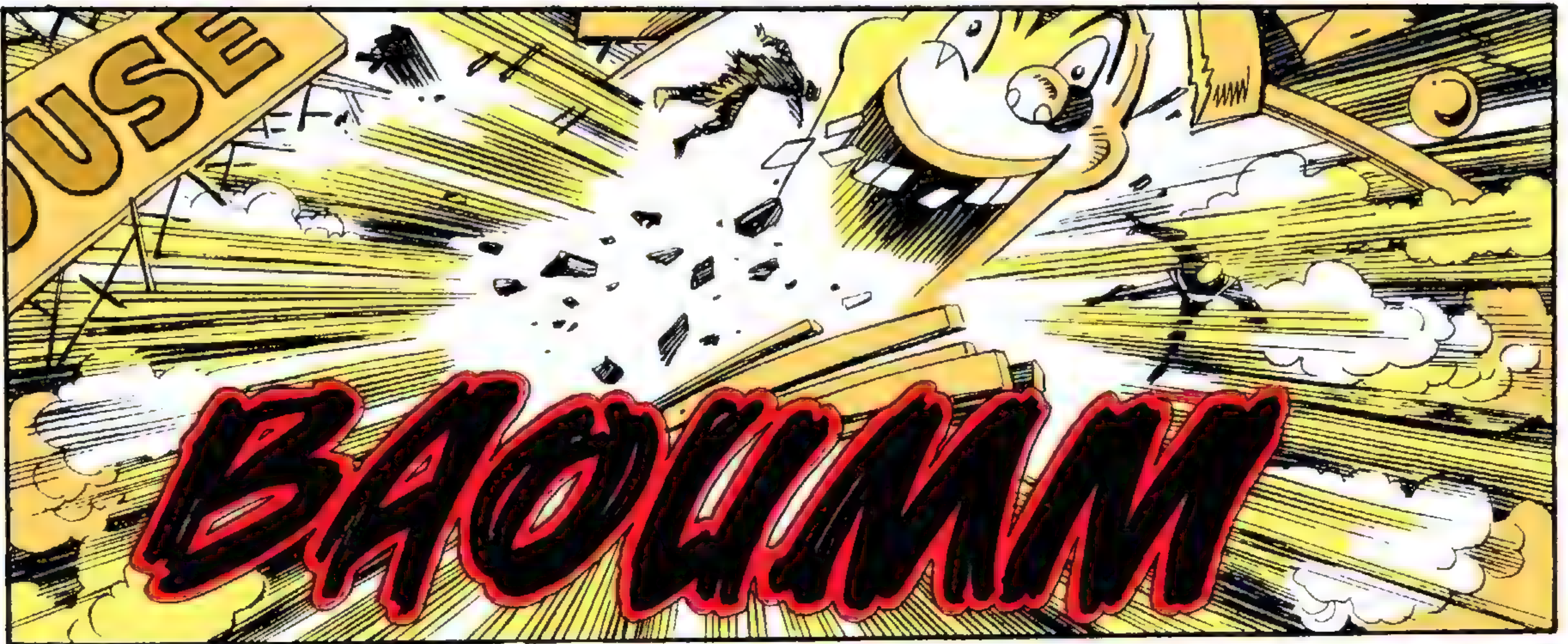




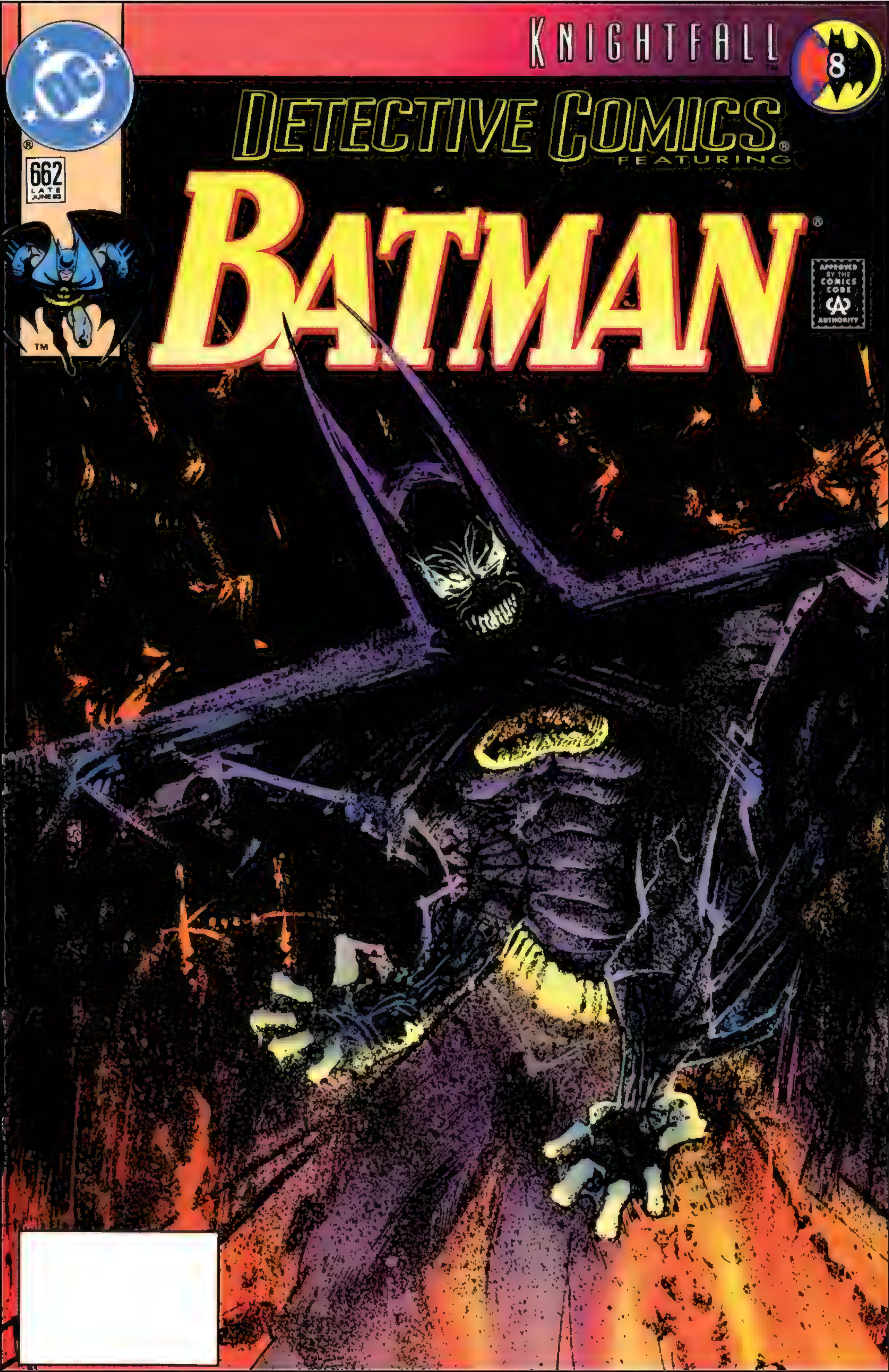




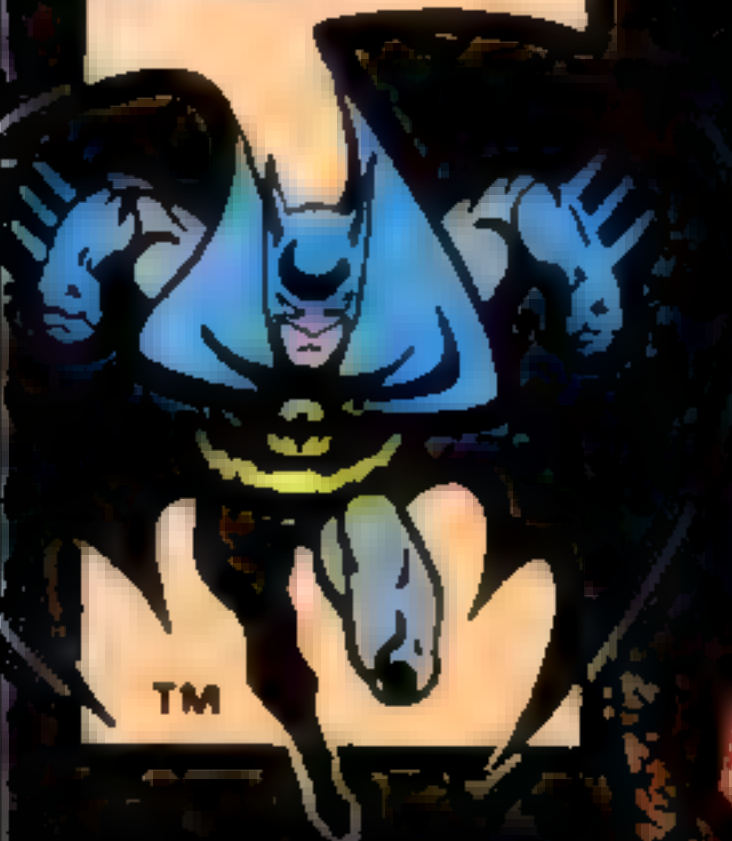




Cover art by SAM KIETH



662
LATE
JUNE 83



KNIGHTFALL



DETECTIVE COMICS[®]
FEATURING

BATMAN[®]

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

BURNING QUESTIONS



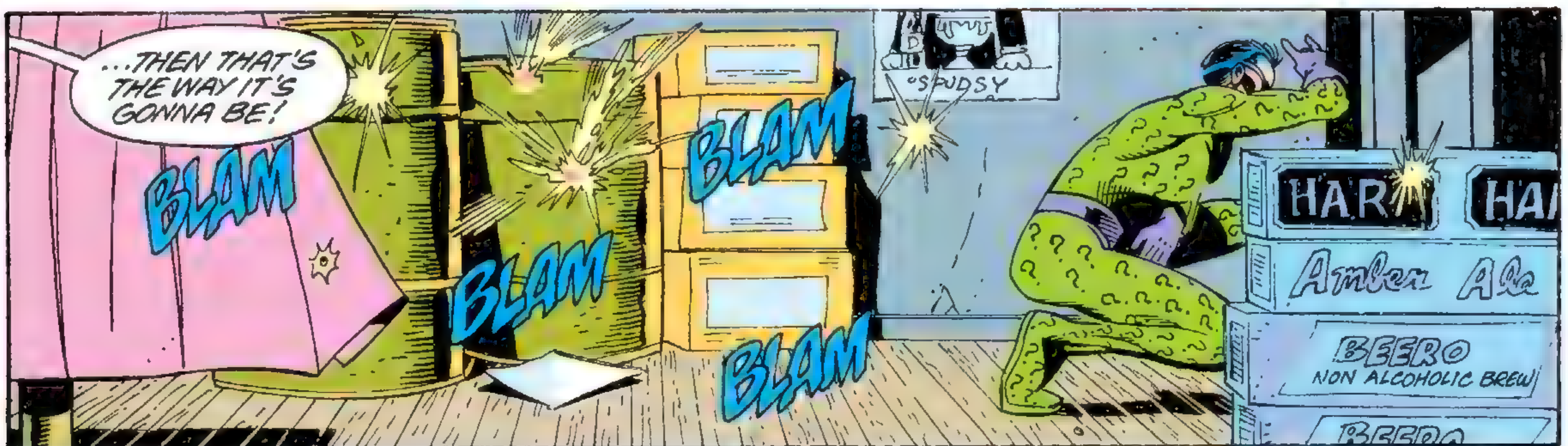
WHAT'S THE DEAL HERE, GUYS? CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

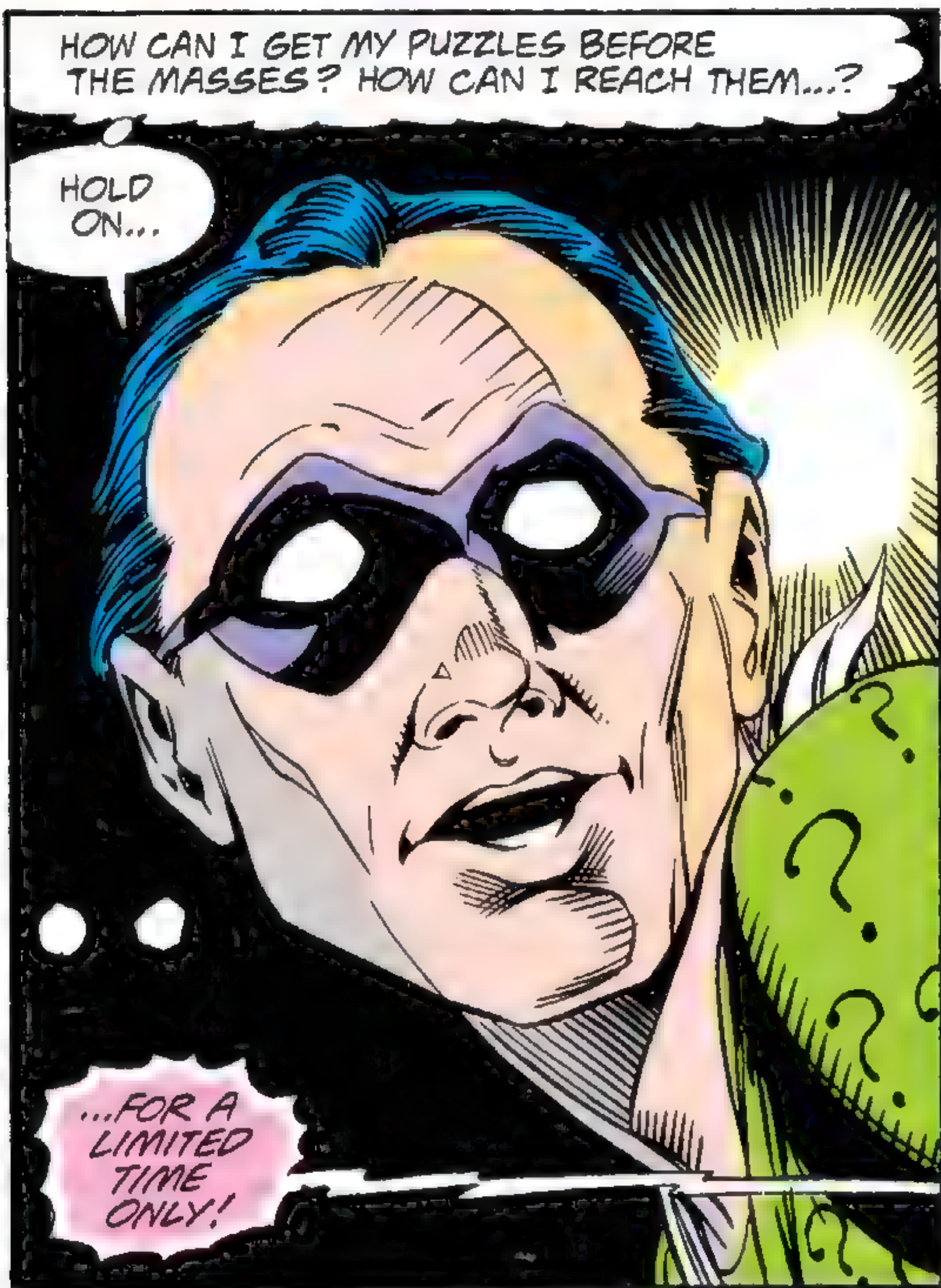
THAT'S ALL YOU DO IS TALK, RIDDLER.

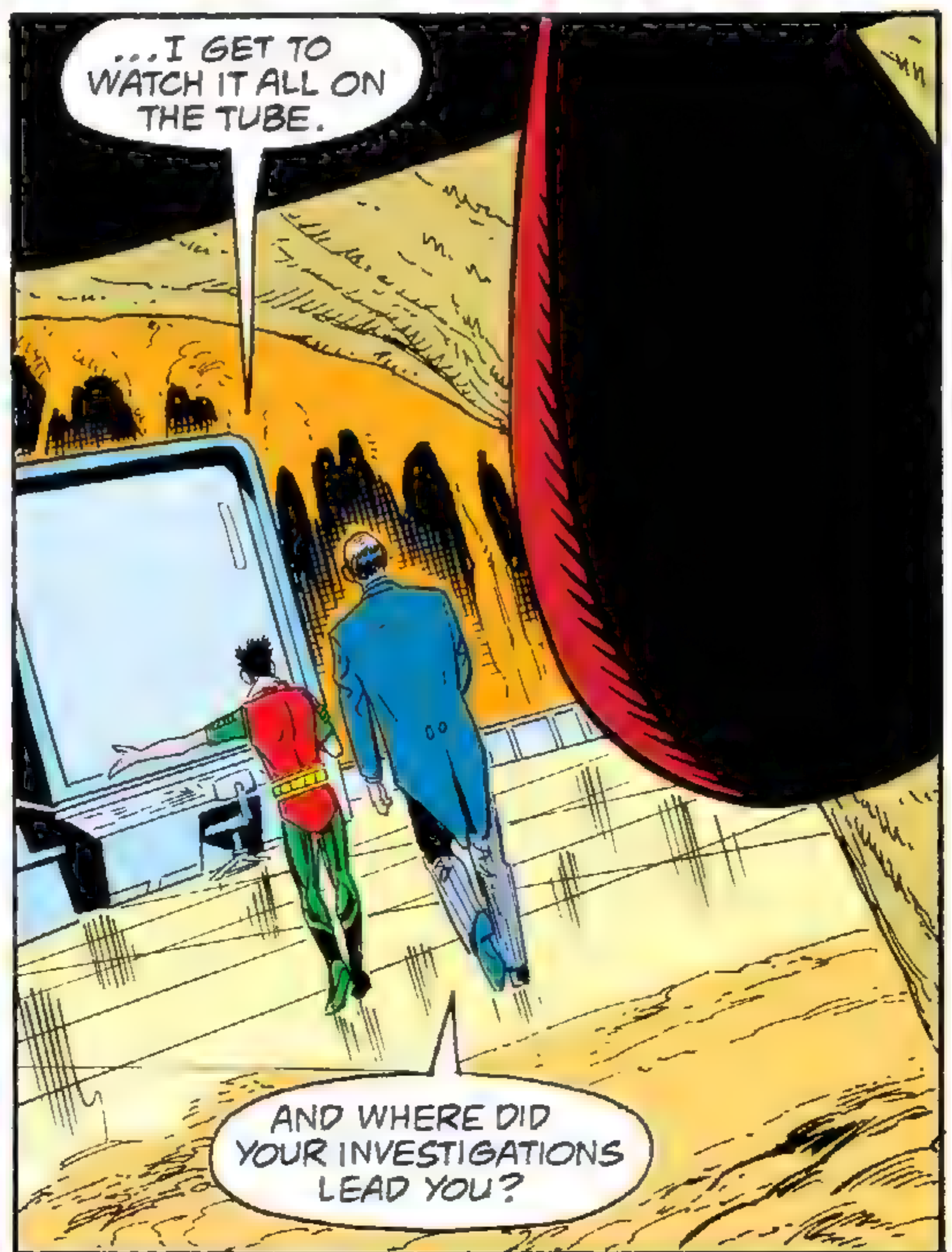
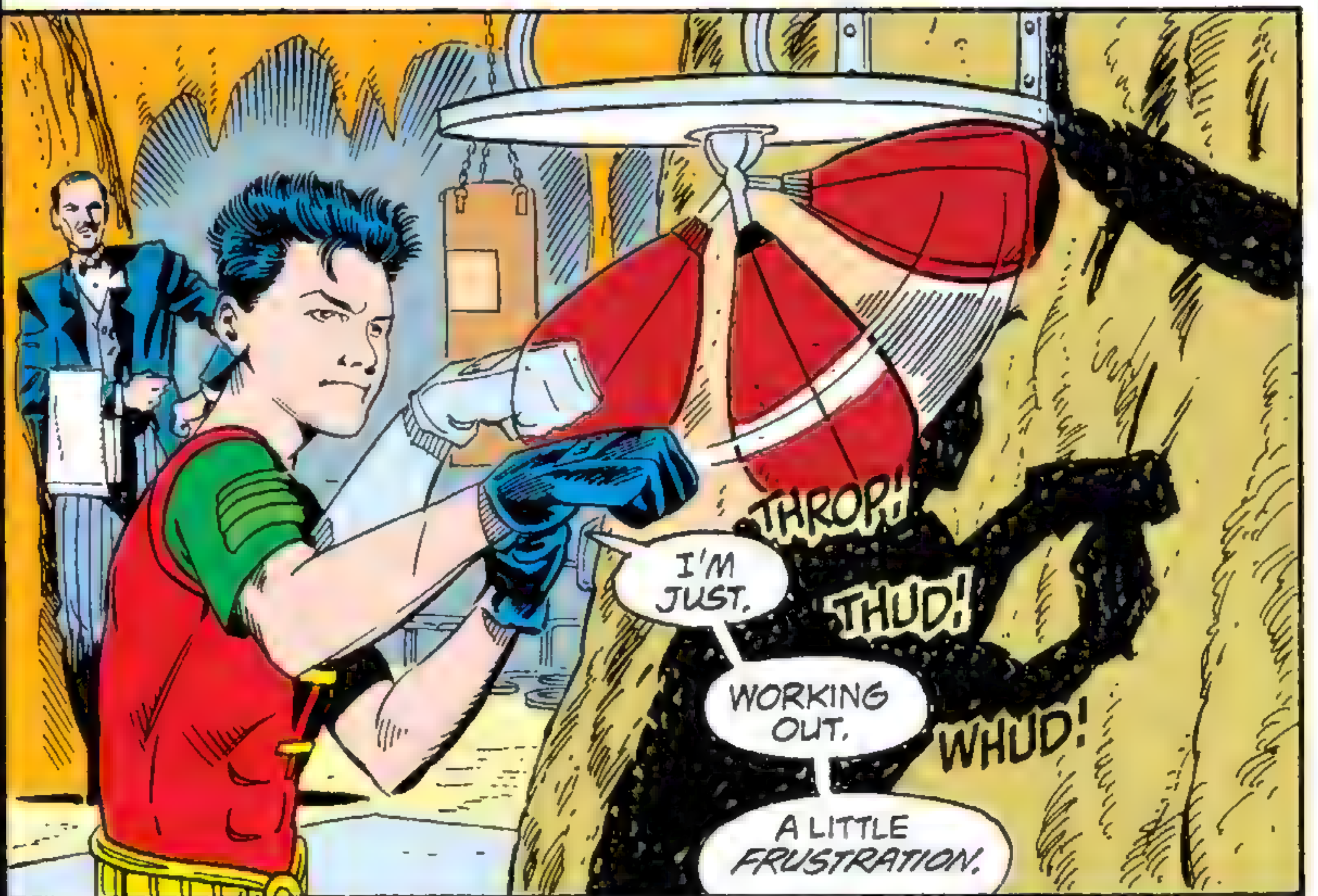
AND WE'RE SICK OF IT AND SICK OF YOU!

CHUCK DIXON
writer
GRAHAM NOLAN
penciler
SCOTT HANNA
inker
ADRIENNE ROY
colorist
JOHN COSTANZA
letterer
SCOTT PETERSON
and
DENNIS O'NEIL
editors

BATMAN created by
BOB KANE



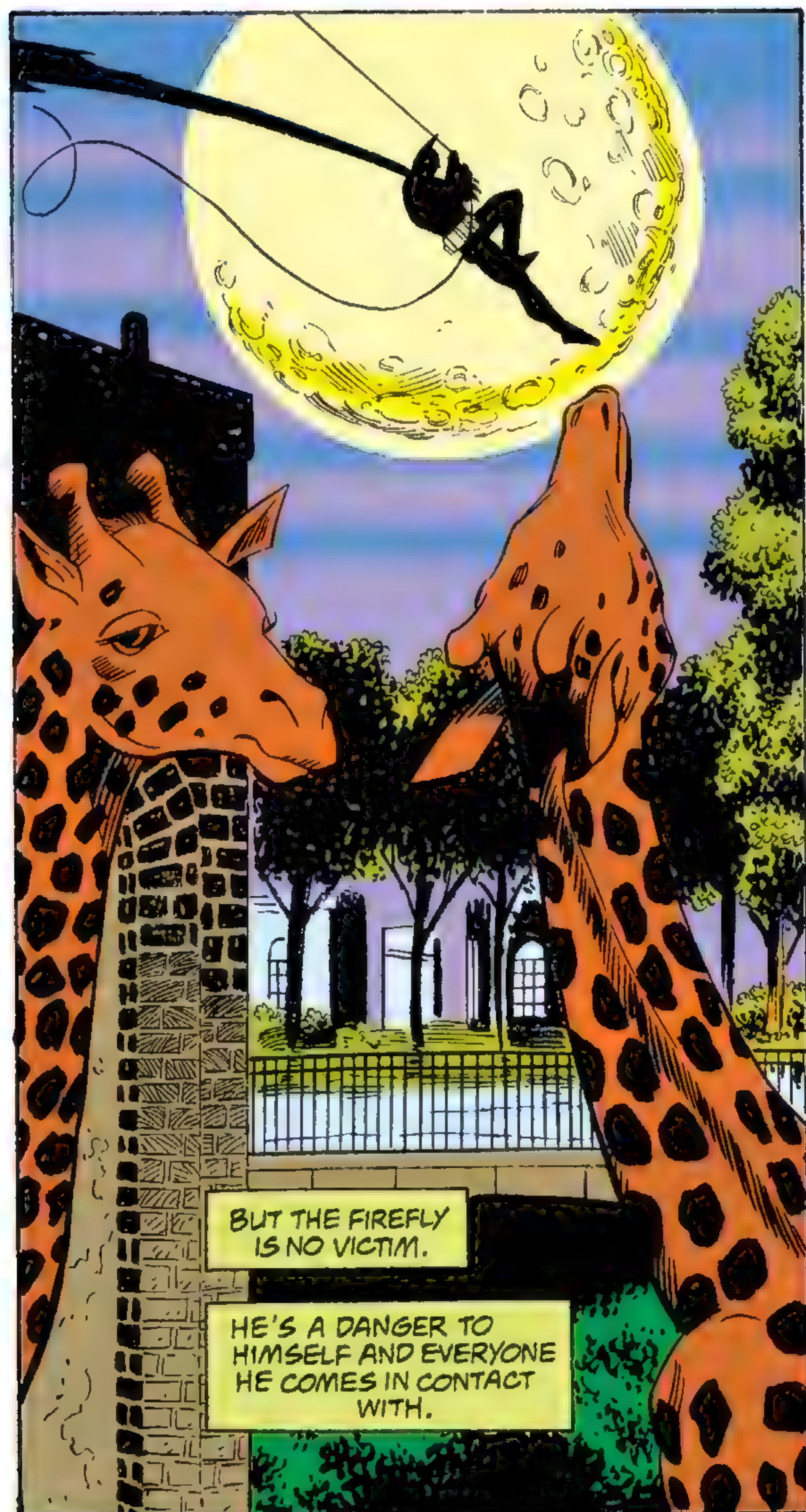






GARFIELD LYNN'S IS OUT TO BURN DOWN ALL OF THE PLACES HE NEVER GOT TAKEN TO AS A CHILD.

IN PSYCHOBABBLE TERMS HE'S FEEDING OFF THE RAGE OF HIS INNER CHILD, REDRESSING THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF HIS PAST.



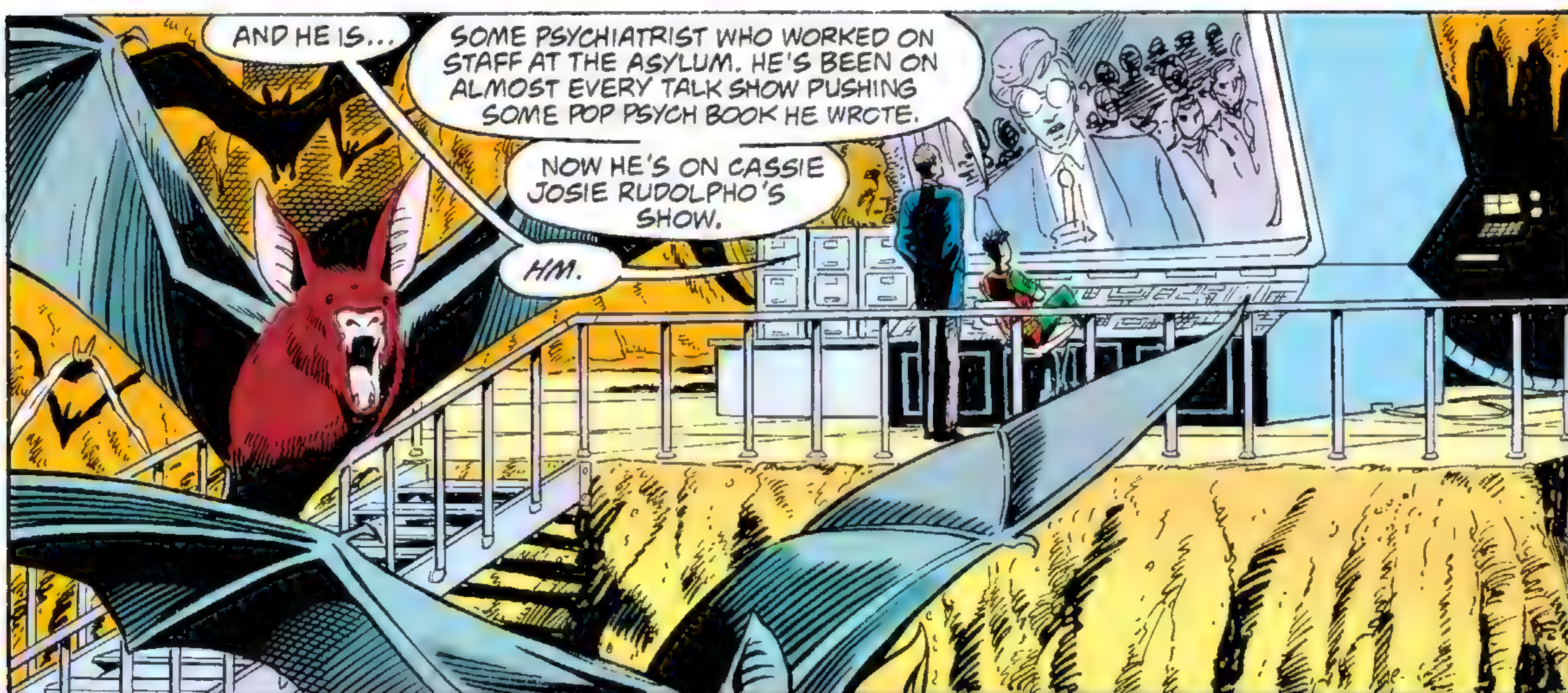
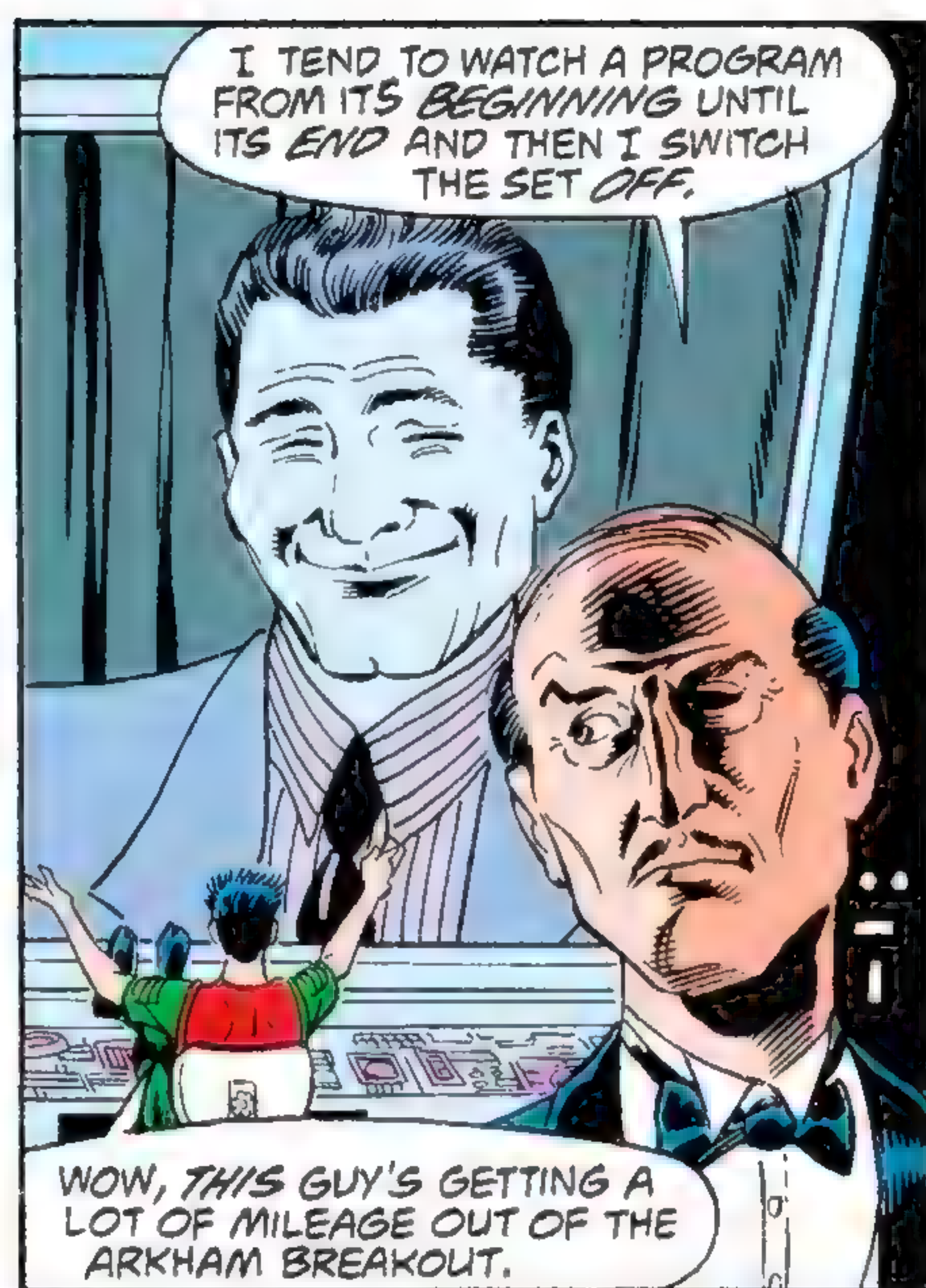
BUT THE FIREFLY IS NO VICTIM.

HE'S A DANGER TO HIMSELF AND EVERYONE HE COMES IN CONTACT WITH.



AND A TORTURED CHILDHOOD IS NO EXCUSE FOR BECOMING A MONSTER.

I KNOW.





WELL, LET'S GIVE OUR AUDIENCE A CHANCE TO QUESTION DR. FLANDERS.

DO ANY OF YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO ASK OUR GUEST?



ACTUALLY, CASSIE, I HAD A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS.

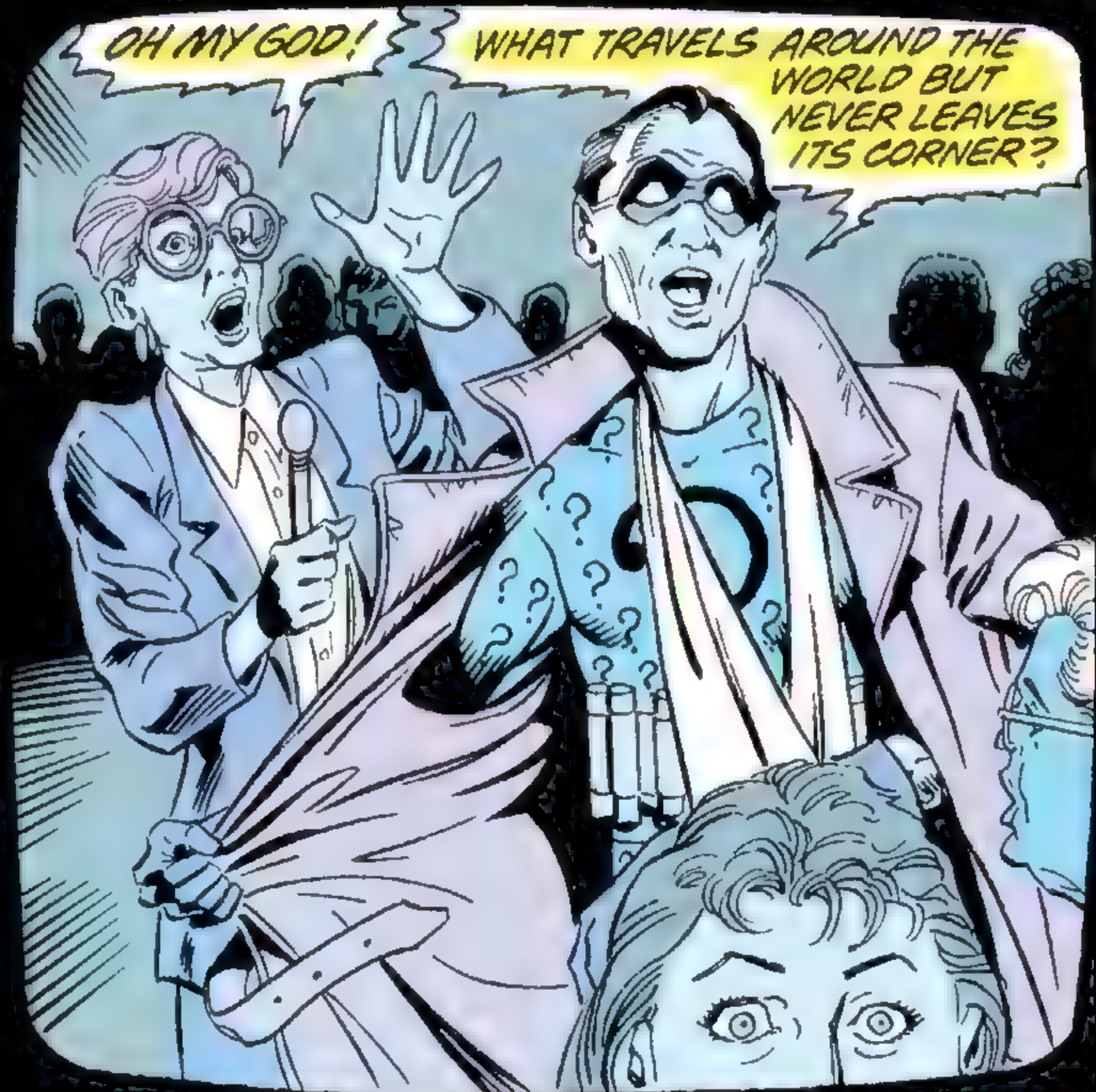
GO AHEAD, SIR. THIS IS AN OPEN FORUM.



WHAT LETTER IS NEVER FOUND IN THE ALPHABET?

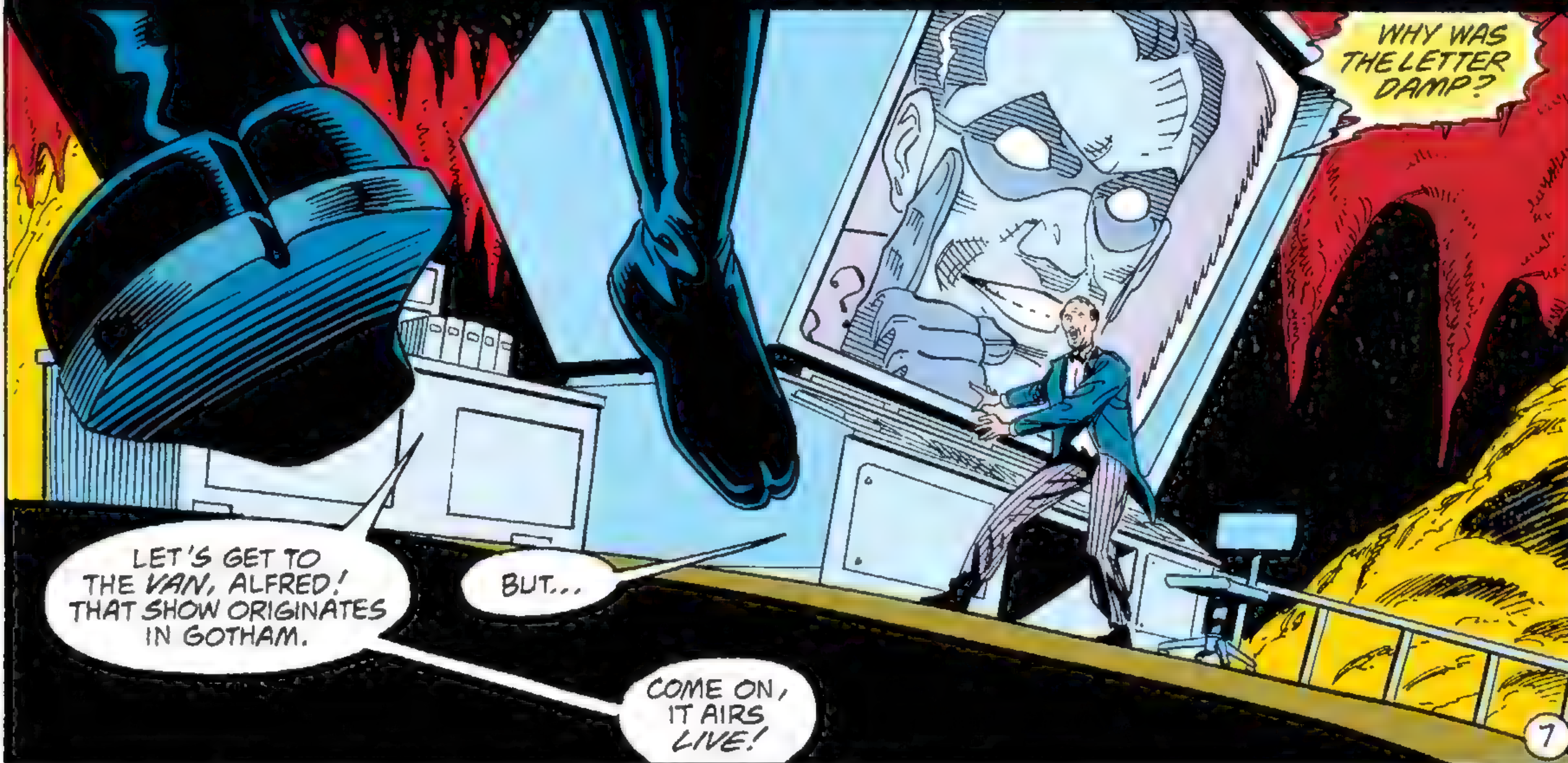
WHAT DOES THE BALLPLAYER LIKE TO BE CALLED AT HOME?

I'M NOT SURE I--



OH MY GOD!

WHAT TRAVELS AROUND THE WORLD BUT NEVER LEAVES ITS CORNER?



WHY WAS THE LETTER DAMP?

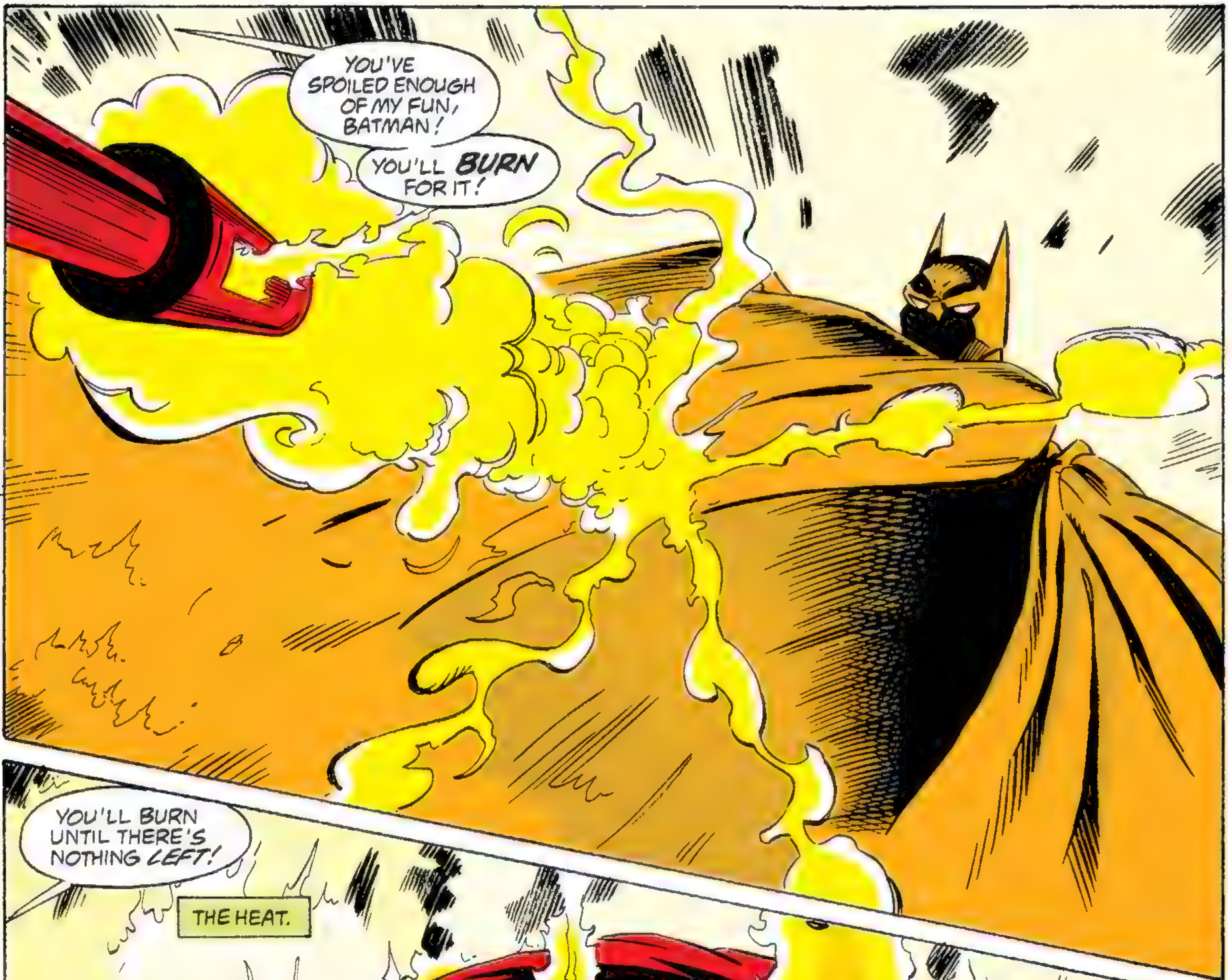
LET'S GET TO THE VAN, ALFRED! THAT SHOW ORIGINATES IN GOTHAM.

BUT...

COME ON, IT AIRS LIVE!

7







BUT I'M NOT
BURNING.

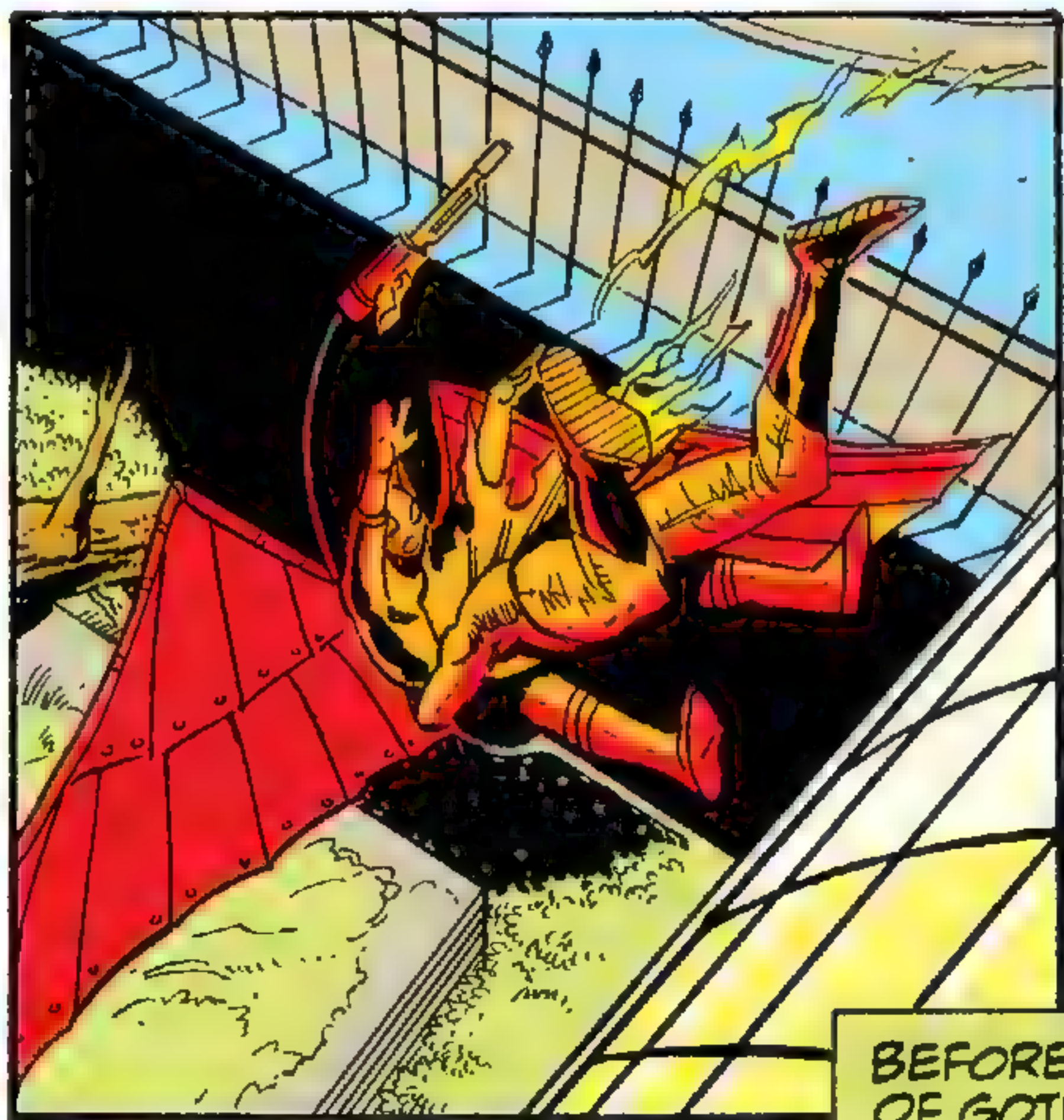
FIFTEEN-LAYER NOMEX
AND A REBREATHER
SHIELD ME FROM THE
WORST OF IT.

STILL THE HEAT
REACHES ME,
STEALS MY
STAMINA.

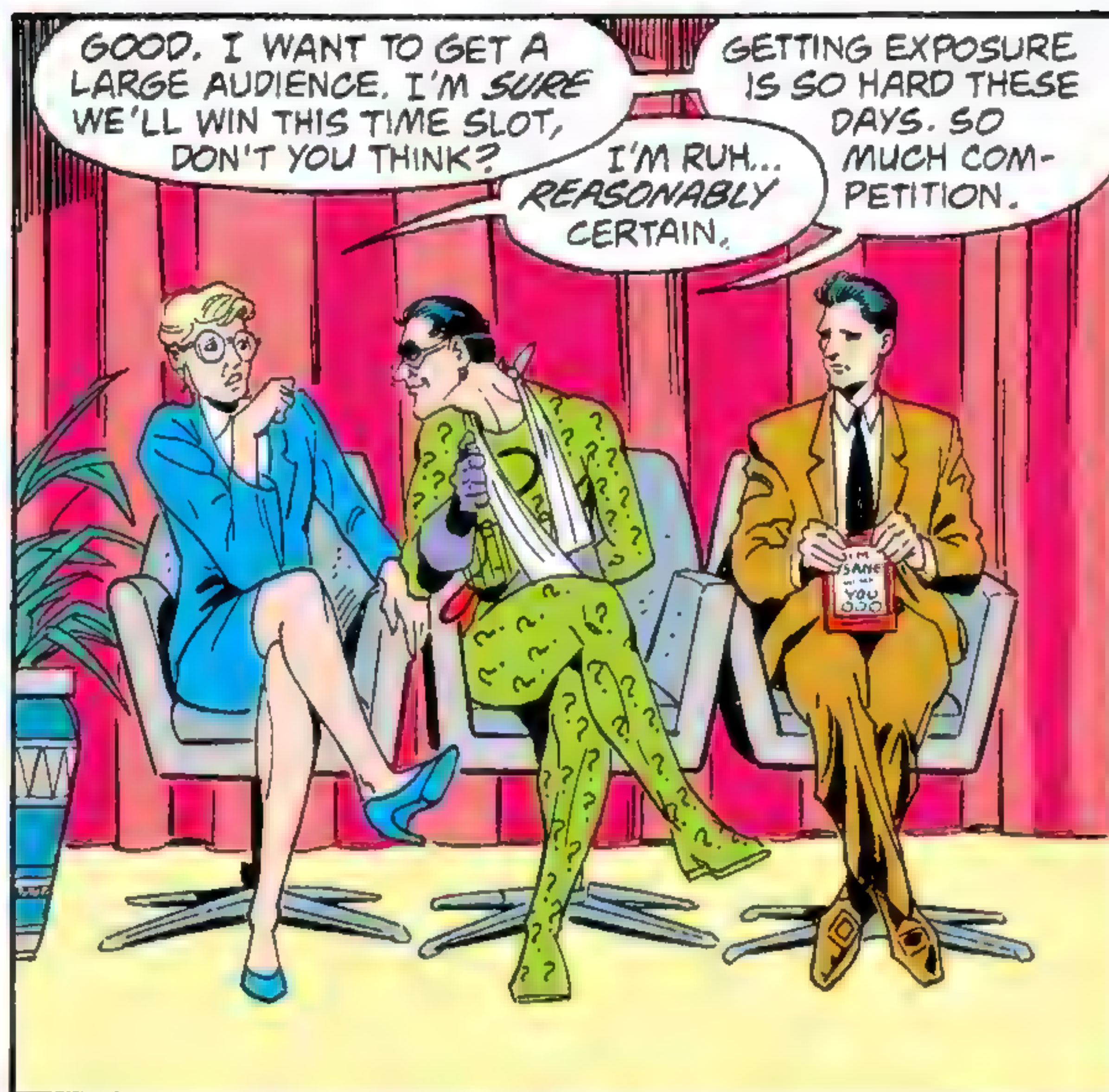


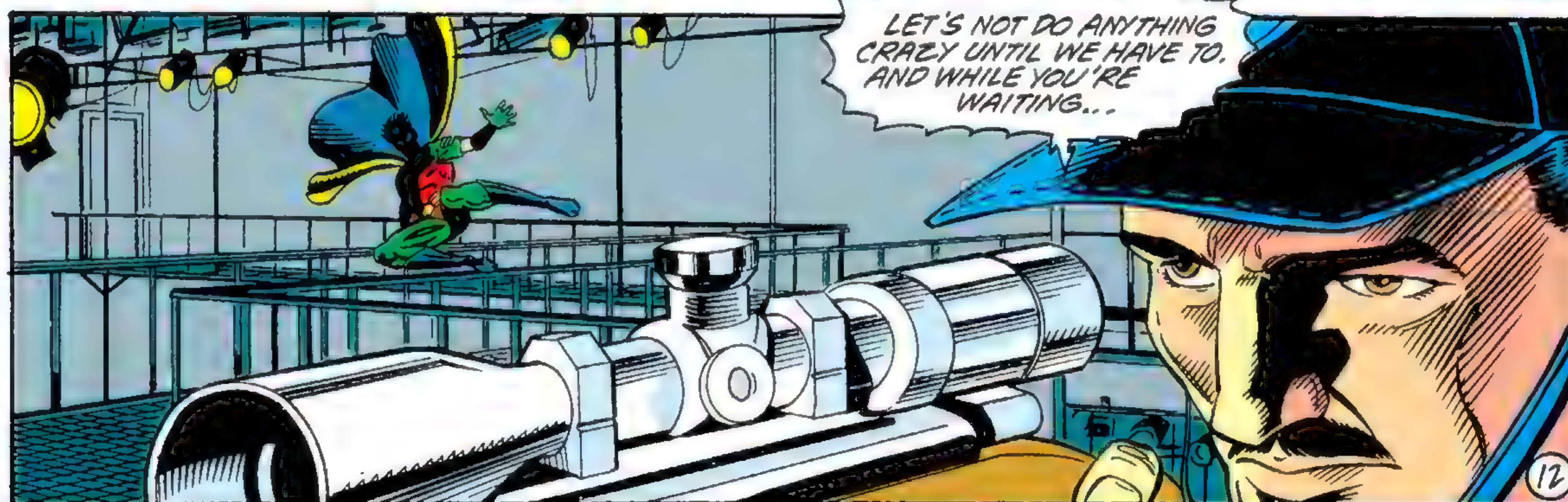
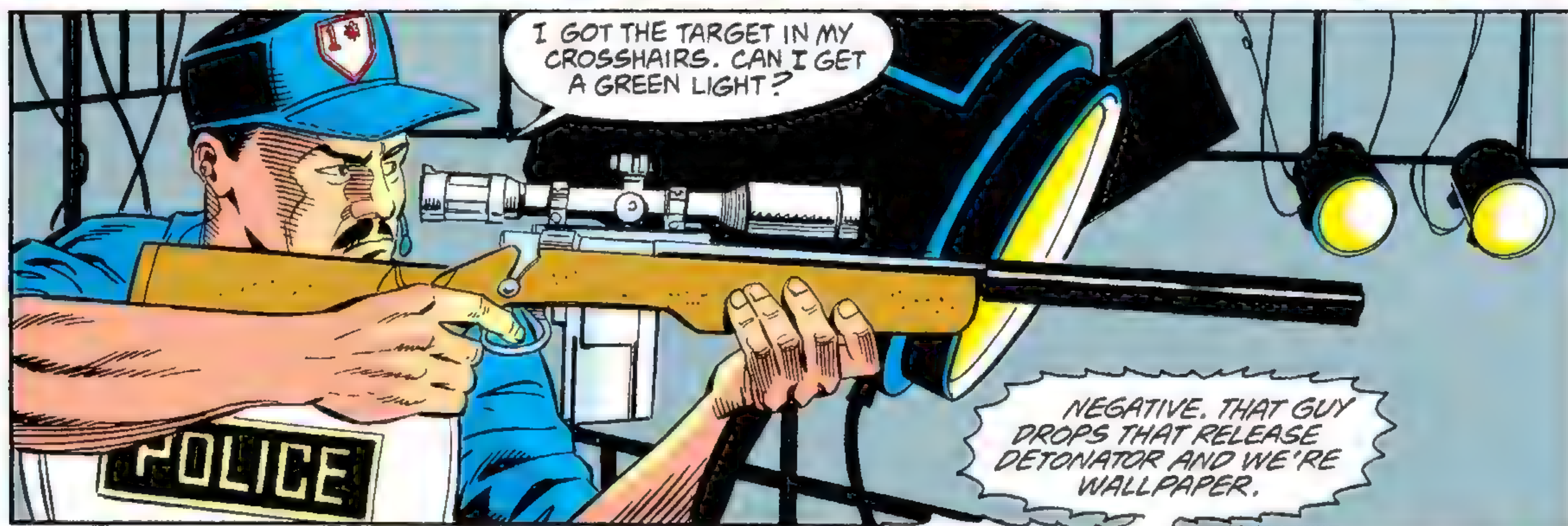
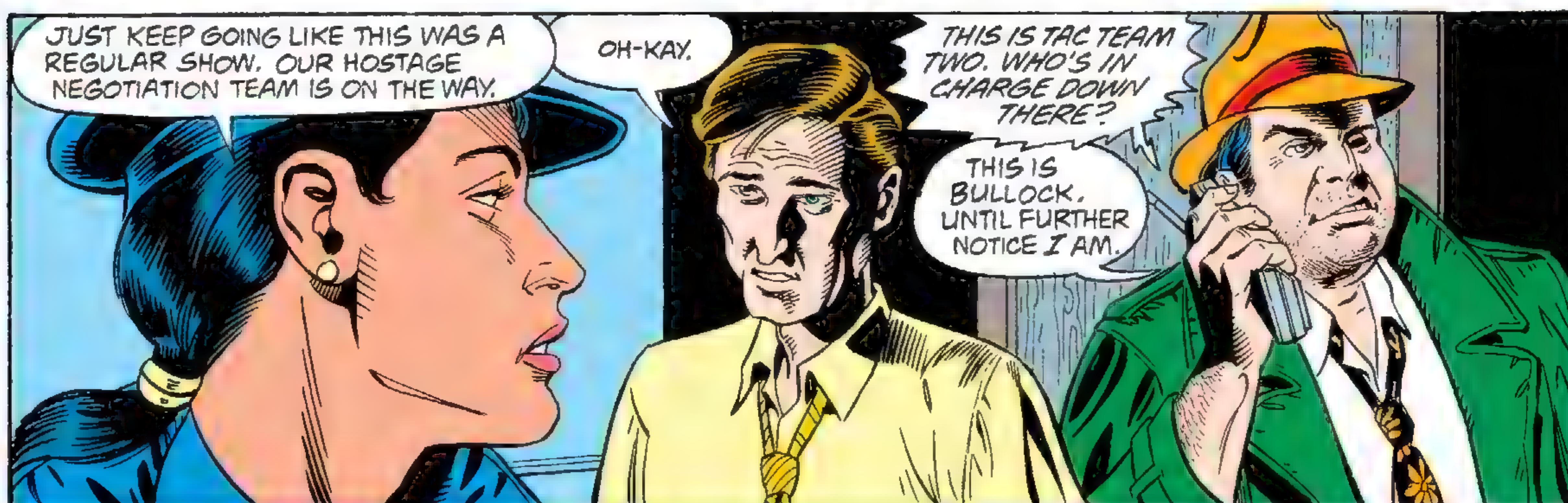
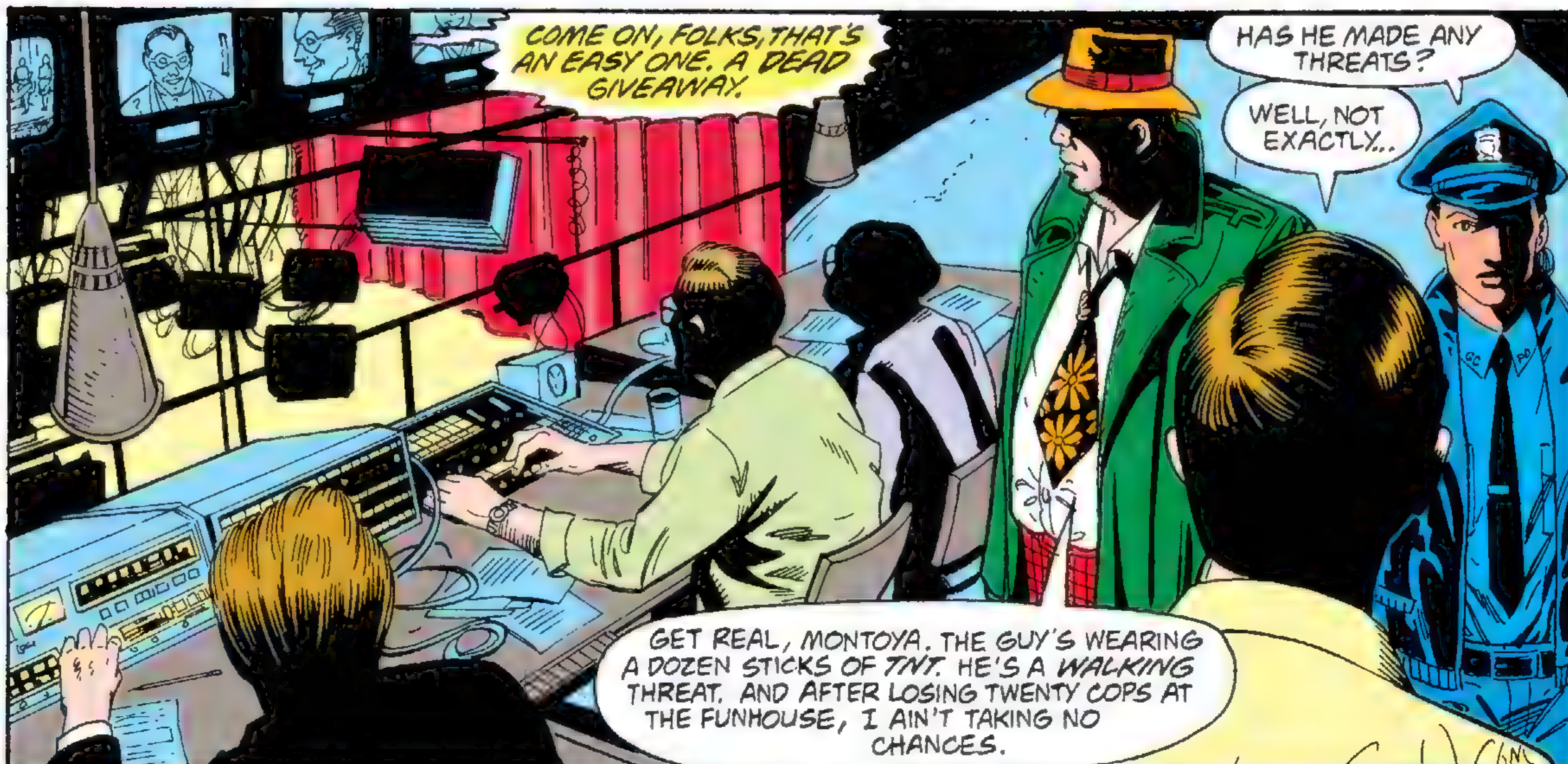
DON'T HAVE
ANY TO SPARE.

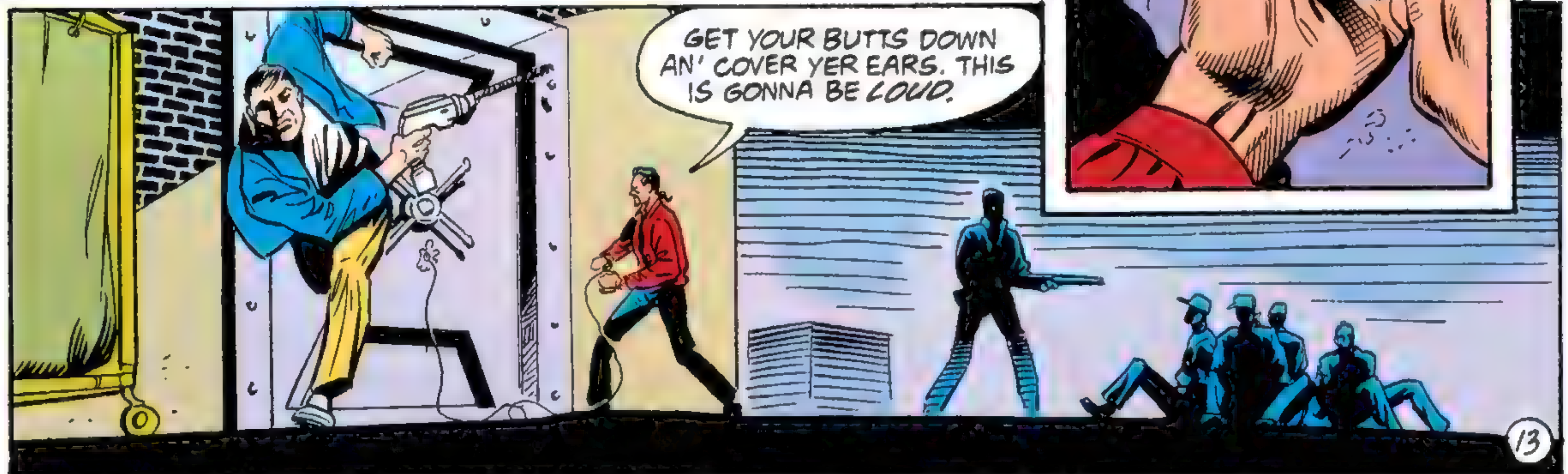
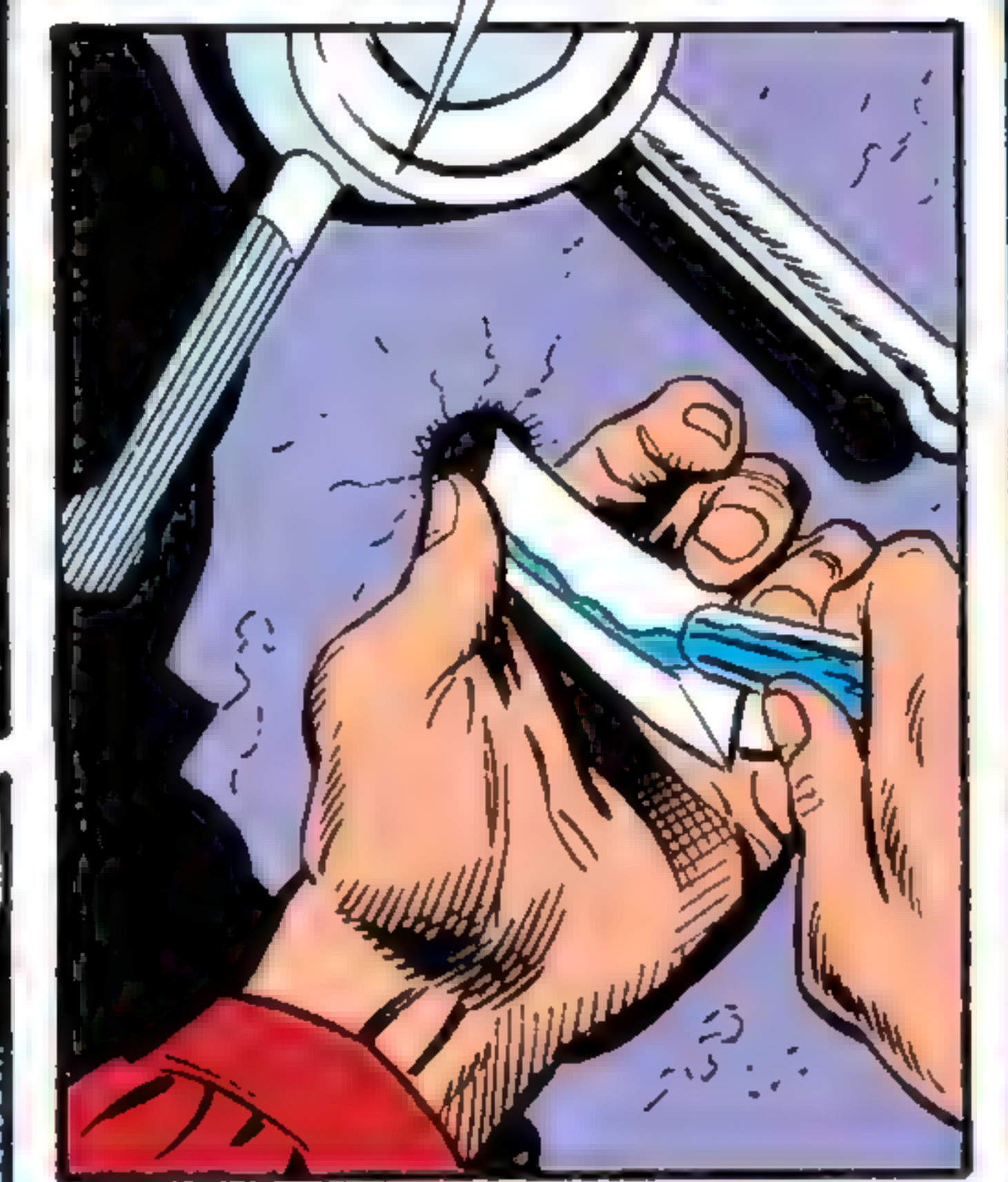
HAVE TO TAKE LYNN
BEFORE IT'S ALL GONE.

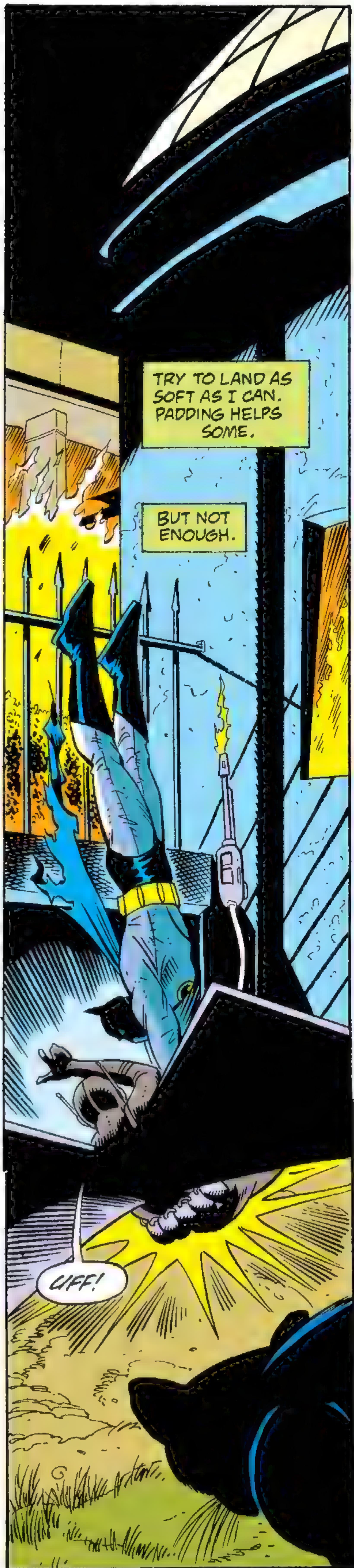


BEFORE ALL
OF GOTHAM
BURNS.





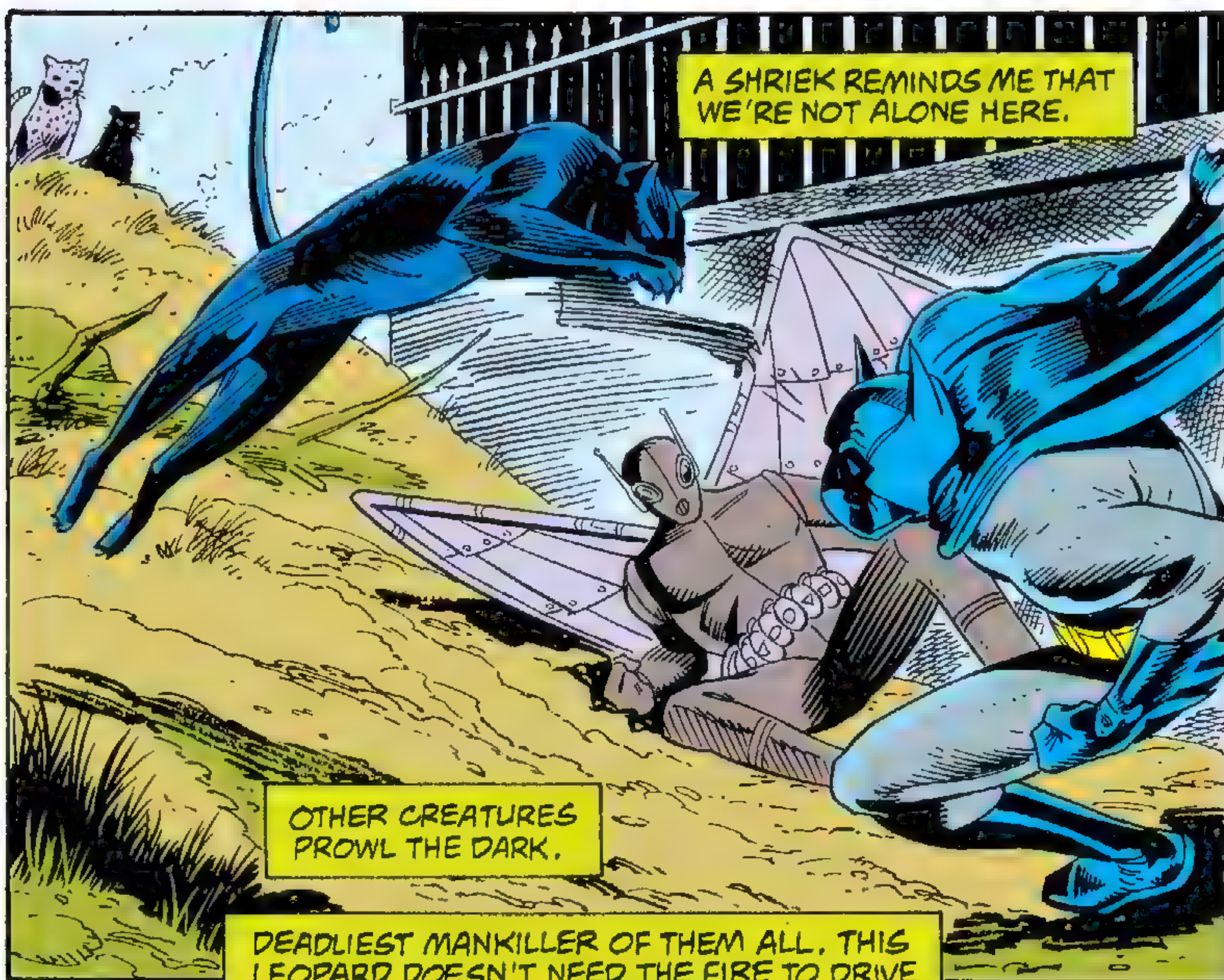




TRY TO LAND AS
SOFT AS I CAN.
PADDING HELPS
SOME.

BUT NOT
ENOUGH.

CLIFF!



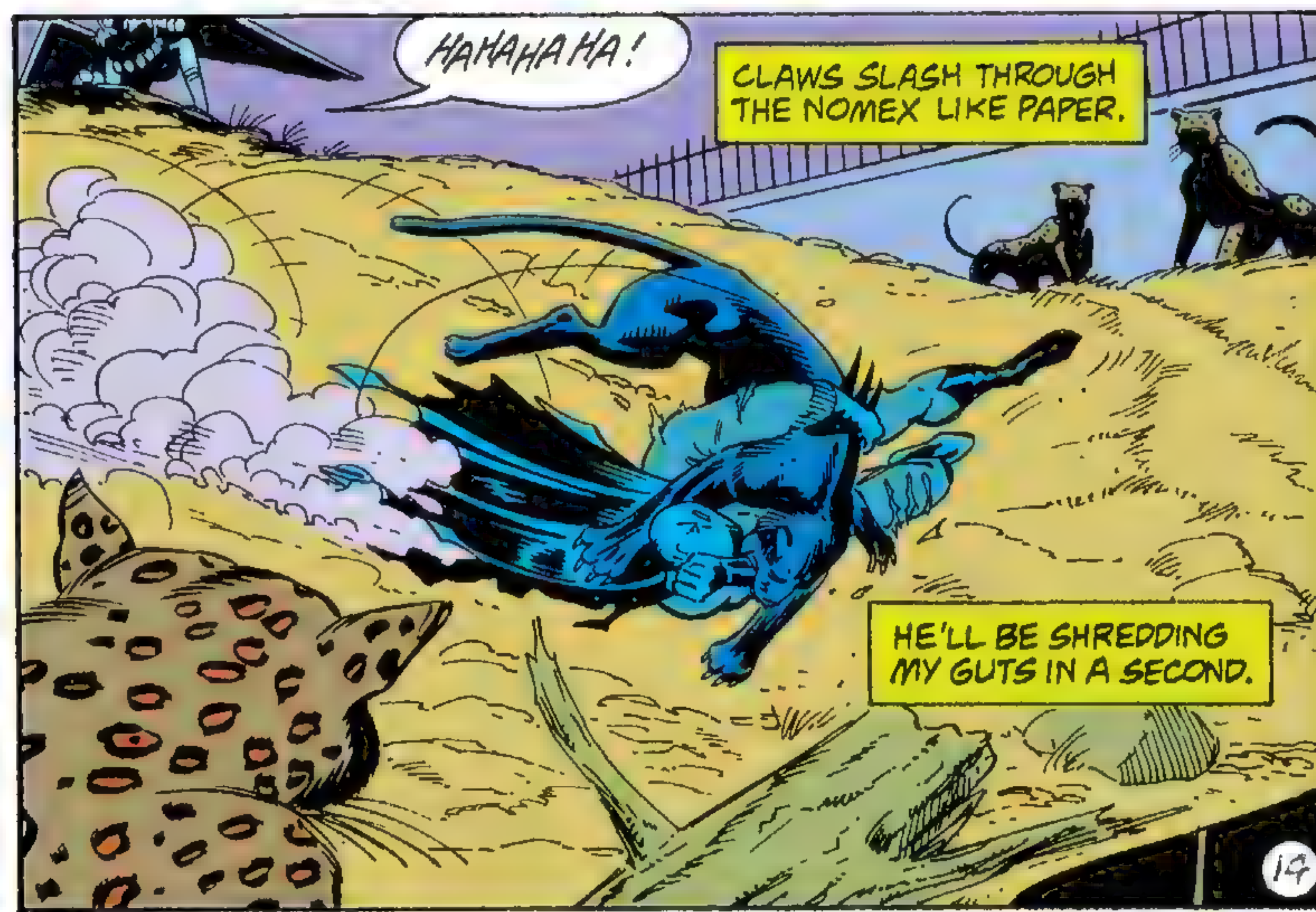
A SHRIEK REMINDS ME THAT
WE'RE NOT ALONE HERE.

OTHER CREATURES
PROWL THE DARK.

DEADLIEST MANKILLER OF THEM ALL. THIS
LEOPARD DOESN'T NEED THE FIRE TO DRIVE
IT TO A KILLING FRENZY.



HELMET SAVES MY
SKULL FROM TWO-
INCH FANGS.



HAHAHA HA!

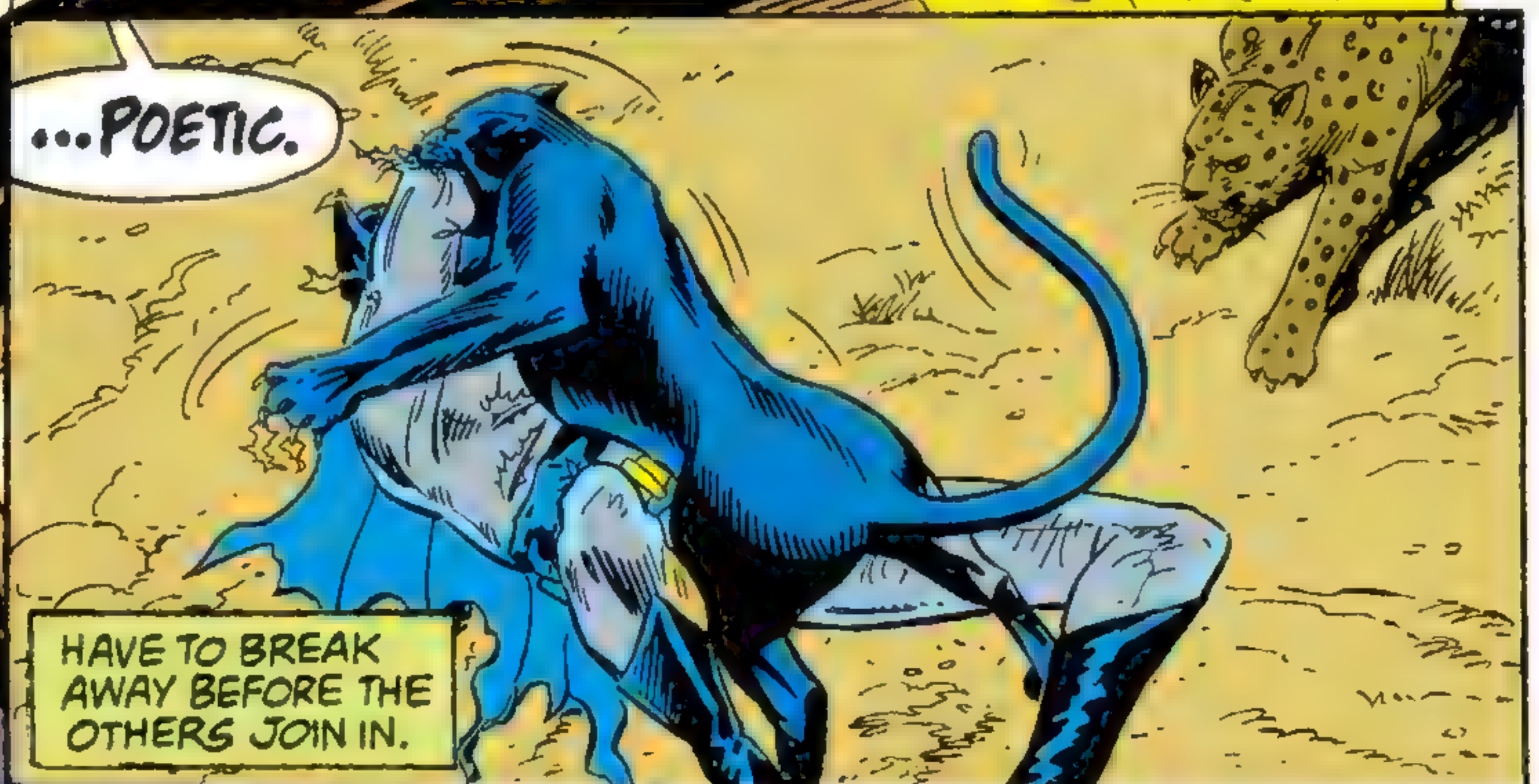
CLAWS SLASH THROUGH
THE NOMEX LIKE PAPER.

HE'LL BE SHREDDING
MY GUTS IN A SECOND.



♪ All the animals in the zoo are jumping up and down on you! ♪

I'D MUCH RATHER YOU'D BURNED, BATMAN. BUT A FLYING RODENT BEING EATEN BY A CAT IS SO MUCH MORE...



...POETIC.

HAVE TO BREAK AWAY BEFORE THE OTHERS JOIN IN.



MEANT THE FIRE RETARDANT OPTION FOR FIREFLY.

KITTY DOESN'T LIKE HALON.



RUN FOR THE FENCE BEFORE THEY RECOVER.

IT'S A MILLION MILES AWAY.

15

FLAMEPROOF
OUTFIT IS
CUMBERSOME.

ADD THAT TO EXHAUSTION
AND INJURIES AND I'M
NOT EXACTLY AT THE TOP
OF MY FORM.

STOP COMPLAINING.

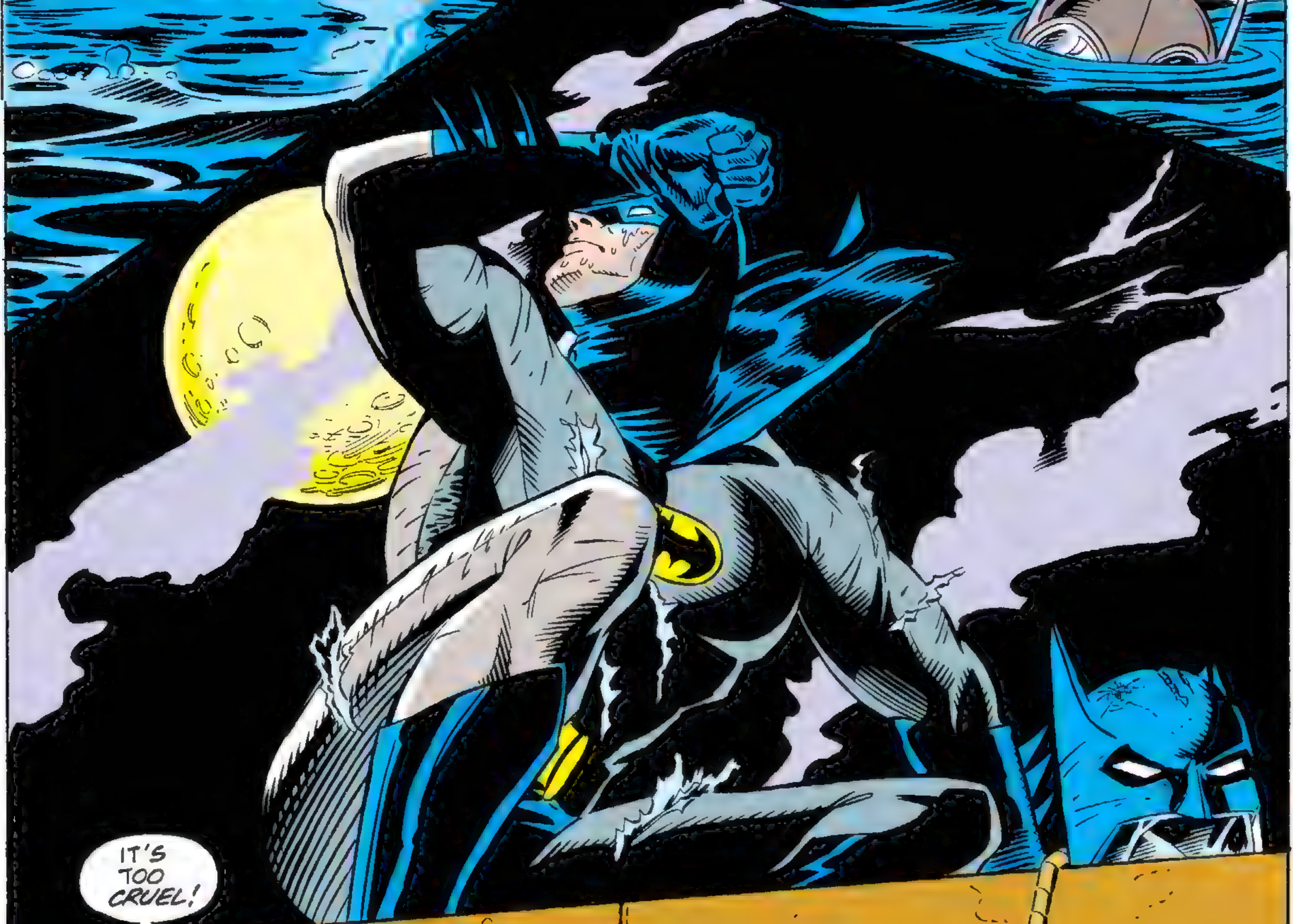
KEEP MOVING.

YOUR PROBLEMS
DON'T MATTER.

YOU DON'T
MATTER.

ONLY
GOTHAM
MATTERS.

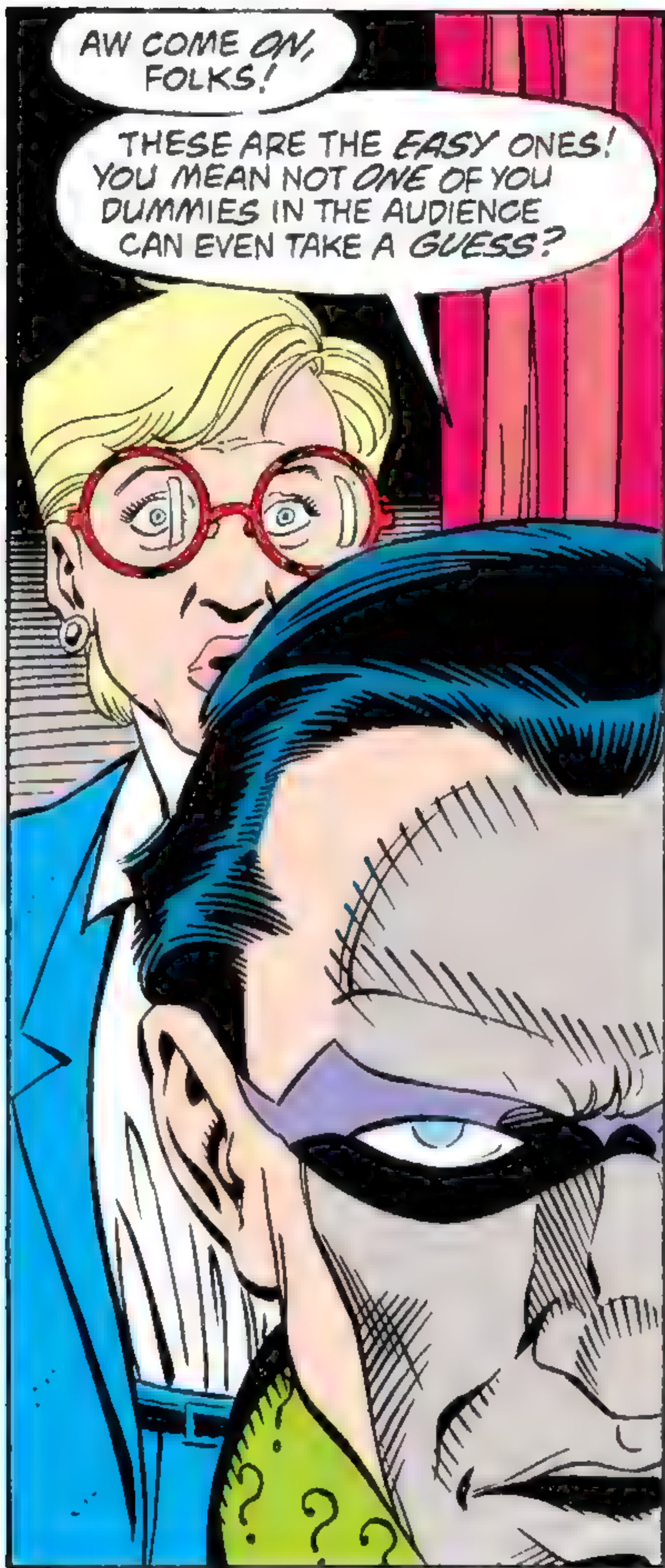
HUH?



IT'S
TOO
CRUEL!

COULDN'T PULL HIM UP
IF I WANTED TO. WANT
TO QUESTION HIM ABOUT
BANE. TOO TIRED.

JUST DON'T
HAVE ANYTHING
LEFT.



AW COME ON, FOLKS!

THESE ARE THE *EASY* ONES! YOU MEAN NOT *ONE* OF YOU DUMMIES IN THE AUDIENCE CAN EVEN TAKE A *GUESS*?



MISS RUDOLPHO, IS THIS THE BEST YOU CAN DO? I HATE TO NITPICK BUT YOUR AUDIENCE MEMBERS ARE SUBMORONS.

I SHOULD HAVE PICKED ANOTHER SHOW TO DEBUT MY CRIME ON. MAYBE ENRICO RIVOLI OR--



UINNH?



WHAH?

JUST SOME FAST-ACTING EPOXY TO KEEP THAT HAND FROM RELAXING.

YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO BOMB IN THE RATINGS, RIGHT?

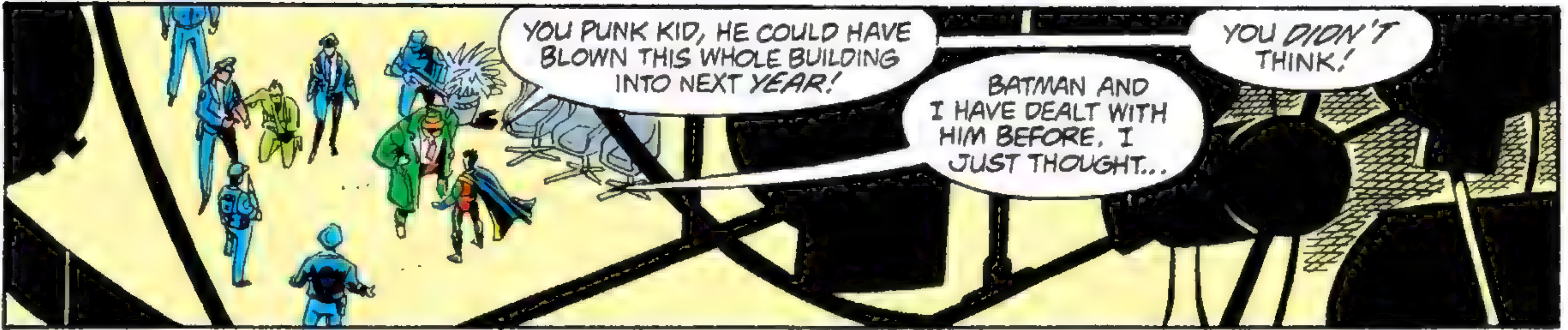


YOU LITTLE...

FREEZE IT RIGHT THERE, RIDDLER.

GET THE BOMB SQUAD IN HERE!

18



YOU PUNK KID, HE COULD HAVE BLOWN THIS WHOLE BUILDING INTO NEXT YEAR!

YOU DIDN'T THINK!

BATMAN AND I HAVE DEALT WITH HIM BEFORE, I JUST THOUGHT...



AND IF I KNOW THE BAT-FREAK LIKE I THINK I DO, HE'LL HAVE A FEW WORDS ON THE SUBJECT HIMSELF.

WE HAD THIS PSYCHO COVERED.

BUT...

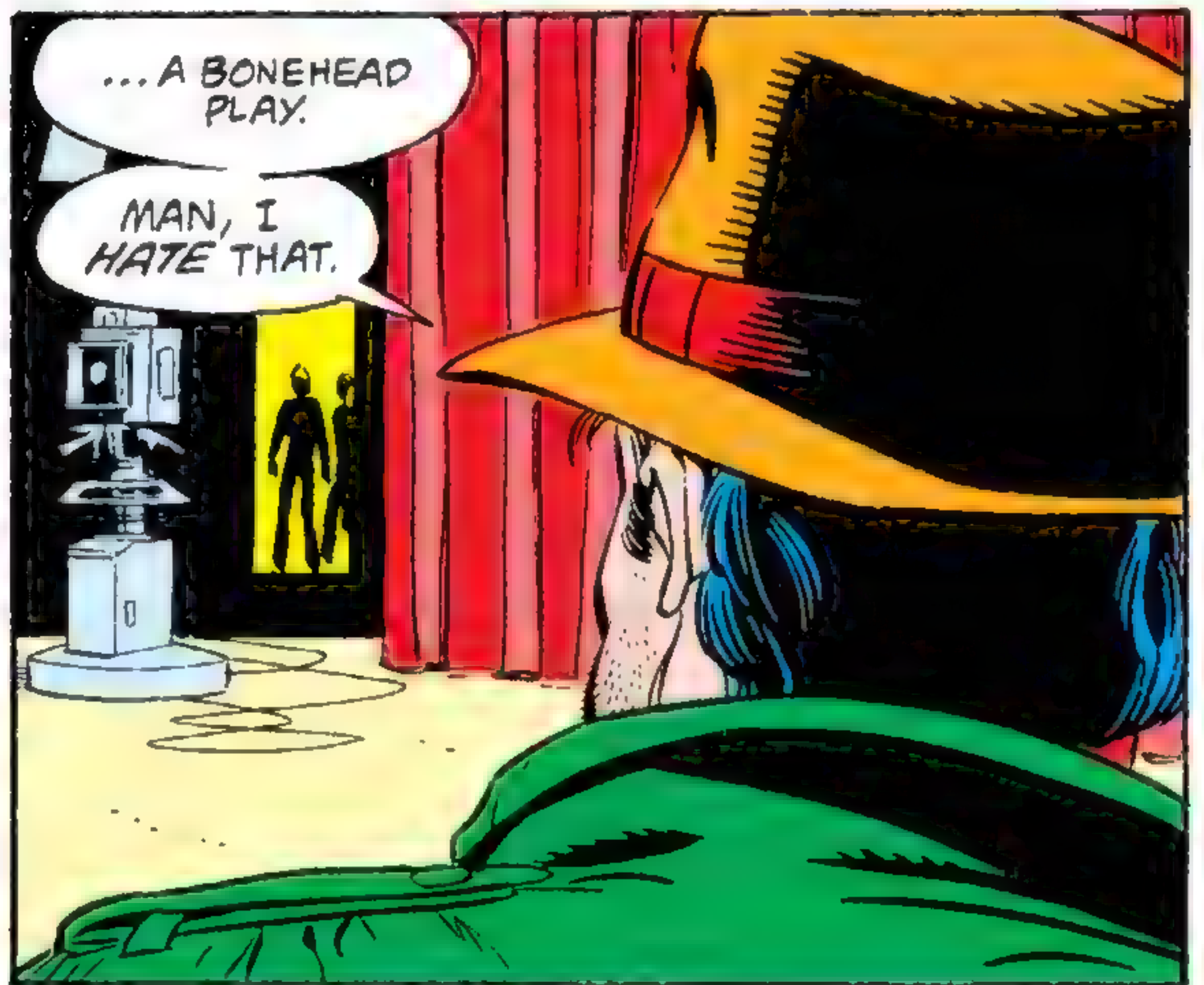
YO, HARV...



THE BOMB'S A FAKE. JUST WOODEN CHAIR RAILS WRAPPED IN ELECTRIC TAPE.

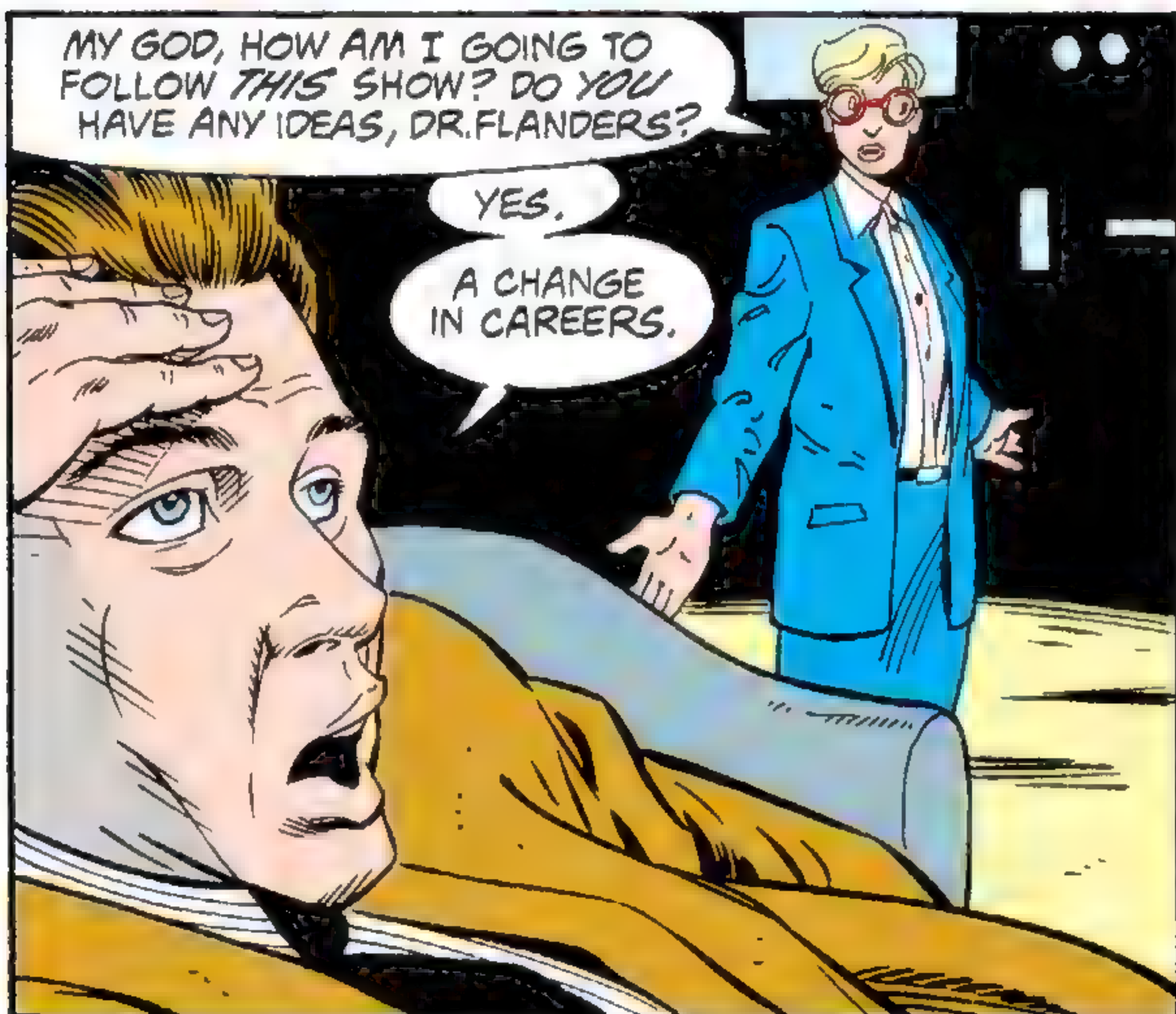
HEY, WATCH THE ARM, OKAY?

THAT DON'T CHANGE A THING, KID. THAT WAS STILL--



... A BONEHEAD PLAY.

MAN, I HATE THAT.



MY GOD, HOW AM I GOING TO FOLLOW THIS SHOW? DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS, DR. FLANDERS?

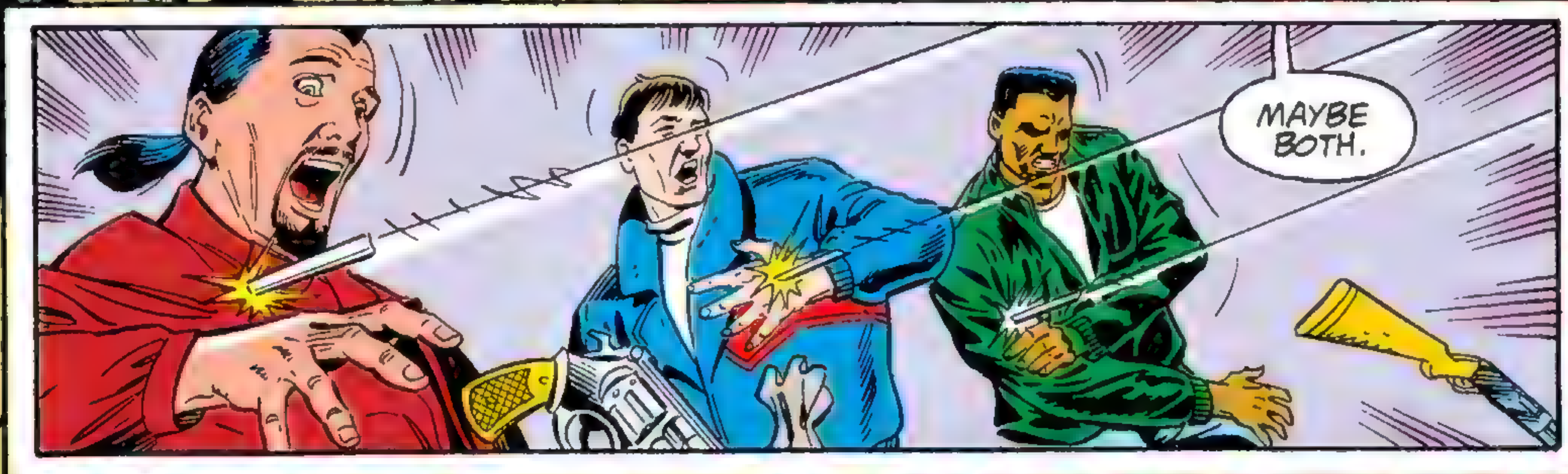
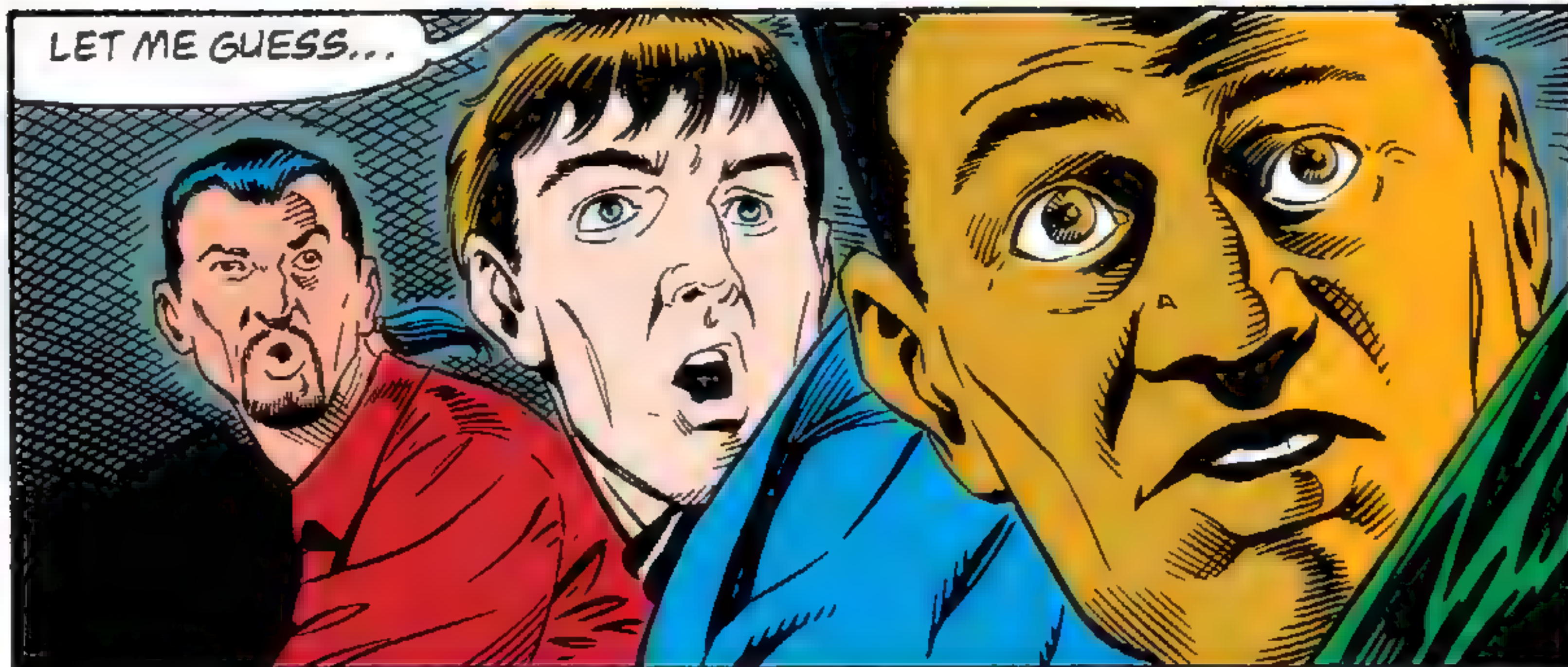
YES.

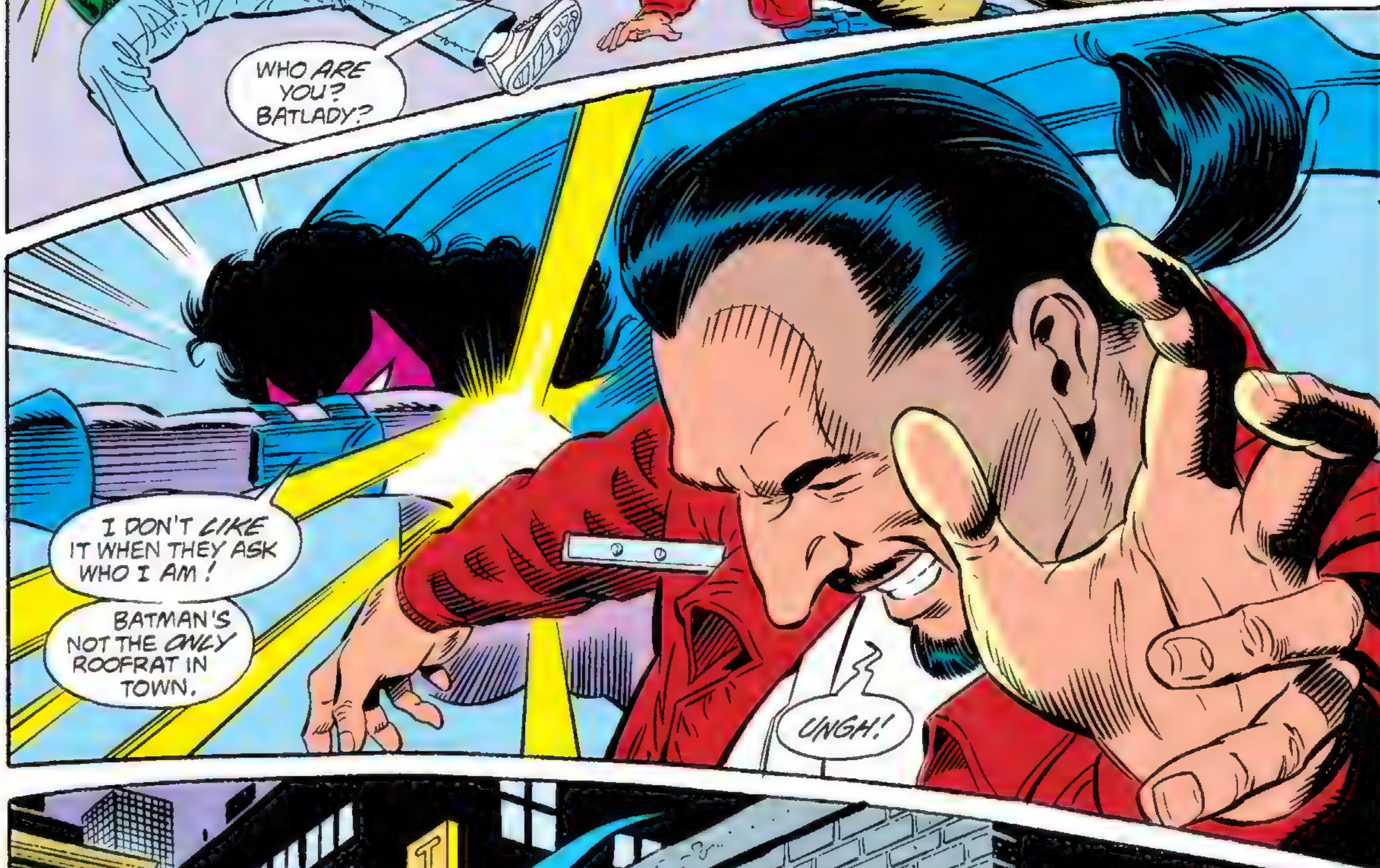
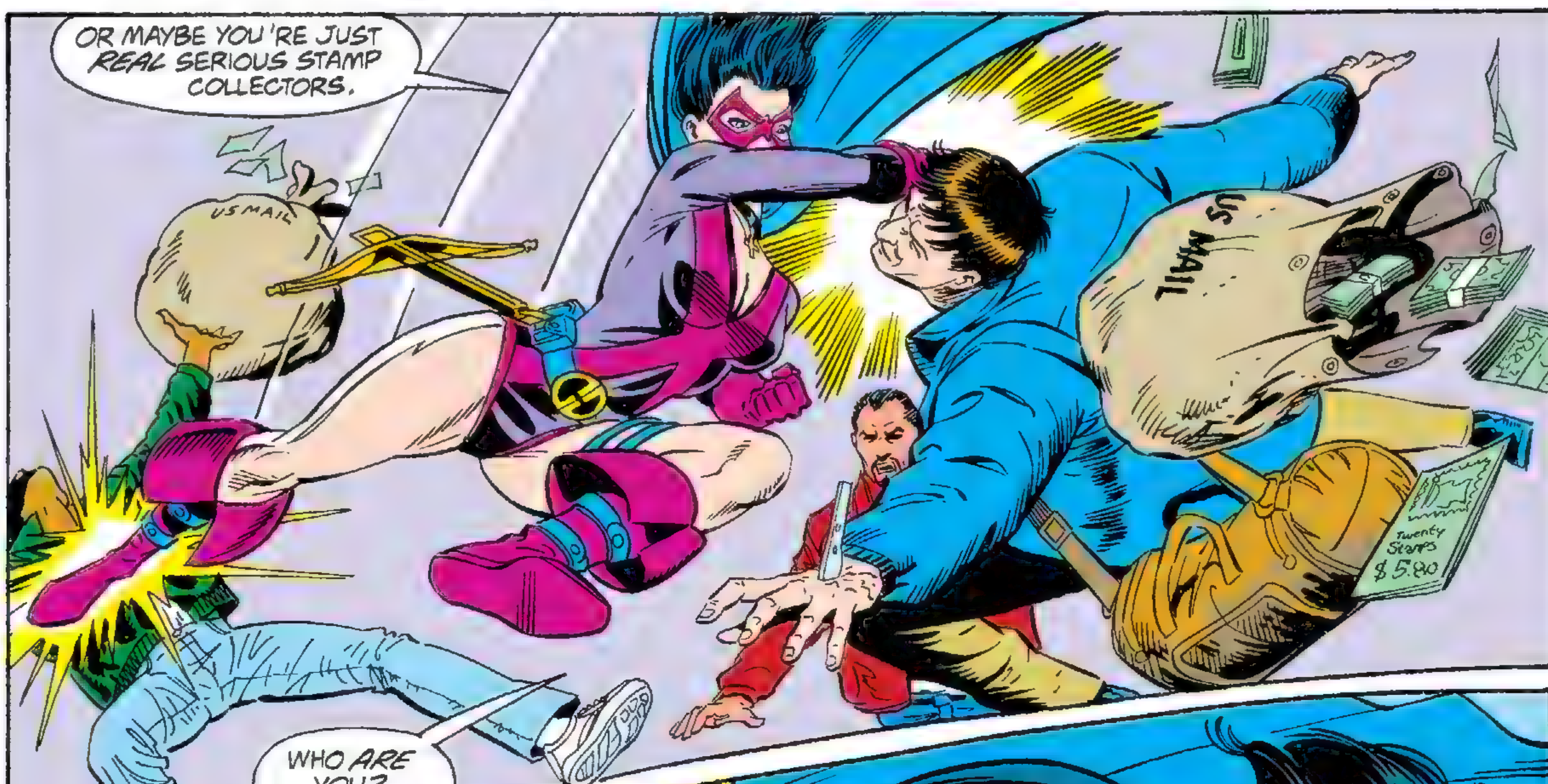
A CHANGE IN CAREERS.



SO WHAT WAS WITH ALL THE CRAZY RIDDLES? WHERE'S THE SCORE YOU'RE PULLING DOWN?

FIGURE IT OUT FOR YOURSELF.





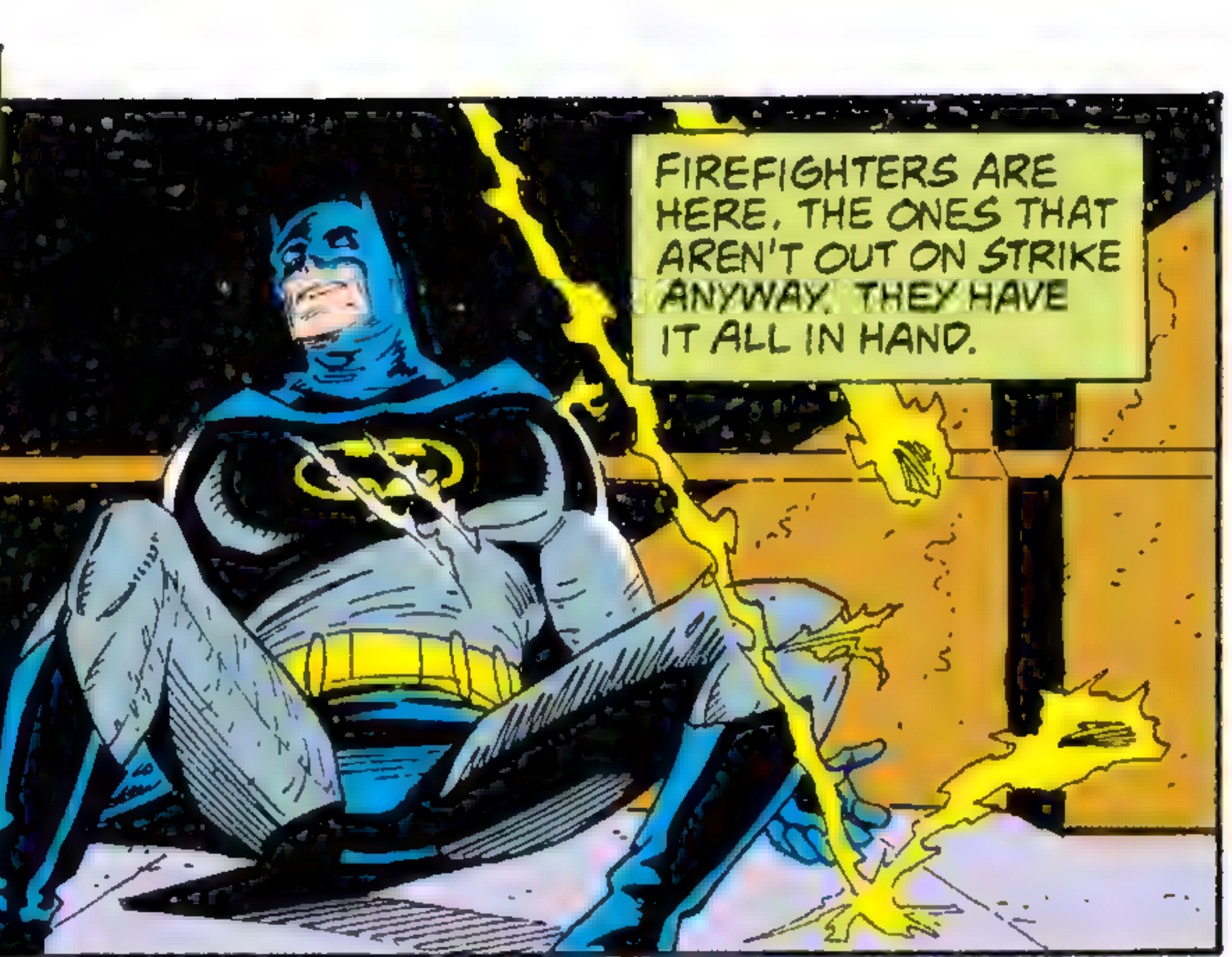


"...HE PROBABLY DOESN'T GET TIRED."

IT'S OVER.



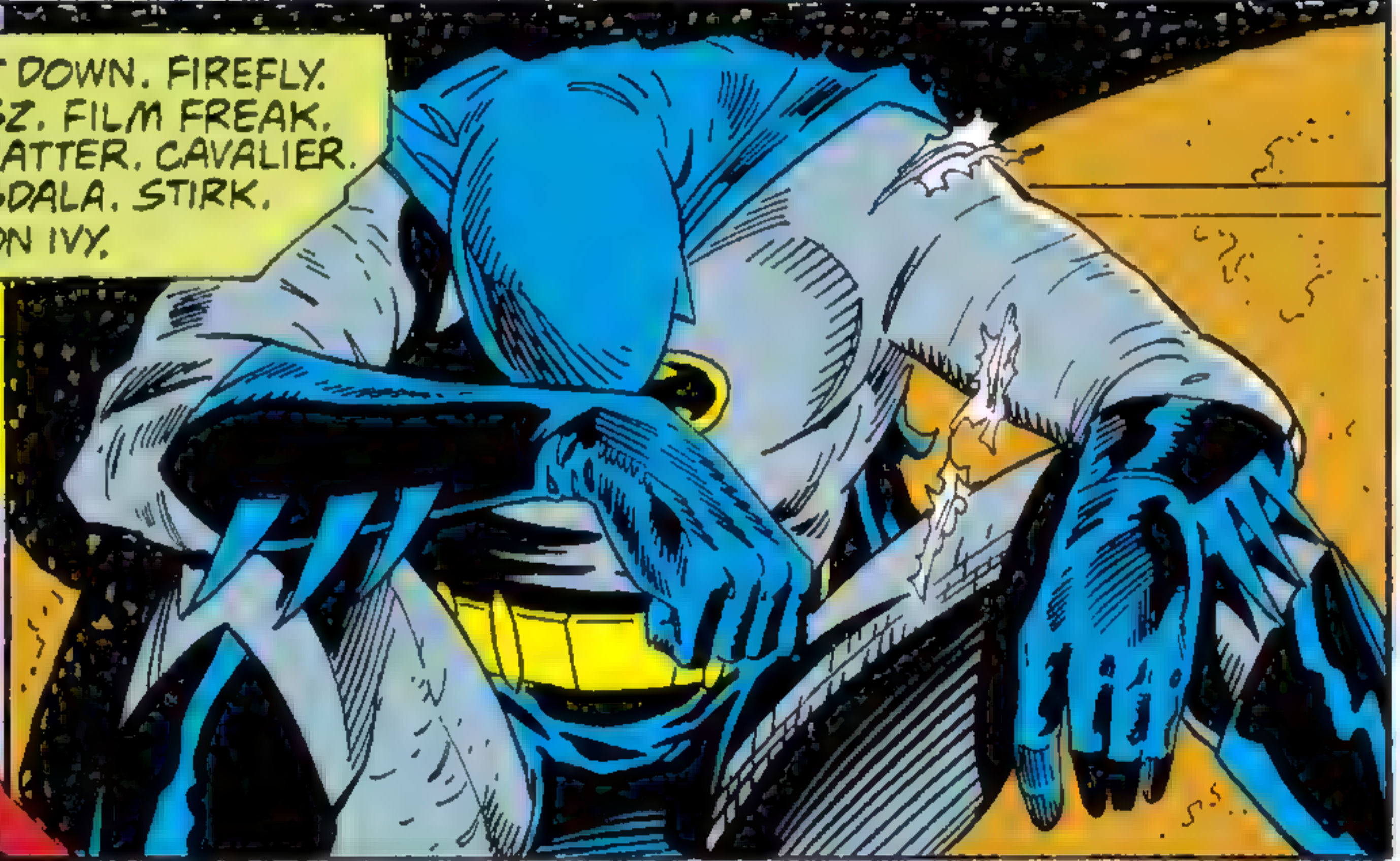
FOR TONIGHT ANYWAY.



FIREFIGHTERS ARE HERE, THE ONES THAT AREN'T OUT ON STRIKE ANYWAY. THEY HAVE IT ALL IN HAND.



MOSTLY SECOND-STRINGERS AND THEY NEARLY TOOK ME OUT.



EIGHT DOWN. FIREFLY. ZSASZ. FILM FREAK. THE HATTER. CAVALIER. AMYGDALA. STIRK. POISON IVY.



THE REALLY DANGEROUS ONES ARE STILL ON THE STREET. SCARECROW. RIDDLER. JOKER.

HOW CAN I STAND AGAINST THEM WHEN I CAN'T EVEN STAND UP?



WHO WILL STAND BETWEEN GOTHAM AND BANE?

Cover art by KELLEY JONES

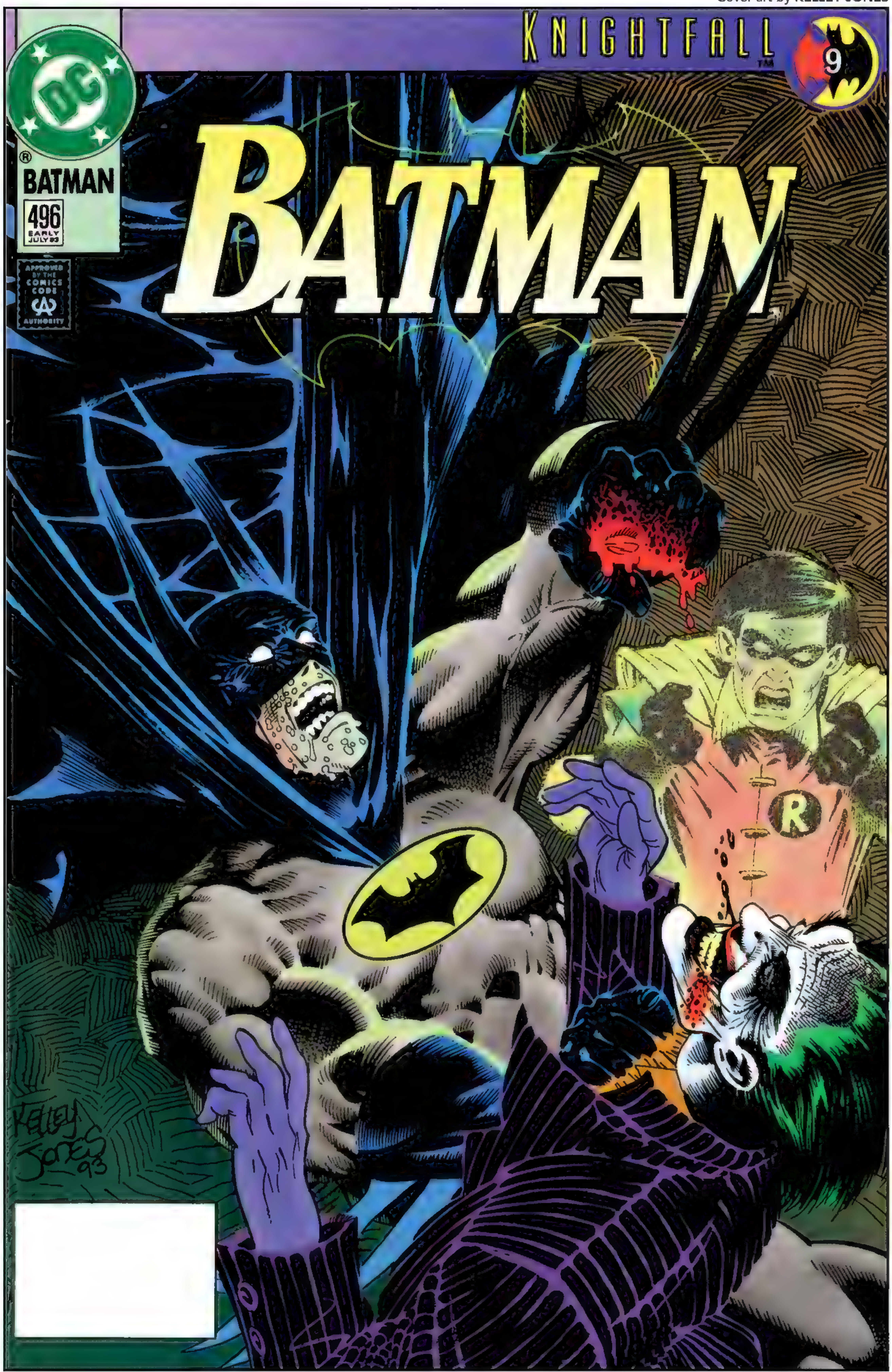

®
BATMAN
496
EARLY JULY 93

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

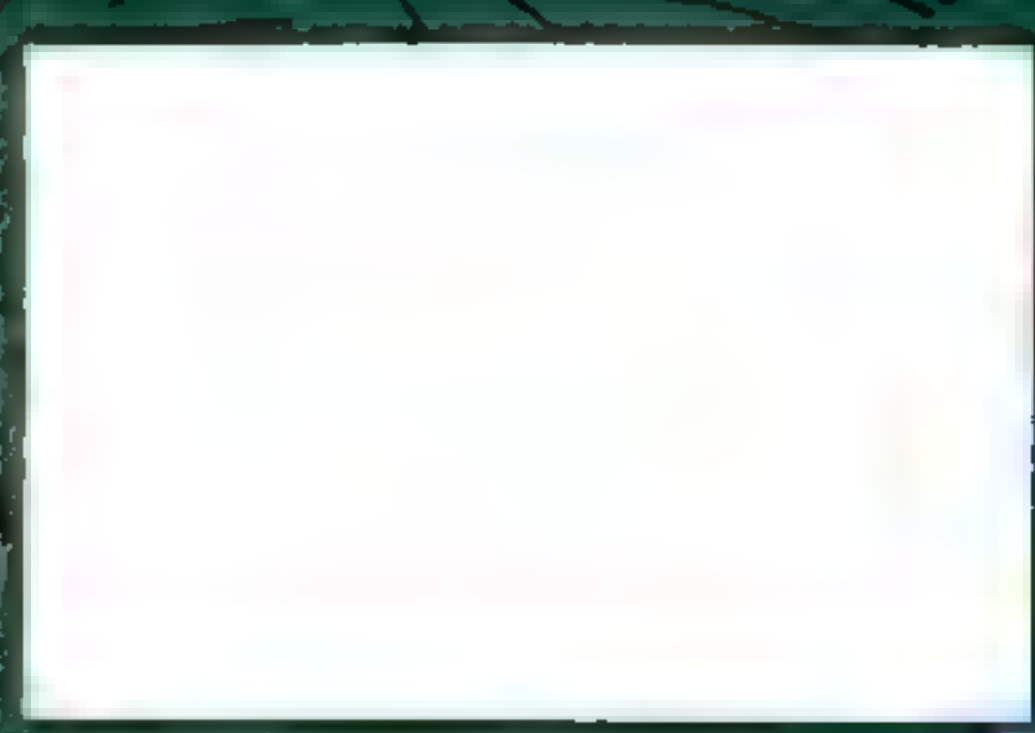
KNIGHTFALL™



BATMAN



KELLEY
JONES
93



DIE LAUGHING

SCORCHED AND
SHREDDED, MAYBE
A BROKEN RIB,
ENERGY SAPPED...
NEVER FELT SO
WEAK, SO FOUL...

... BUT I'M
NOT DEAD
YET...

... AND THE MEDIA
VULTURES CAN FEED ON
SOME COLDER CARCASS.

BATMAN
CREATED BY
**BOB
KANE,**

DOUG MOENCH

WRITER

JIM APARO

PENCILLER

JOSEF RUBINSTEIN

INKER

ADRIENNE ROY

COLORIST

RICHARD STARKINGS

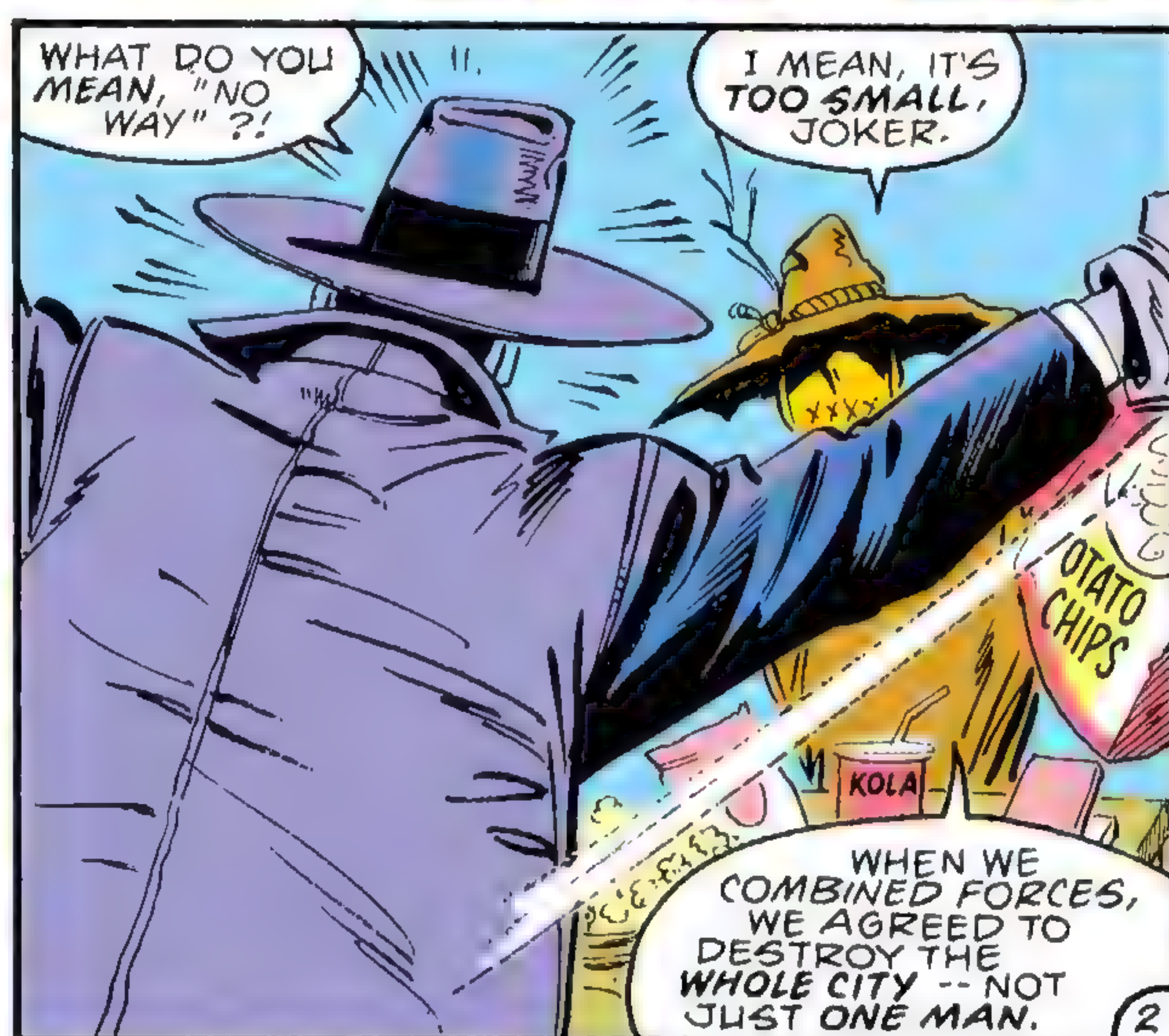
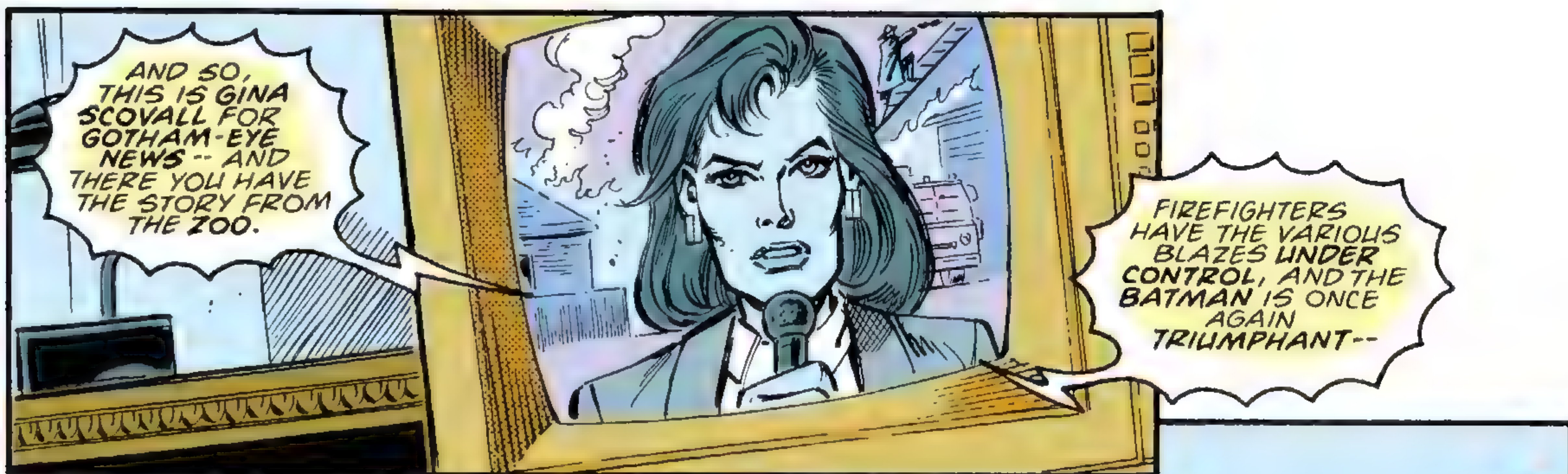
LETTERER

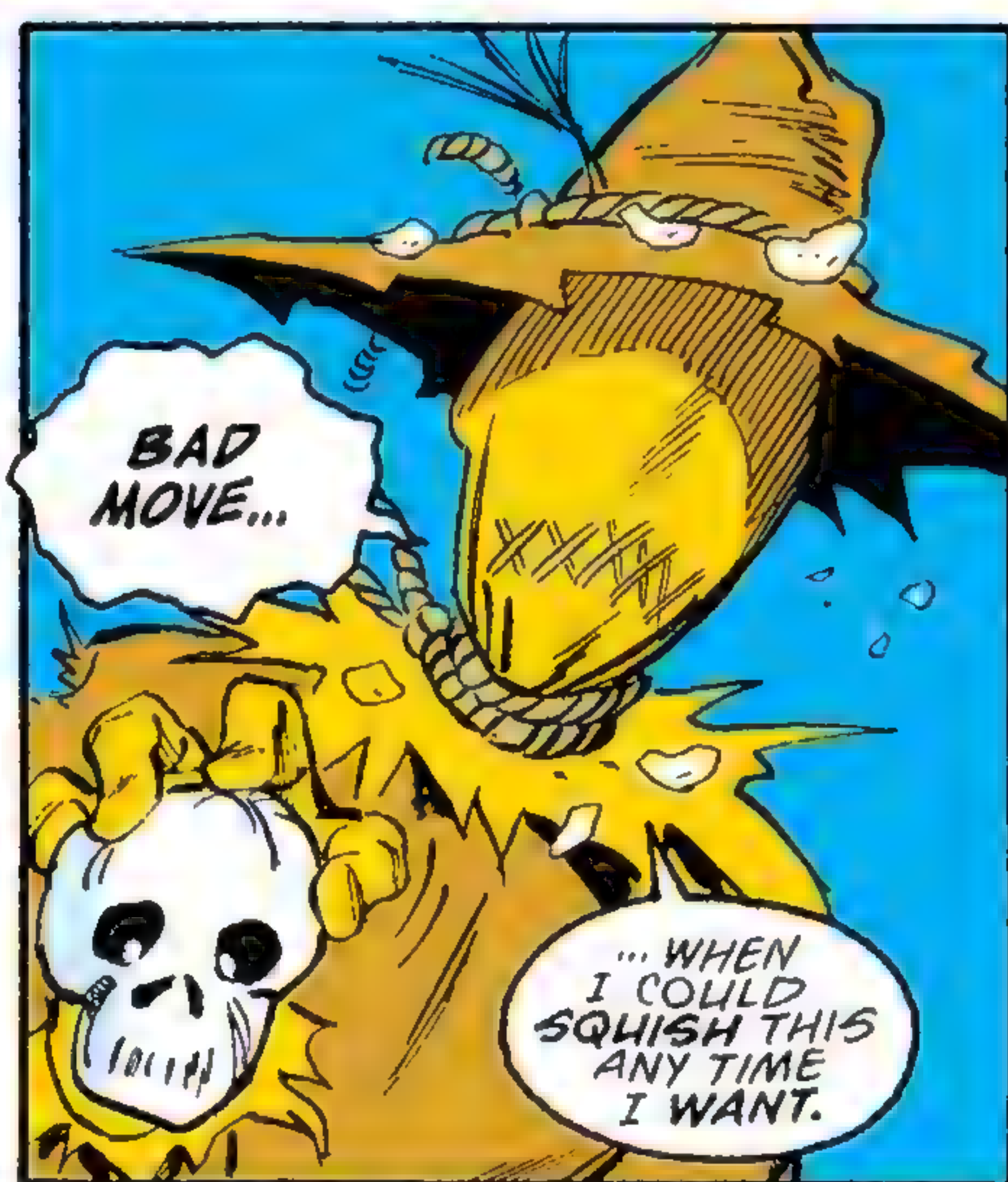
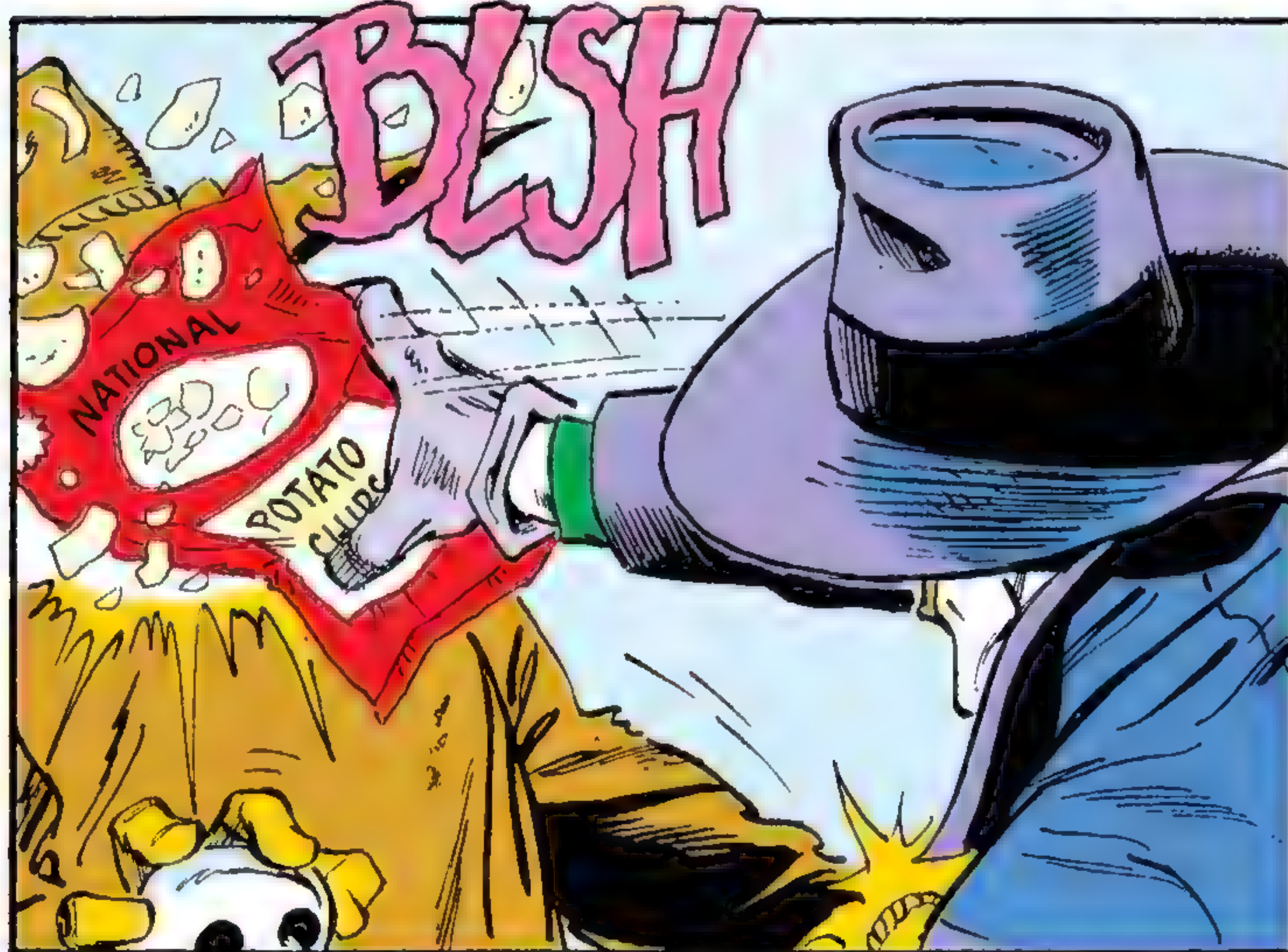
JORDAN B. GORFINKEL

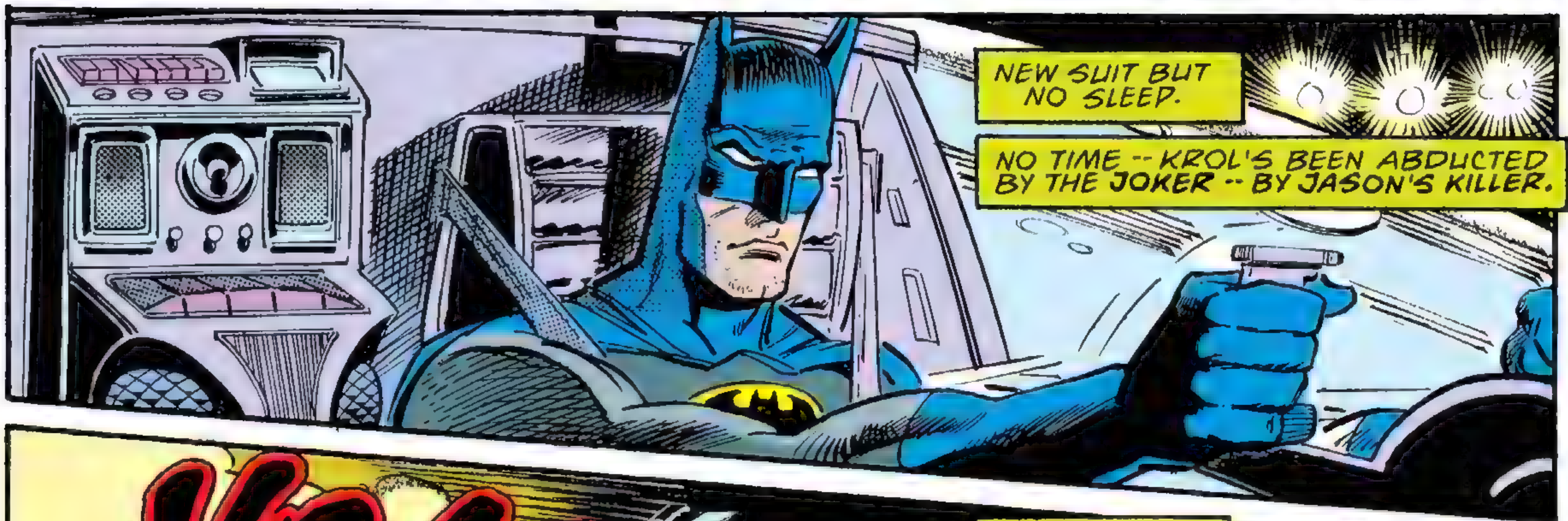
ASSISTANT EDITOR

DENNIS O'NEIL

EDITOR

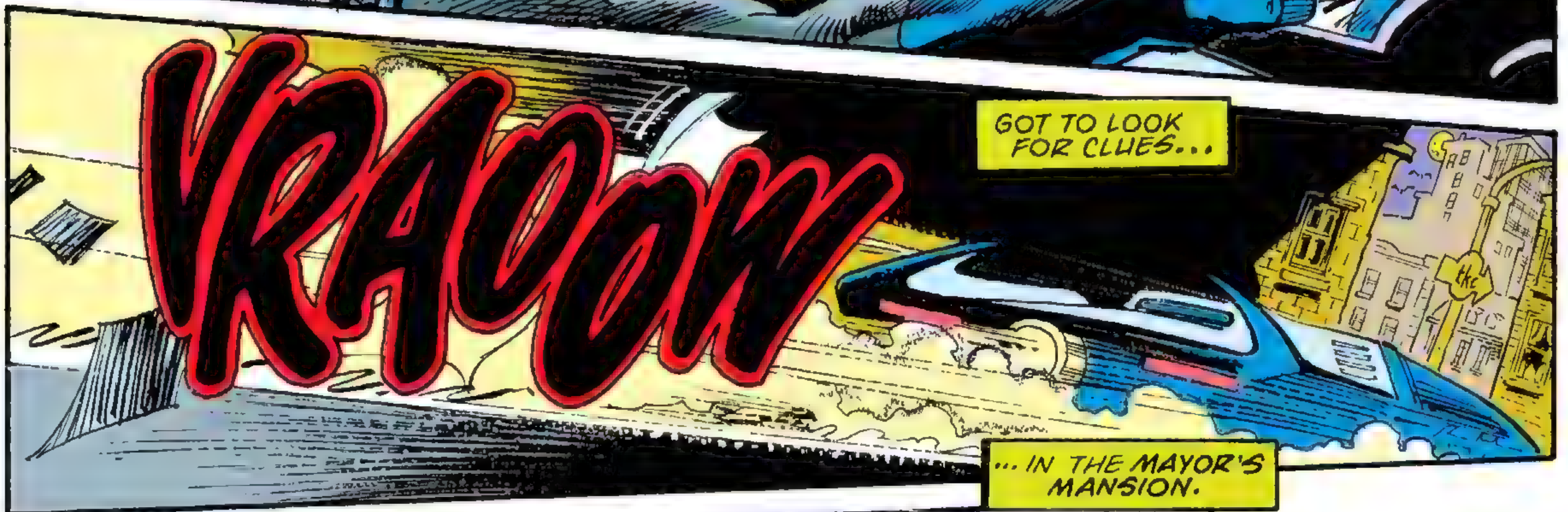






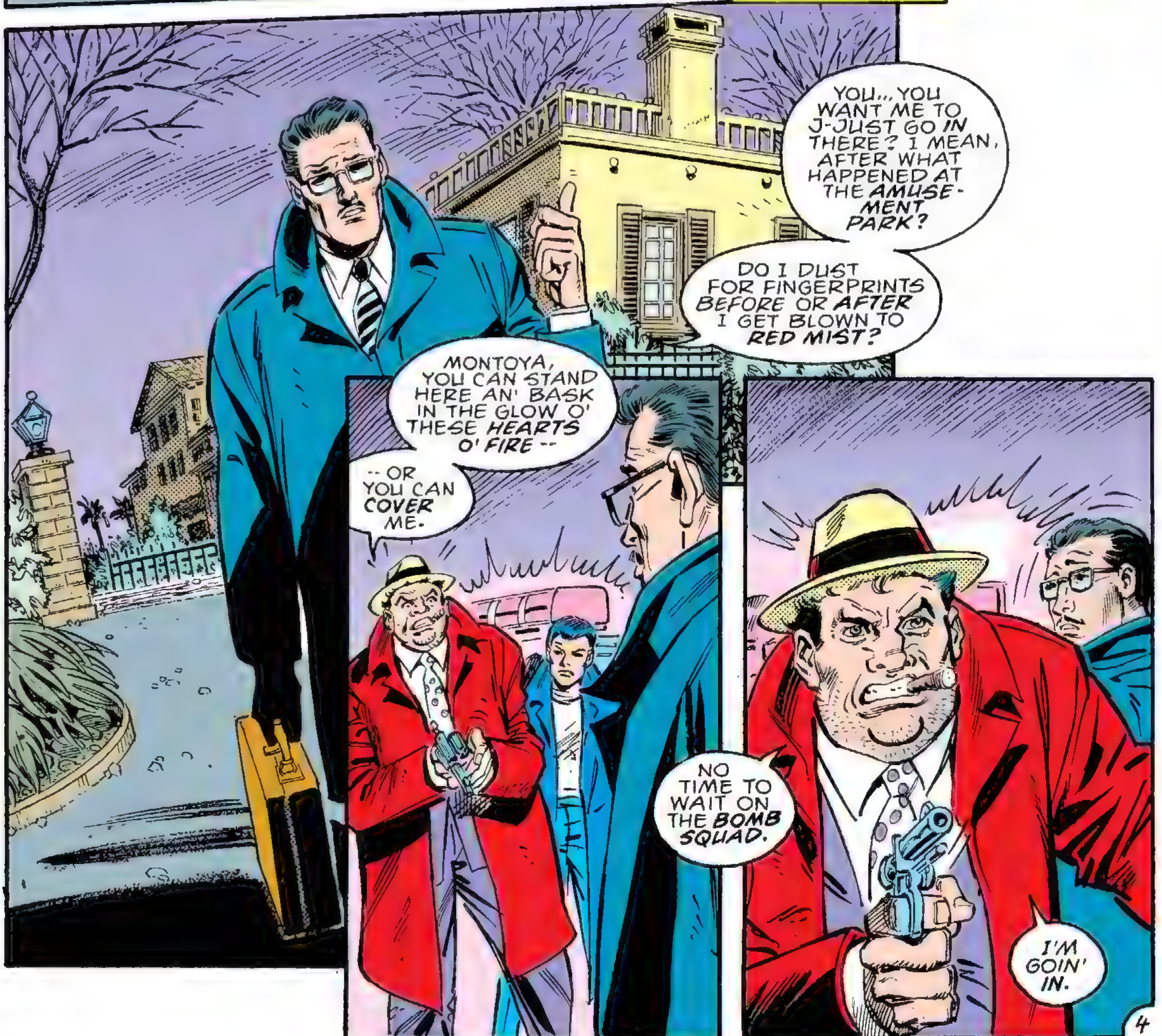
NEW SUIT BUT
NO SLEEP.

NO TIME -- KROL'S BEEN ABDUCTED
BY THE JOKER -- BY JASON'S KILLER.



GOT TO LOOK
FOR CLUES...

... IN THE MAYOR'S
MANSION.



YOU... YOU
WANT ME TO
J-UST GO IN
THERE? I MEAN,
AFTER WHAT
HAPPENED AT
THE AMUSE-
MENT
PARK?

DO I DUST
FOR FINGERPRINTS
BEFORE OR AFTER
I GET BLOWN TO
RED MIST?

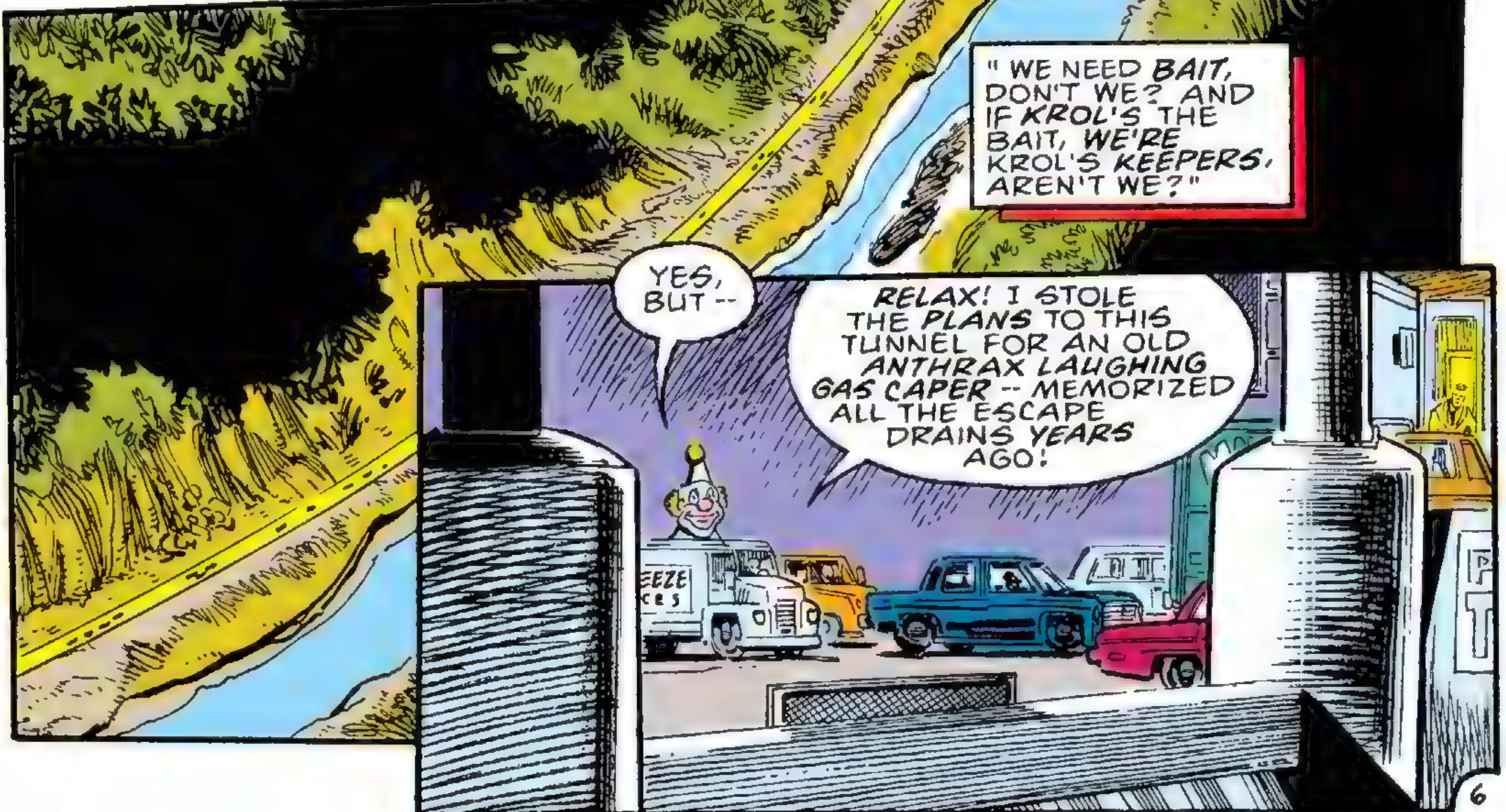
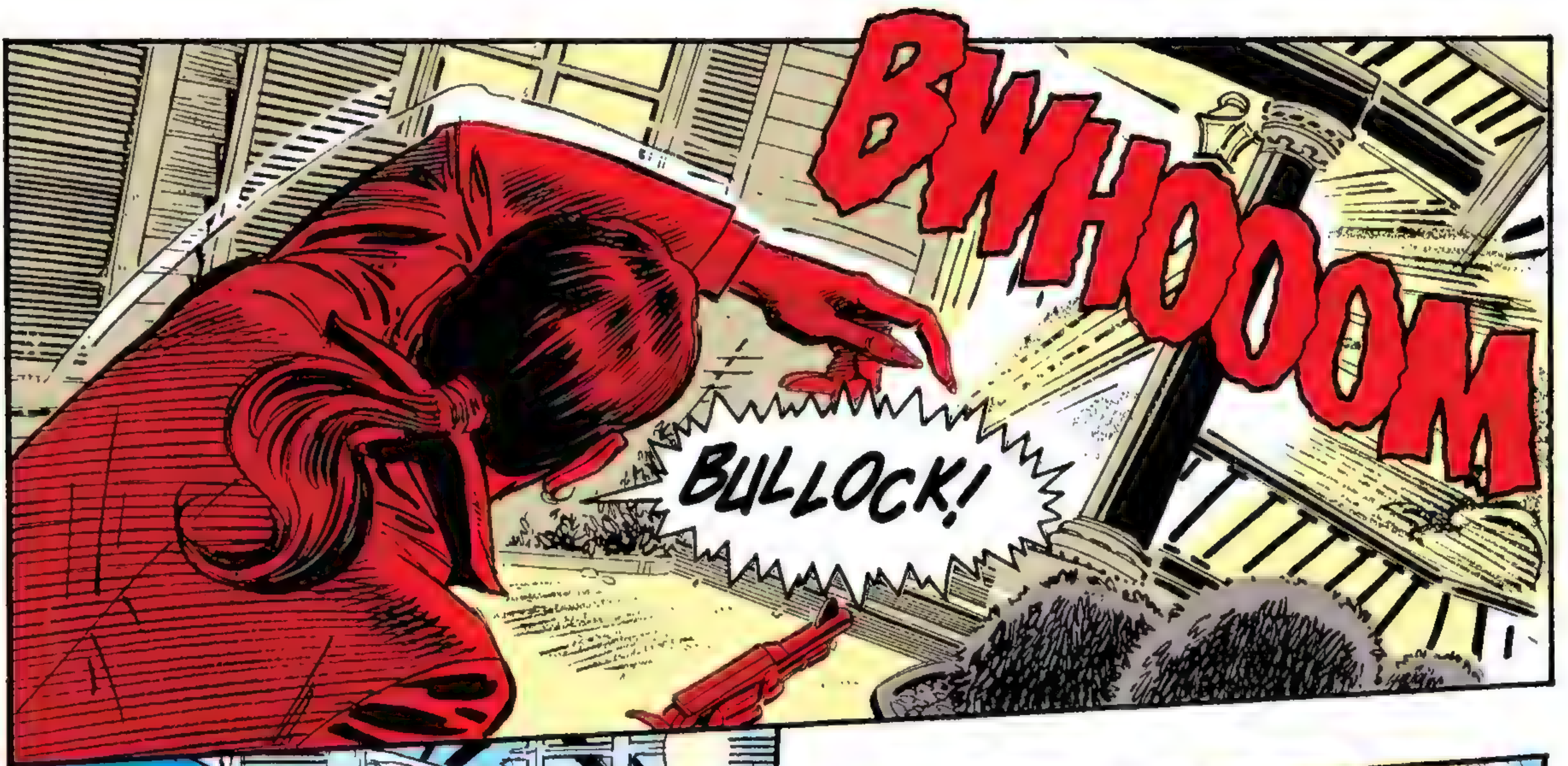
MONTAYA,
YOU CAN STAND
HERE AN' BASK
IN THE GLOW O'
THESE HEARTS
O' FIRE --

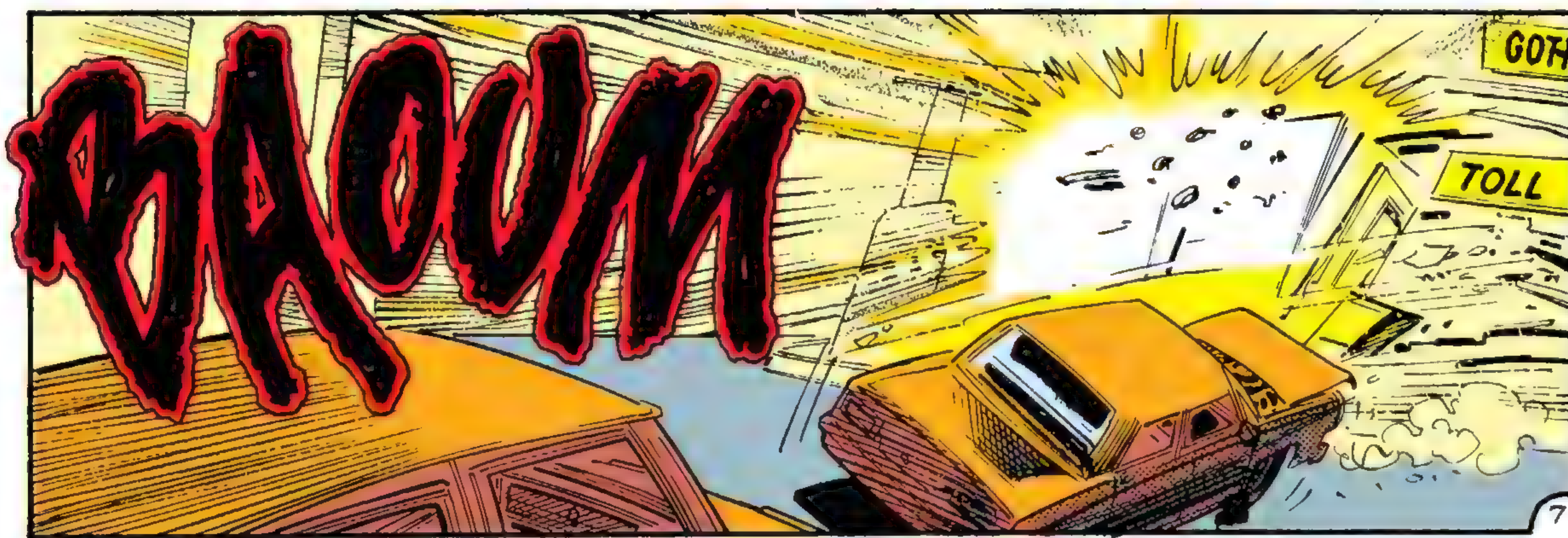
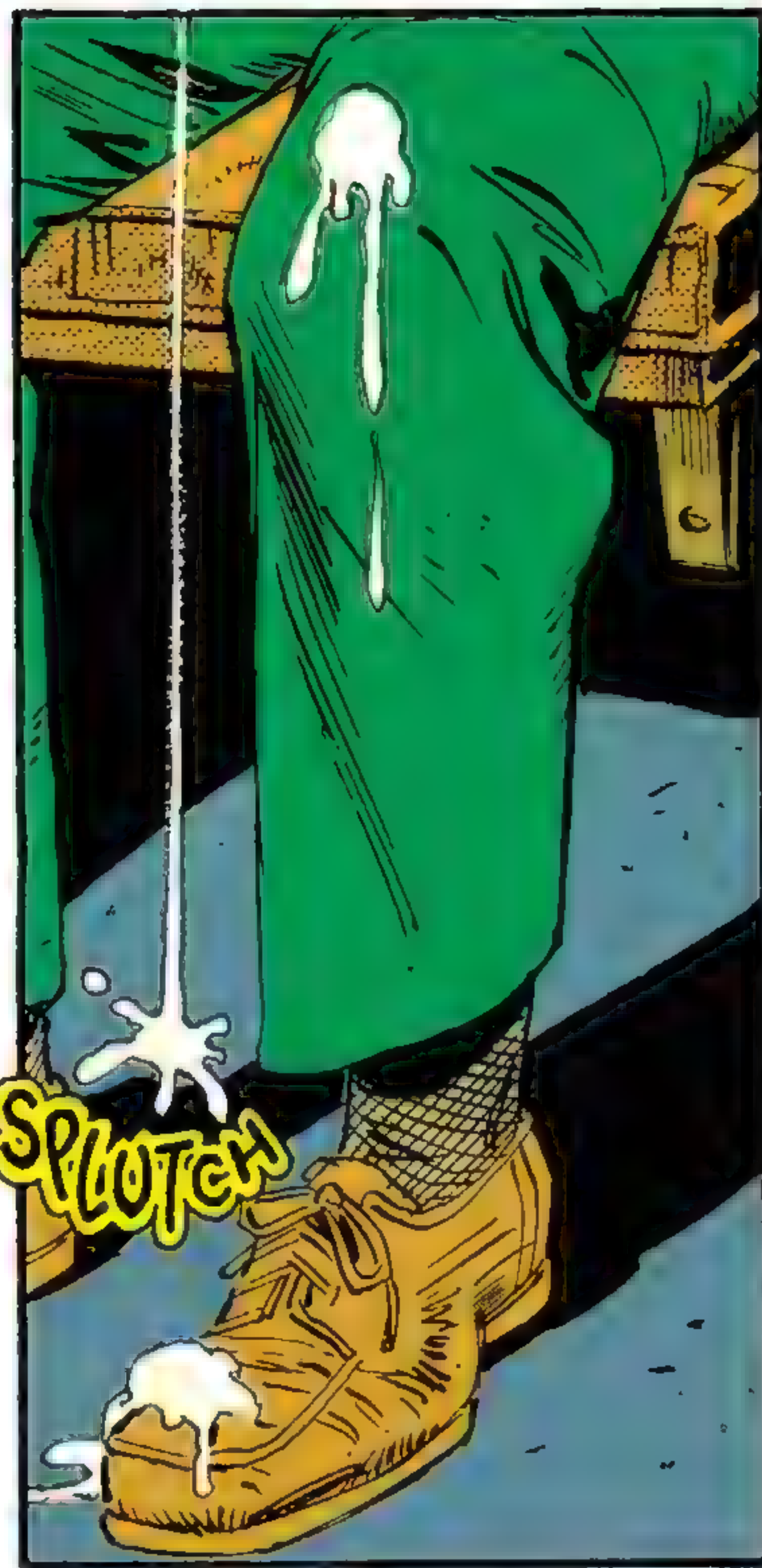
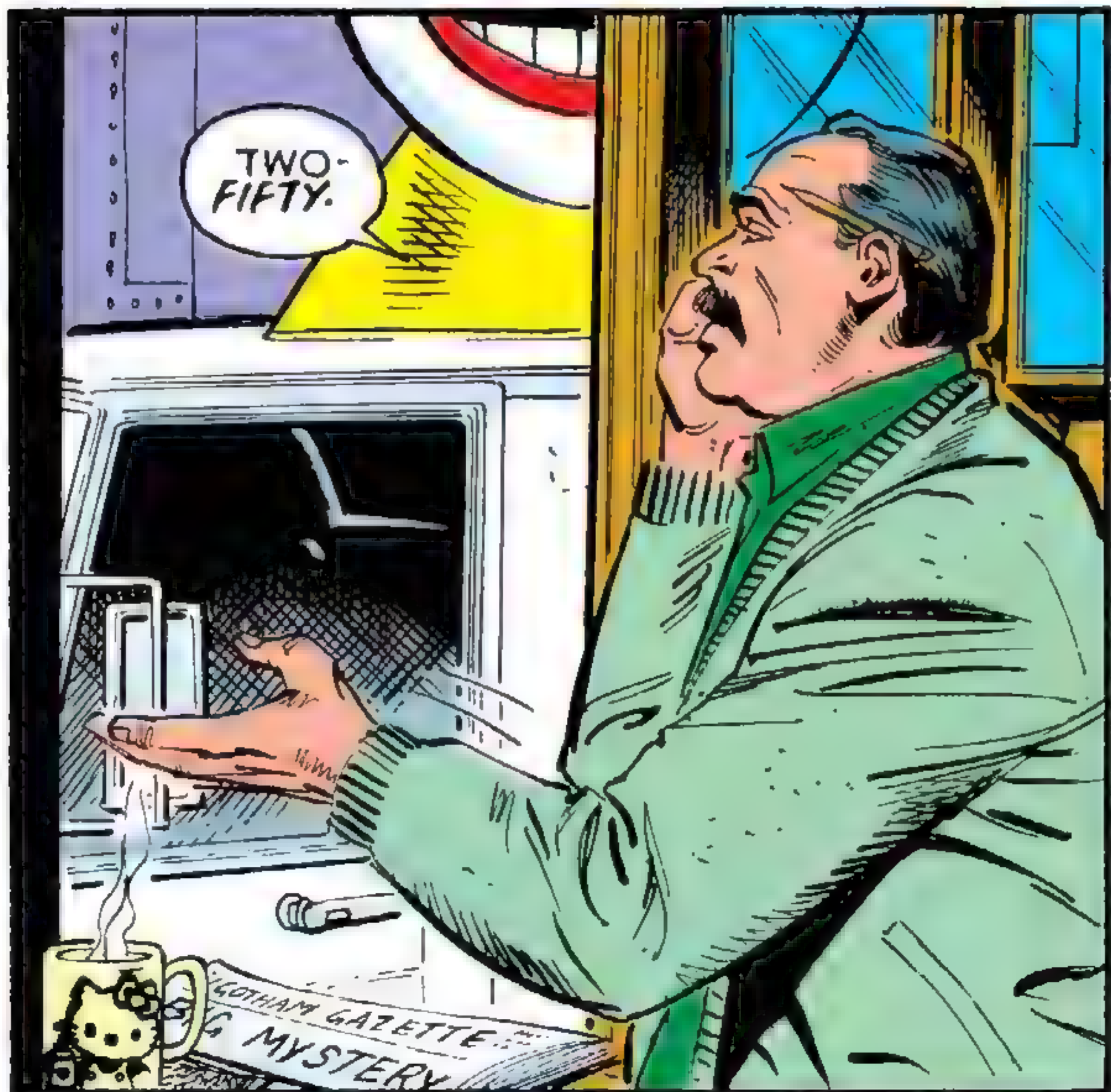
-- OR
YOU CAN
COVER
ME.

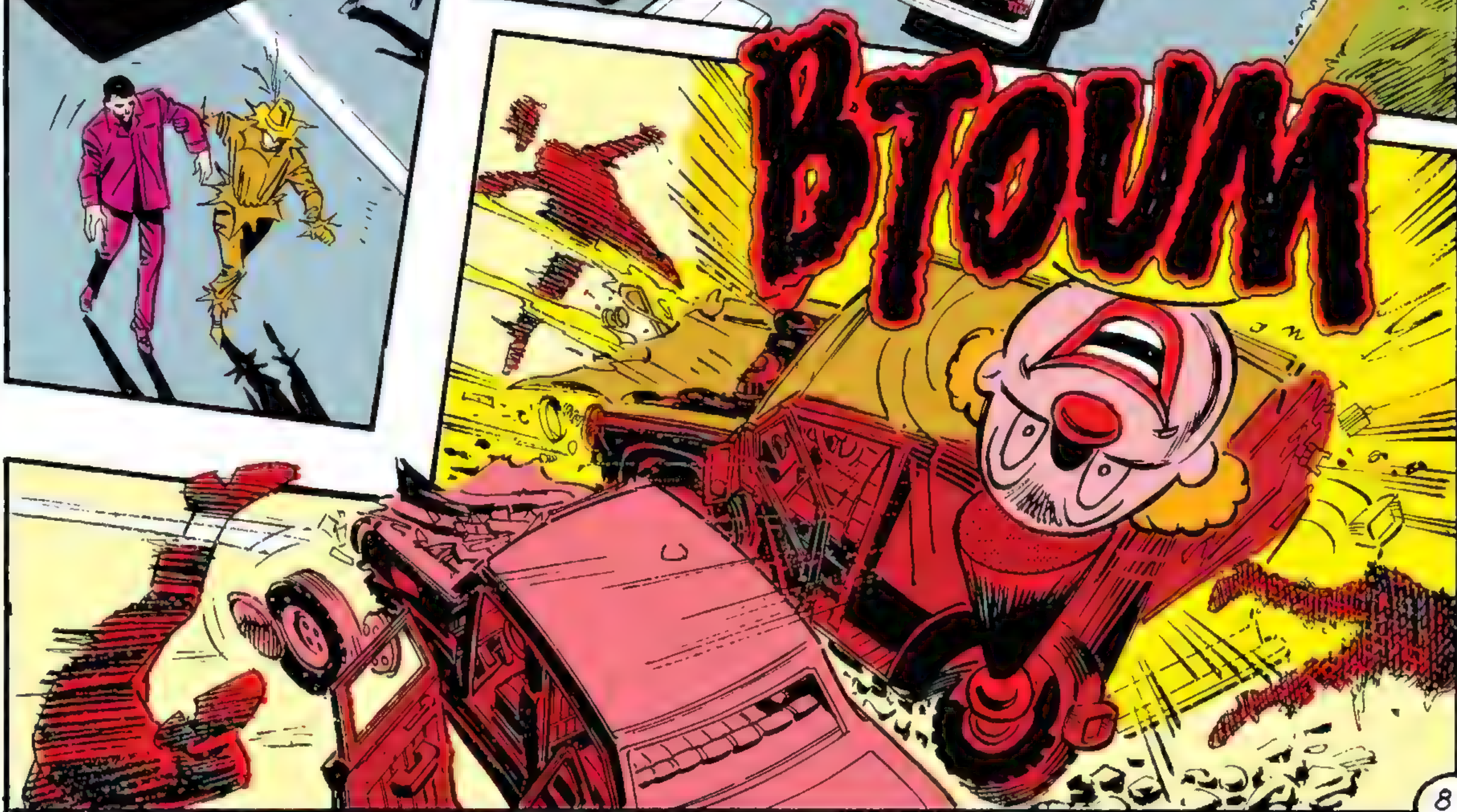
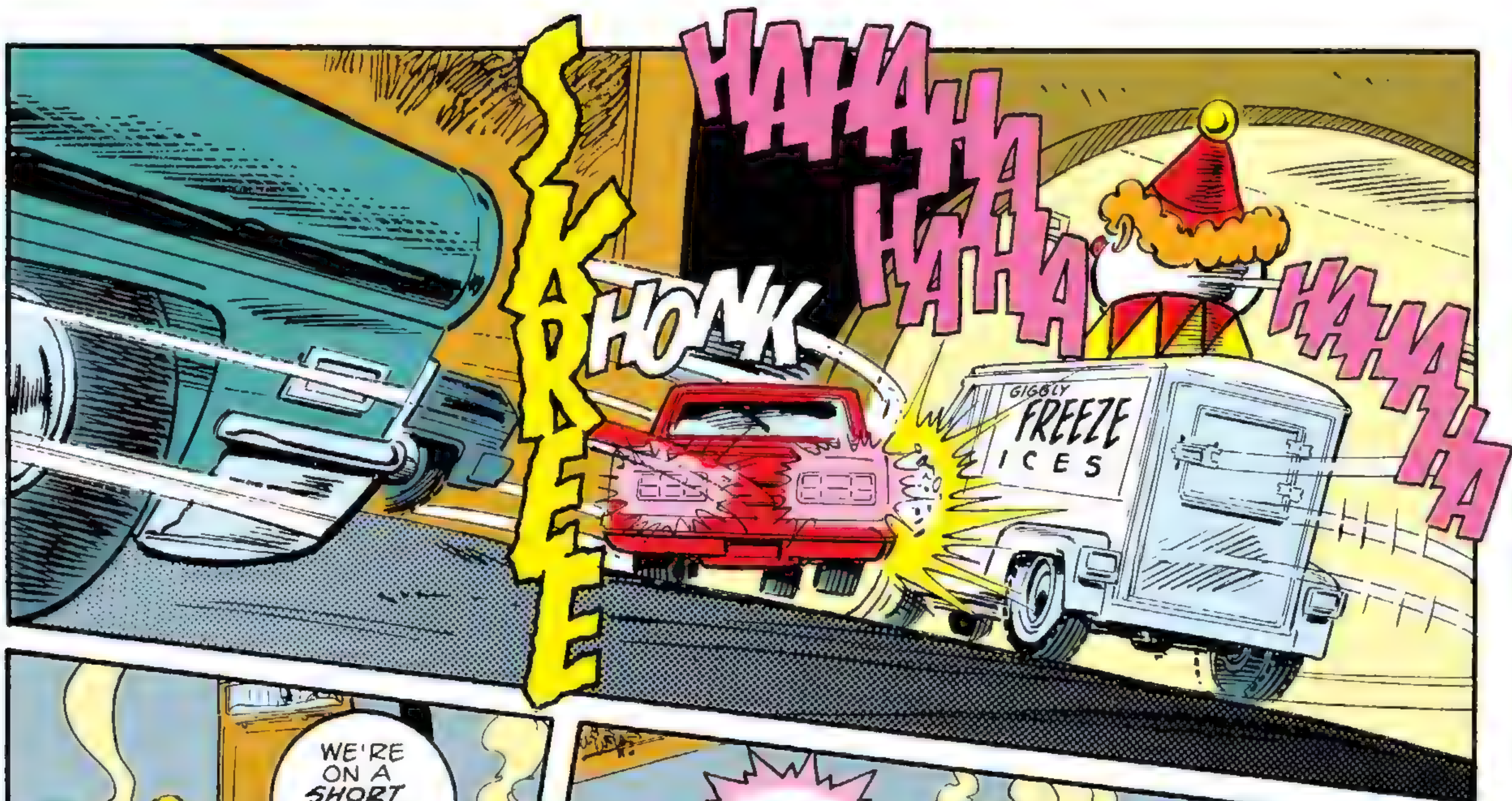
NO TIME TO
WAIT ON
THE BOMB
SQUAD.

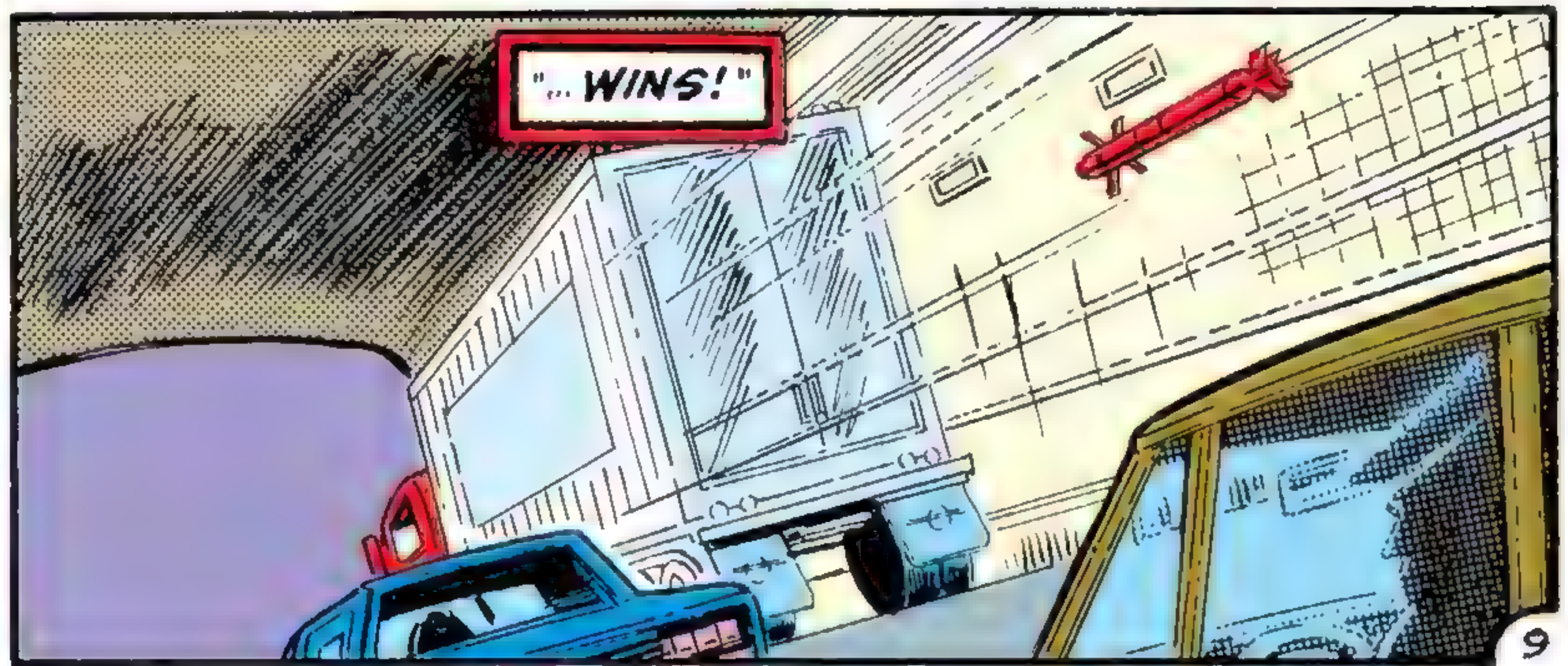
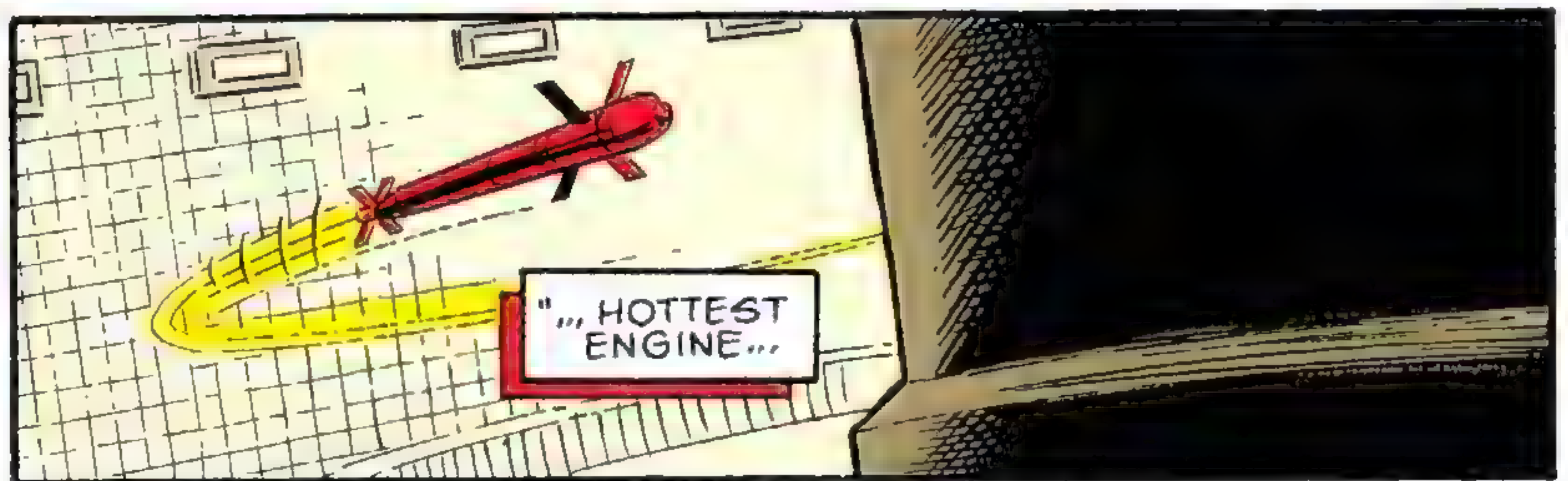
I'M
GOIN'
IN.

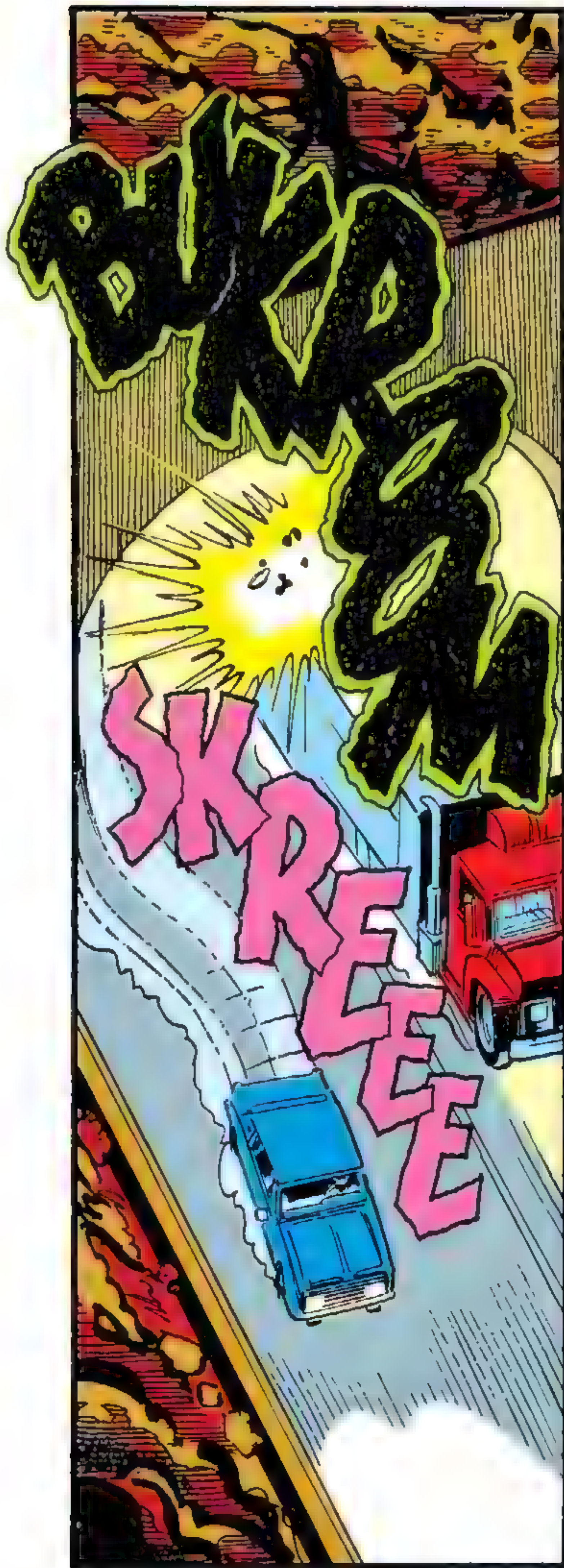


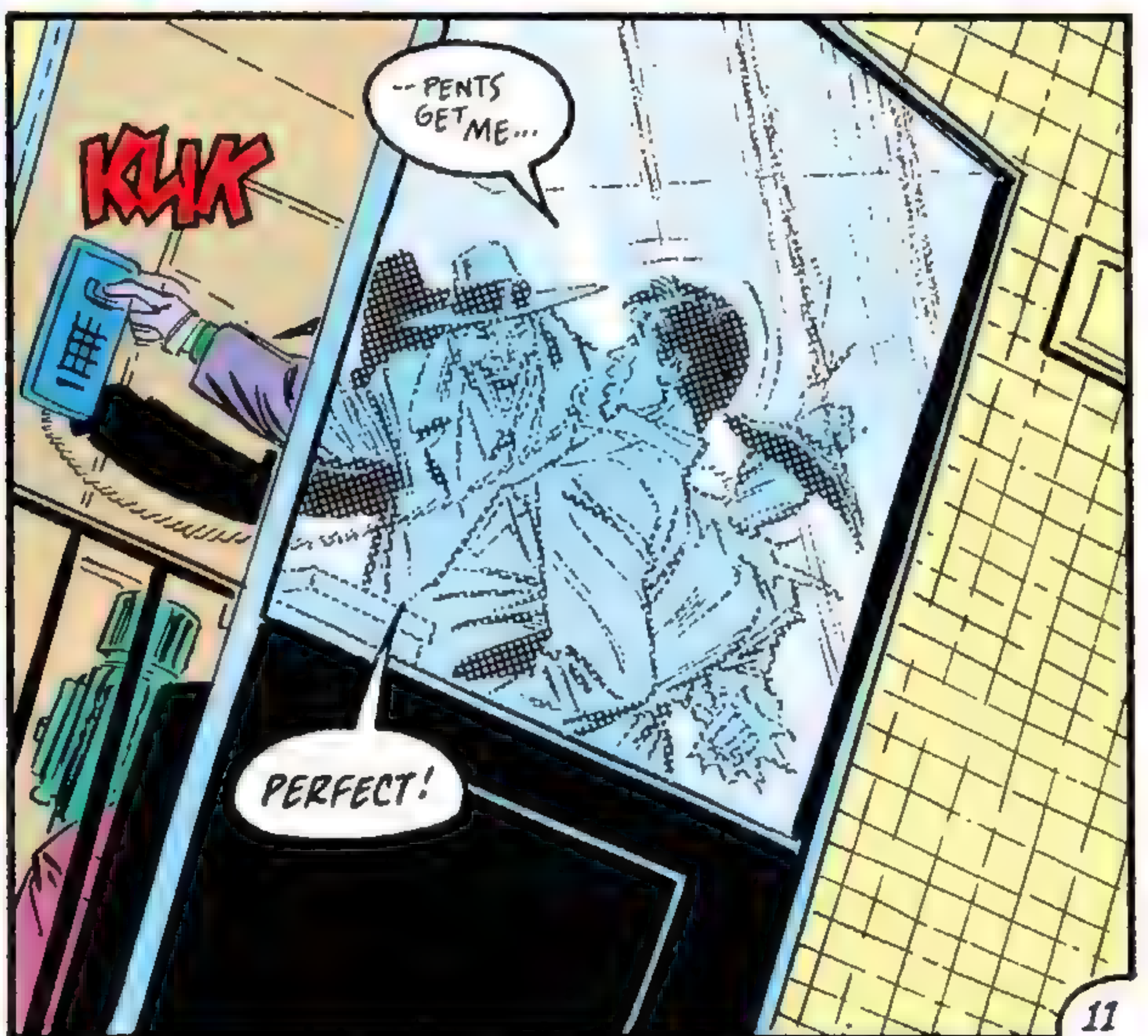
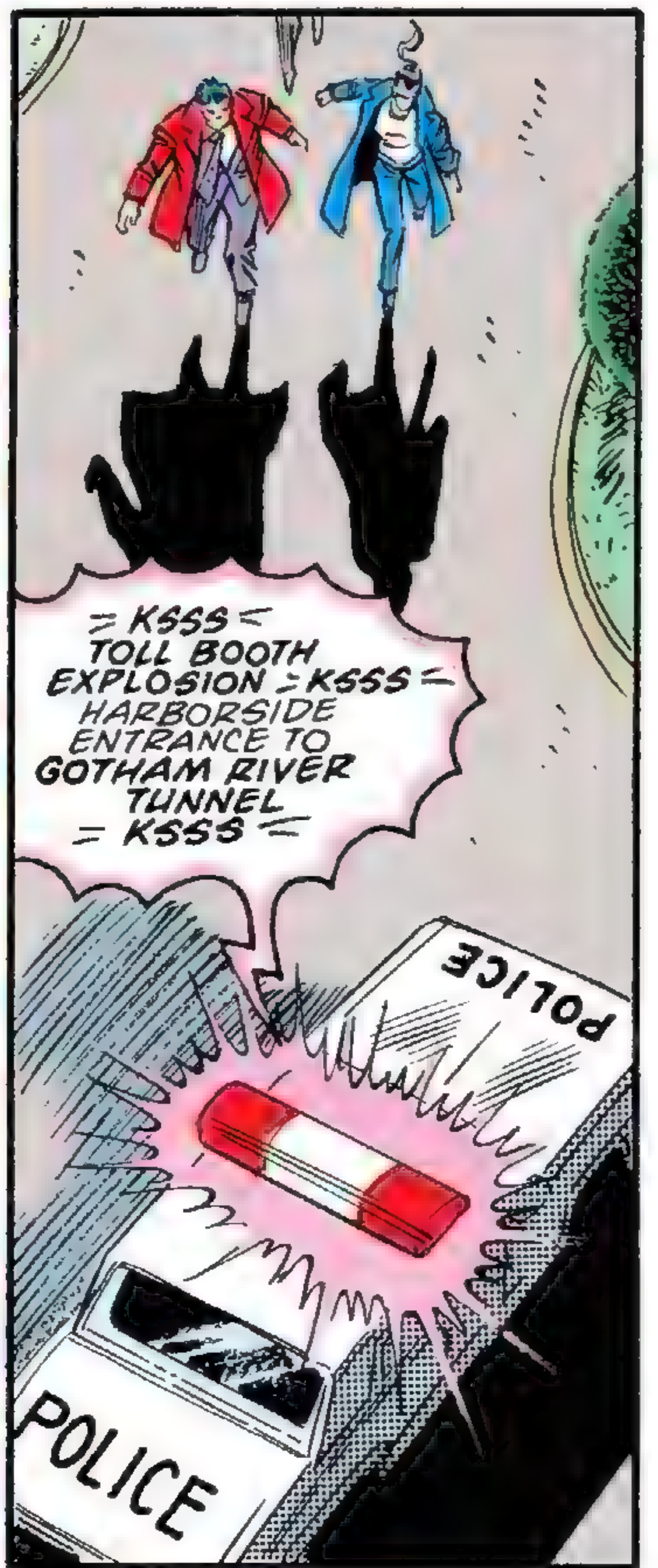


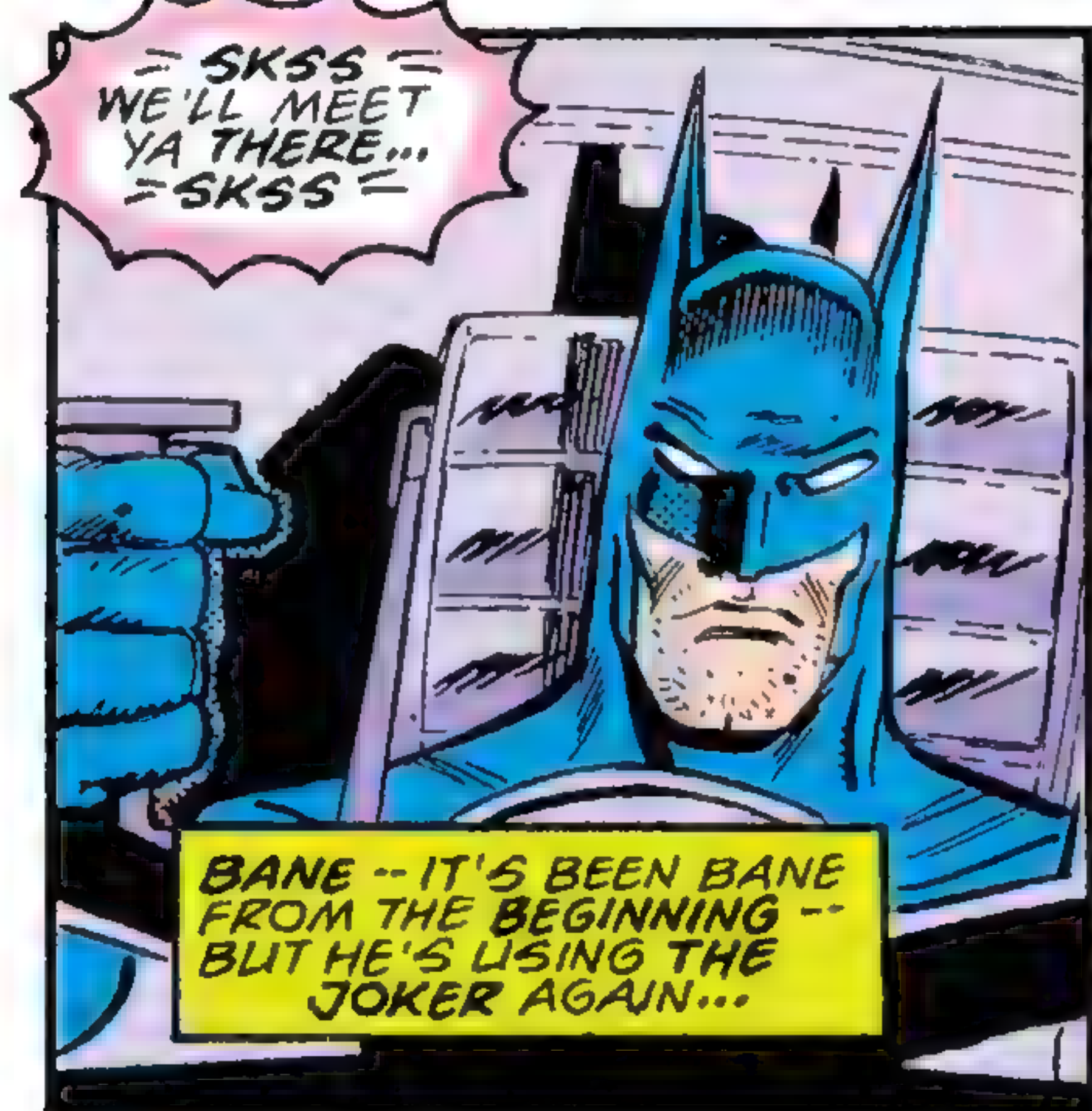














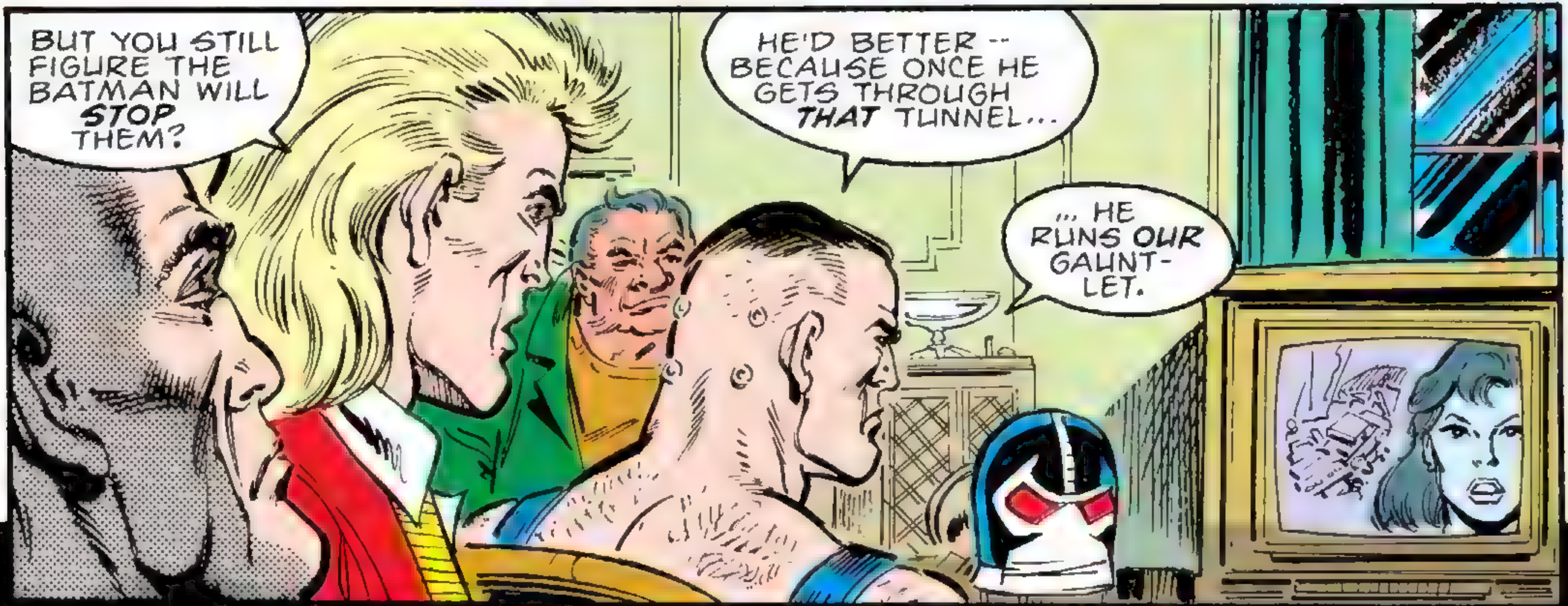
--TRAFFIC NOW
BACKED UP FOR SIX
MILES ON THE BAY
SIDE OF THE TUNNEL,
AS POLICE TRY TO
DETERMINE THE
CAUSE OF THE
MULTIPLE
EXPLOSIONS...

NOT
BAD, EH,
BANE?



I ADMIT, BIRD,
THAT THE JOKER
AND THE SCARE-
CROW DO COMBINE
WELL FOR
CHAOS.

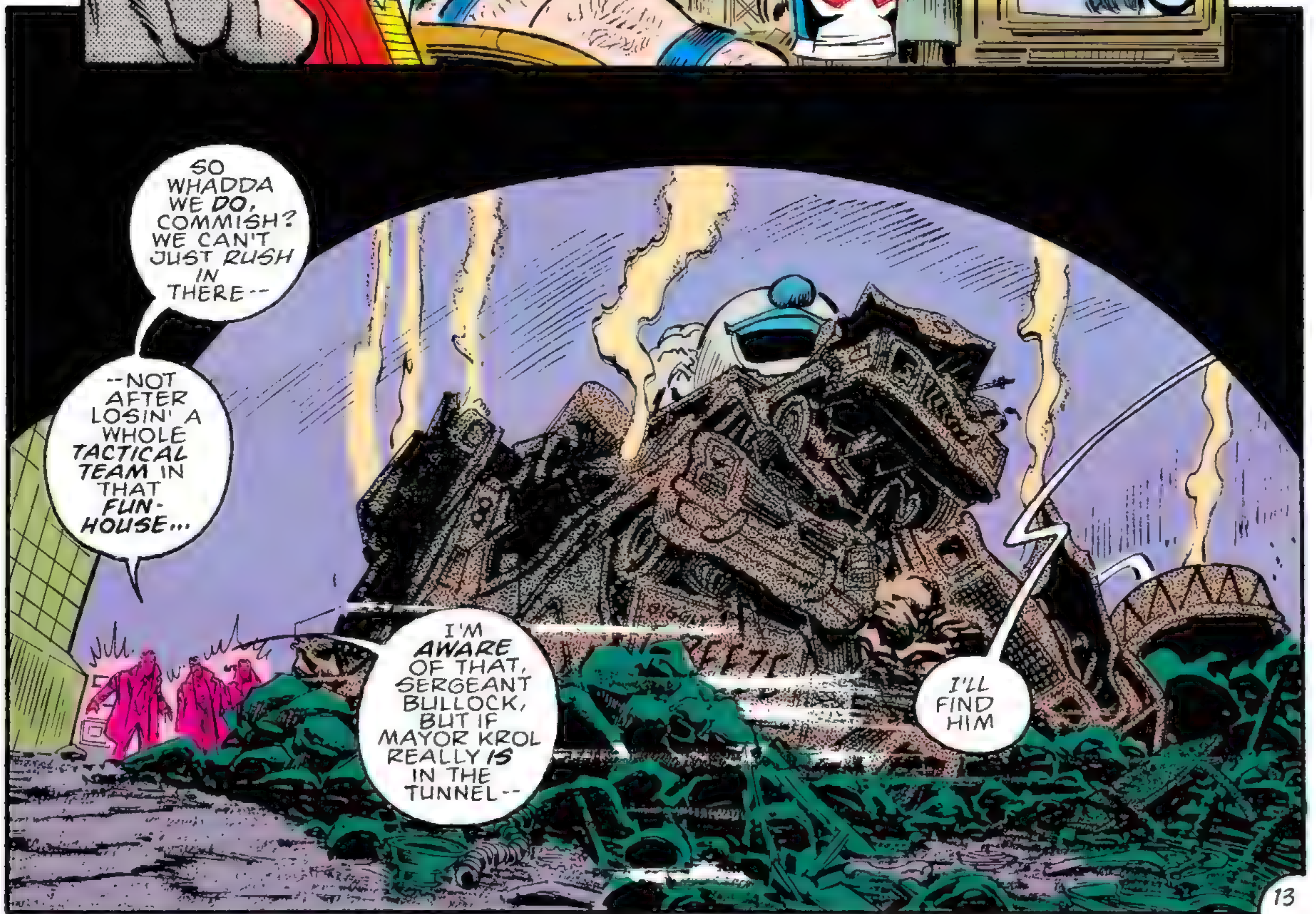
WITH
MORE
DISCIPLINE,
THEY COULD
TAKE THE
CITY.



BUT YOU STILL
FIGURE THE
BATMAN WILL
STOP
THEM?

HE'D BETTER --
BECAUSE ONCE HE
GETS THROUGH
THAT TUNNEL...

... HE
RUNS OUR
GAUNT-
LET.



SO
WHADDA
WE DO,
COMMISH?
WE CAN'T
JUST RUSH
IN
THERE--

--NOT
AFTER
LOSIN' A
WHOLE
TACTICAL
TEAM IN
THAT
FUN-
HOUSE...

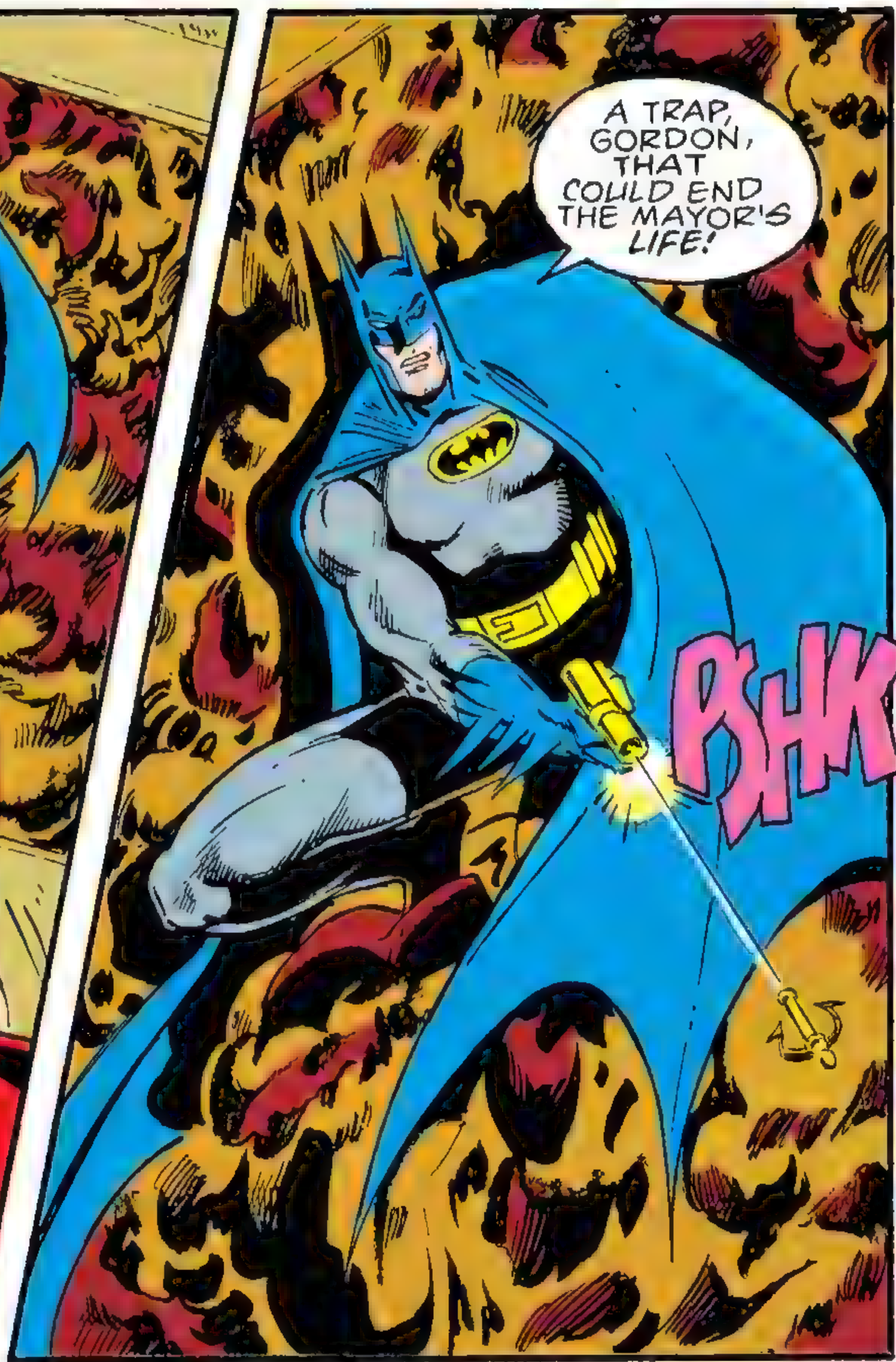
I'M
AWARE
OF THAT,
SERGEANT
BULLOCK,
BUT IF
MAYOR KROL
REALLY IS
IN THE
TUNNEL --

I'LL
FIND
HIM



AND I'LL BRING HIM OUT.

YOU REALIZE IT'S PROBABLY JUST ANOTHER TRAP...



A TRAP, GORDON, THAT COULD END THE MAYOR'S LIFE!

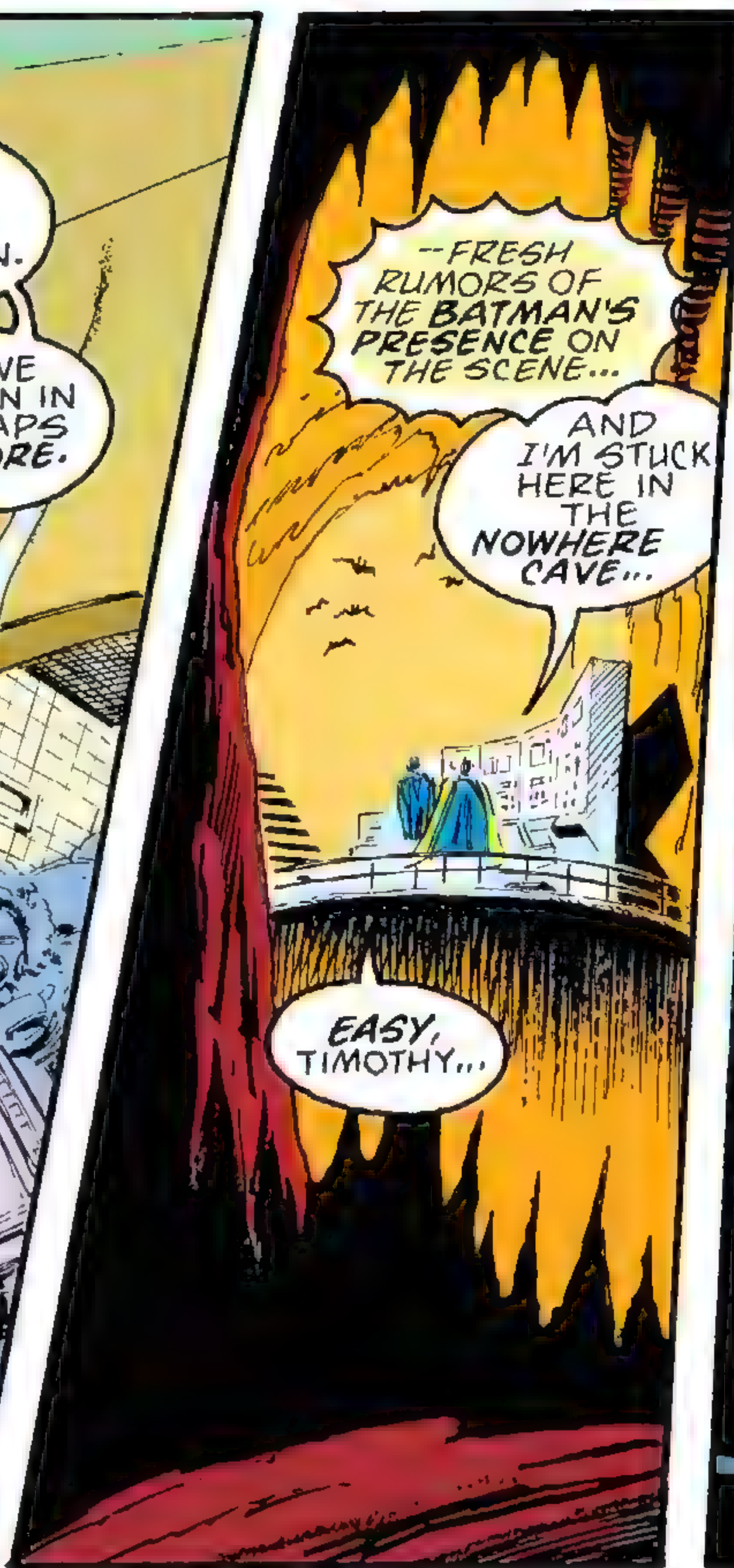
PSHK



BUT--

JUST HOLD TIGHT, GORDON.

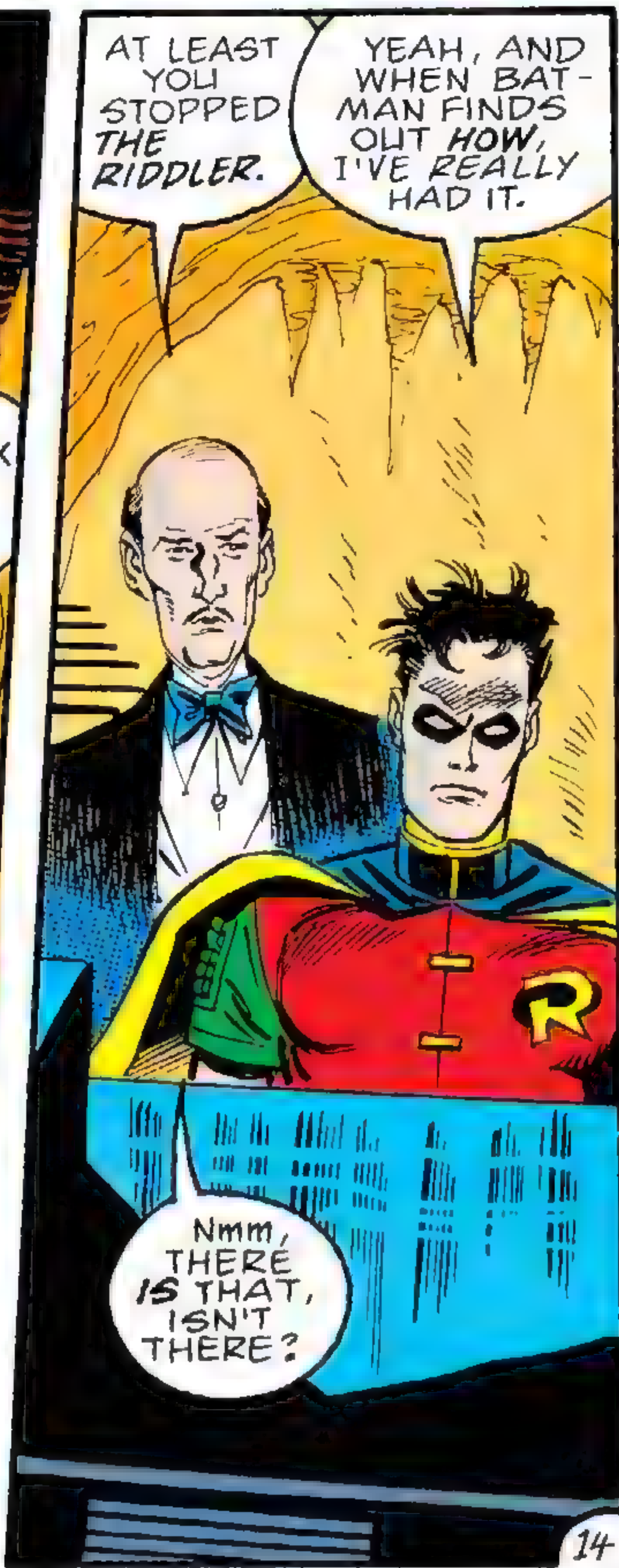
I'VE BEEN IN TRAPS BEFORE.



--FRESH RUMORS OF THE BATMAN'S PRESENCE ON THE SCENE...

AND I'M STUCK HERE IN THE NOWHERE CAVE...

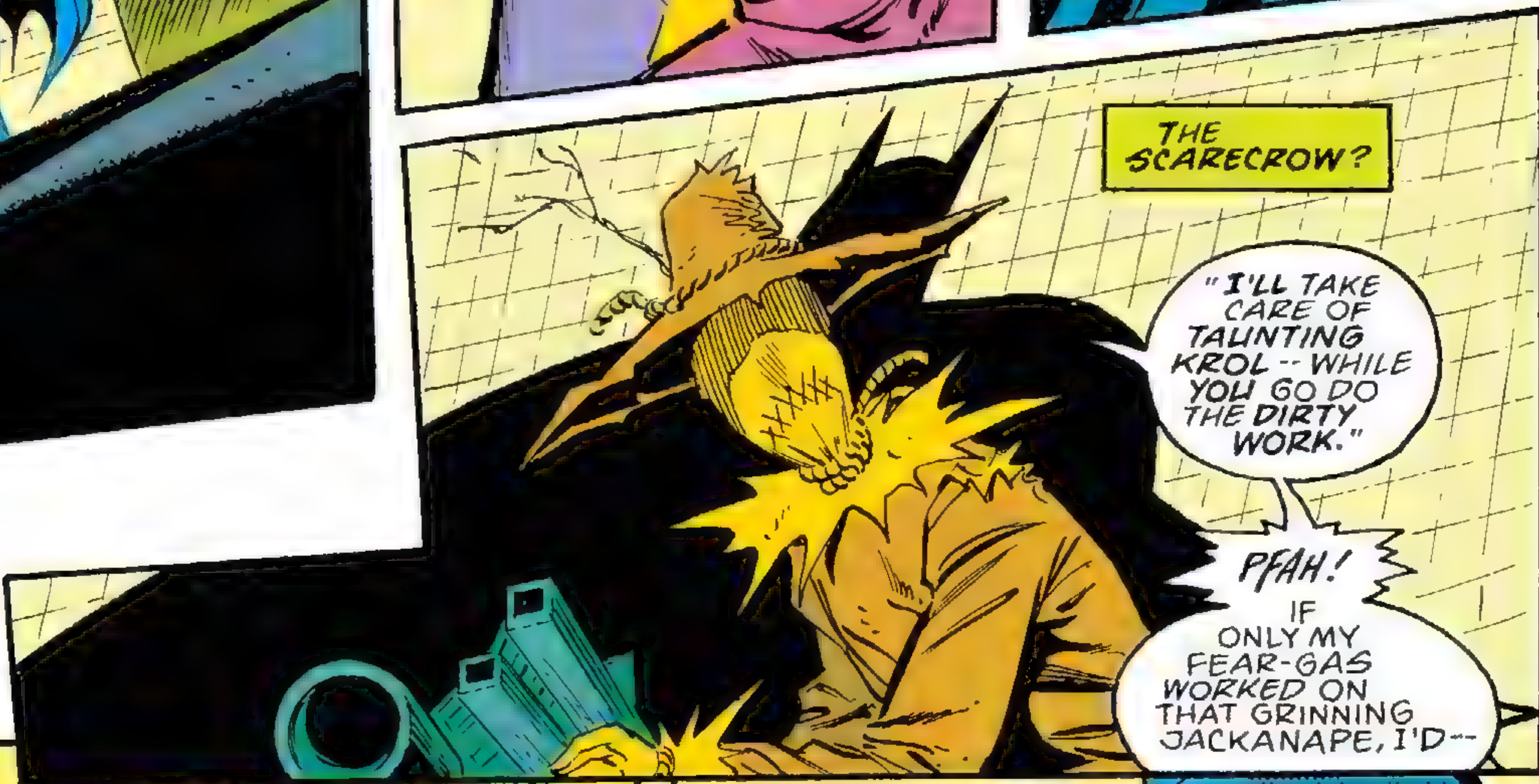
EASY, TIMOTHY...



AT LEAST YOU STOPPED THE RIDDLER.

YEAH, AND WHEN BAT-MAN FINDS OUT HOW, I'VE REALLY HAD IT.

Nmm, THERE IS THAT, ISN'T THERE?

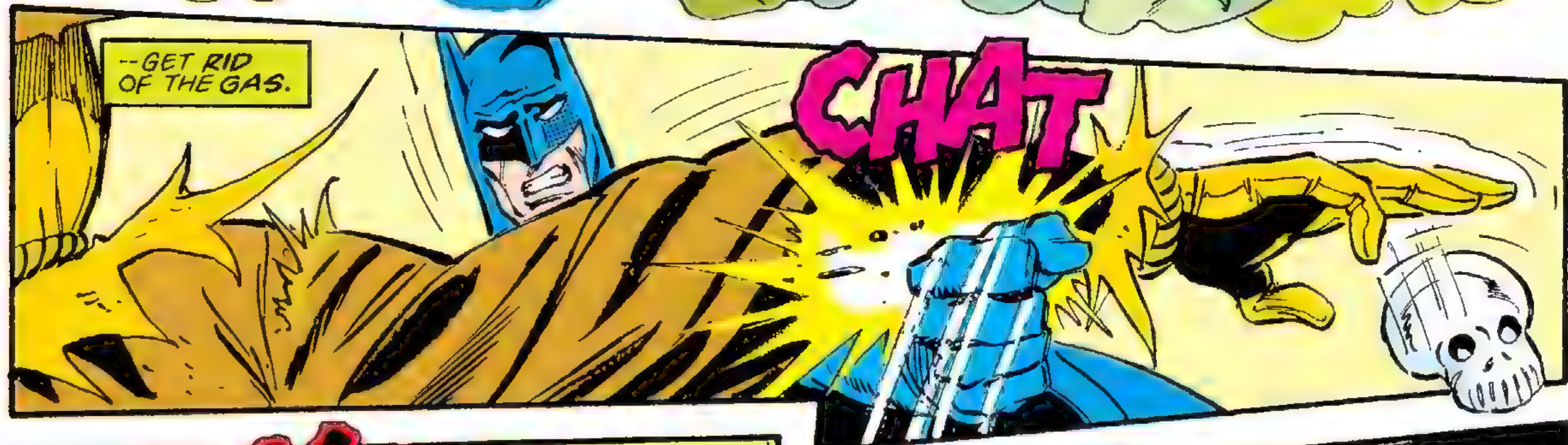




ROBIN!
HE'S KILLING
ROBIN!

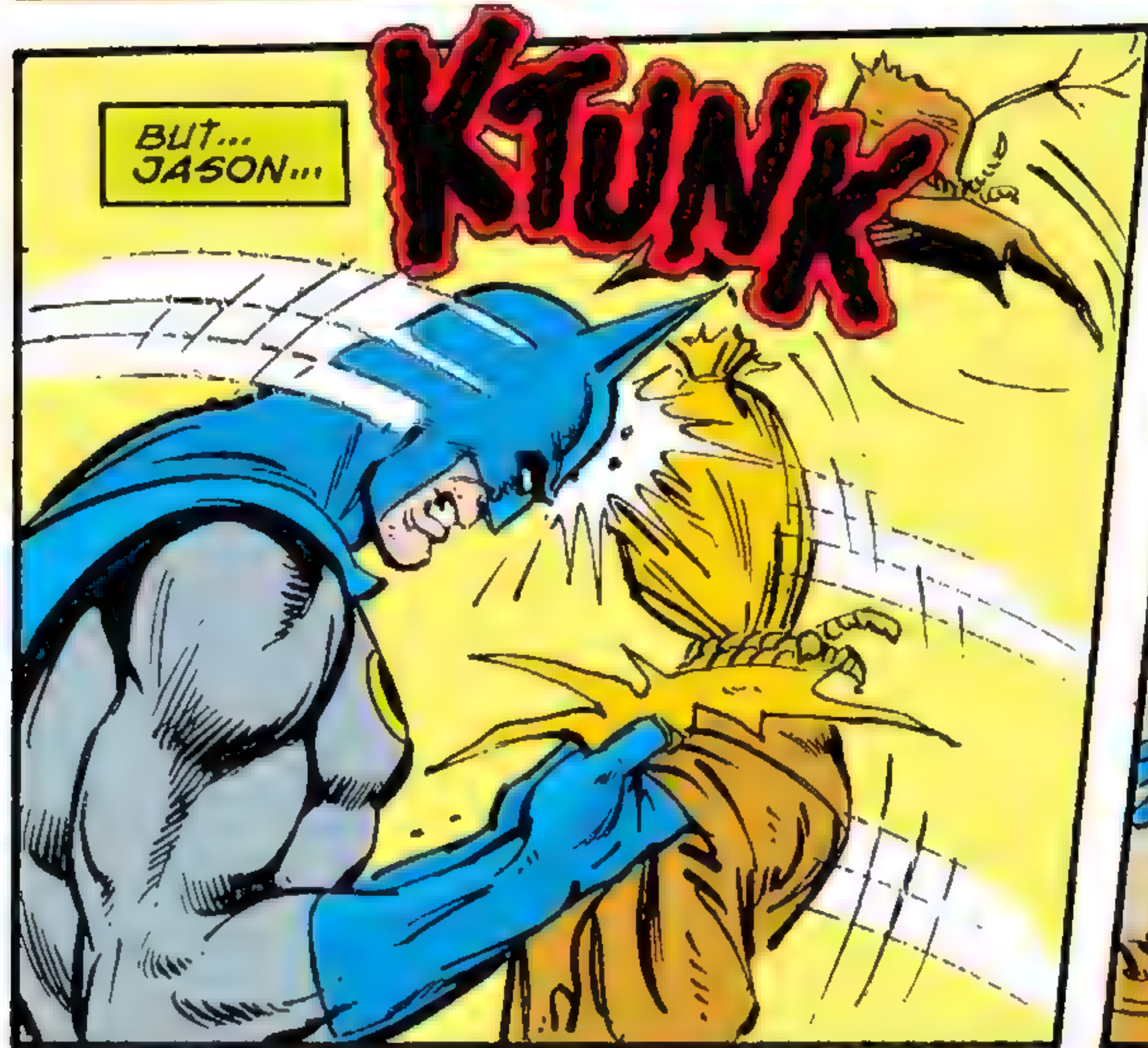
NO -- NOT REAL --
JASON'S ALREADY
DEAD -- JUST
VISIONS ... FROM
THE GAS...

GOT TO FIGHT
THROUGH THE
VISIONS, AND --



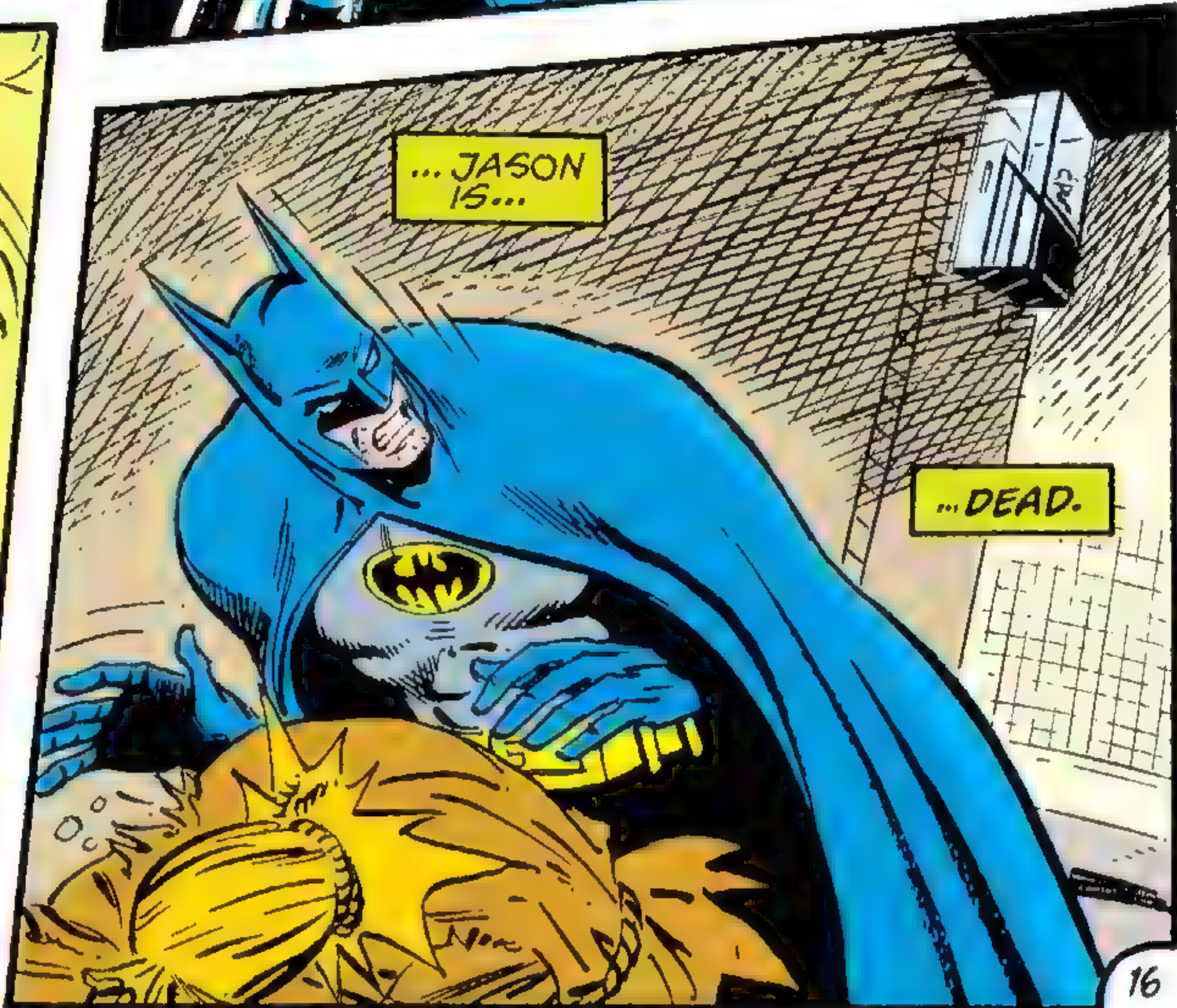
--GET RID
OF THE GAS.

CHAT



BUT...
JASON...

KTUNK



... JASON
IS...

... DEAD.



SNAKES, MAYOR KROL, SERPENTS! VIPERS! VENOM AND FANGS!

SHINKASH SHINKASH!

HSSSS! RATTlers!

HAHAHA



KREESH

Whuh--?

JUST A BOY GOOD AT HEART, MORE BRAVE THAN A MAN...

...TOO BRAVE TO BECOME A MAN.

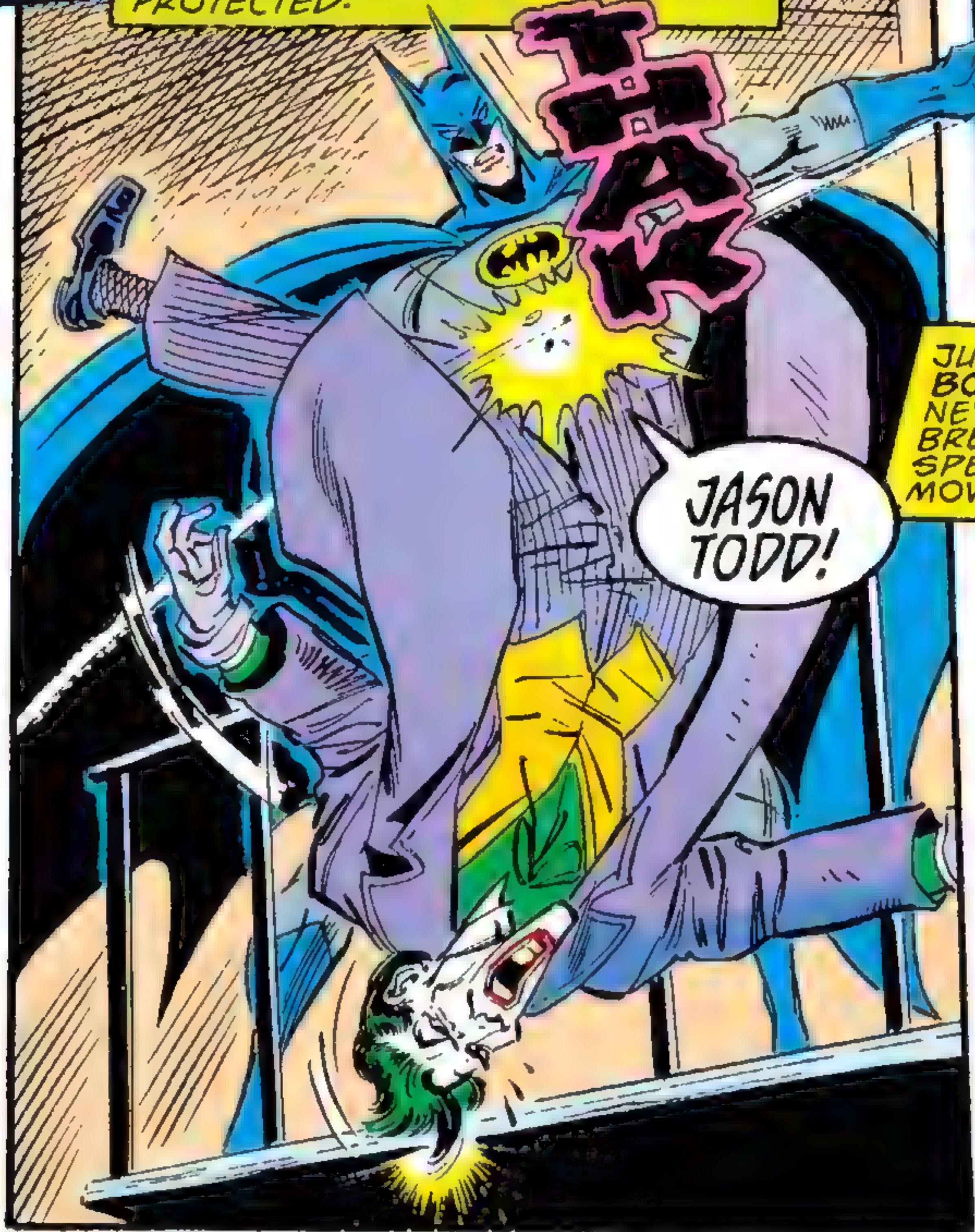


JASON...

TODD.

KRISH

JUST A BOY, HIS PARENTS FELLED IN BLOOD, HIS OWN LIFE RIPPED AND TORN FROM THE WORLD HE PROTECTED.



THA

JASON TODD!

JUST A BOY, BUT NEVER TO BREATHE, SPEAK, OR MOVE AGAIN.



HWOOK

JASON TODD!

JUST A BOY, BUT FAR
TOO BRAVE TO FACE THE
STARK, LURID MADNESS
OF A GRINNING KILLER.

JASON!

KUNCH

JUST A BOY--
DEAD-- BUT
TO HIS KILLER,
NOTHING MORE
THAN A
SICK JOKE!

SWAK

SHOK

CHOOOF

SHUMP

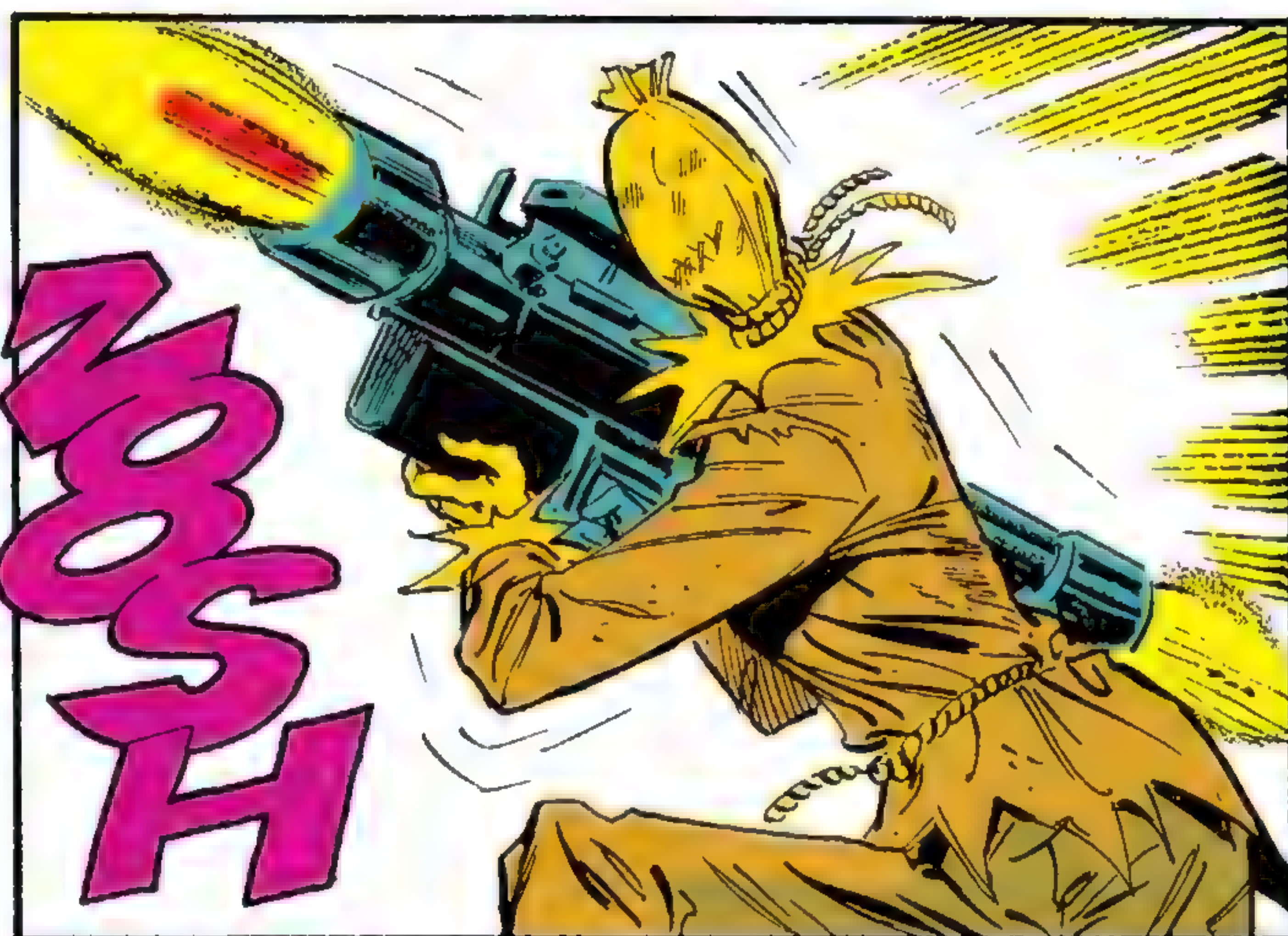
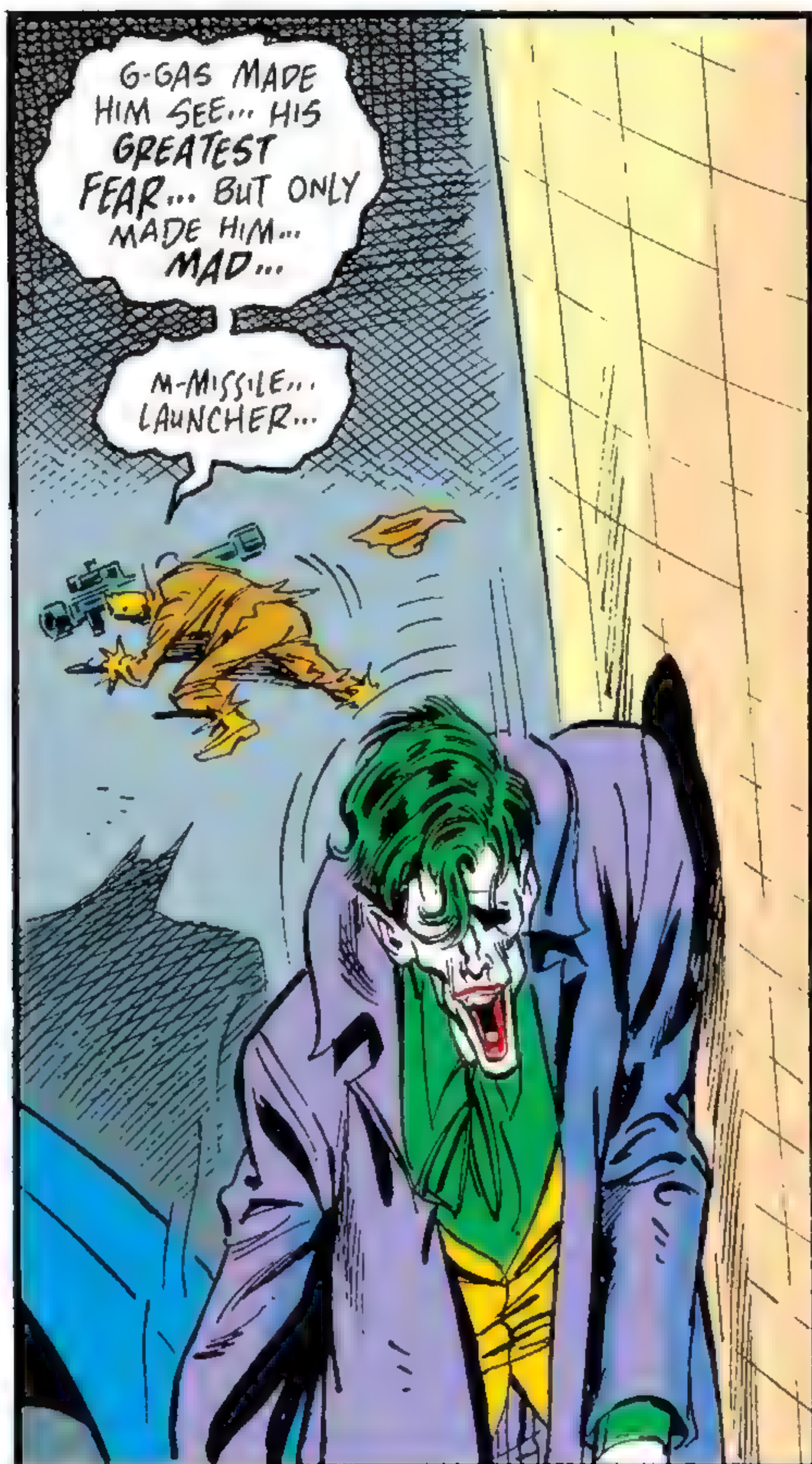
CHUD

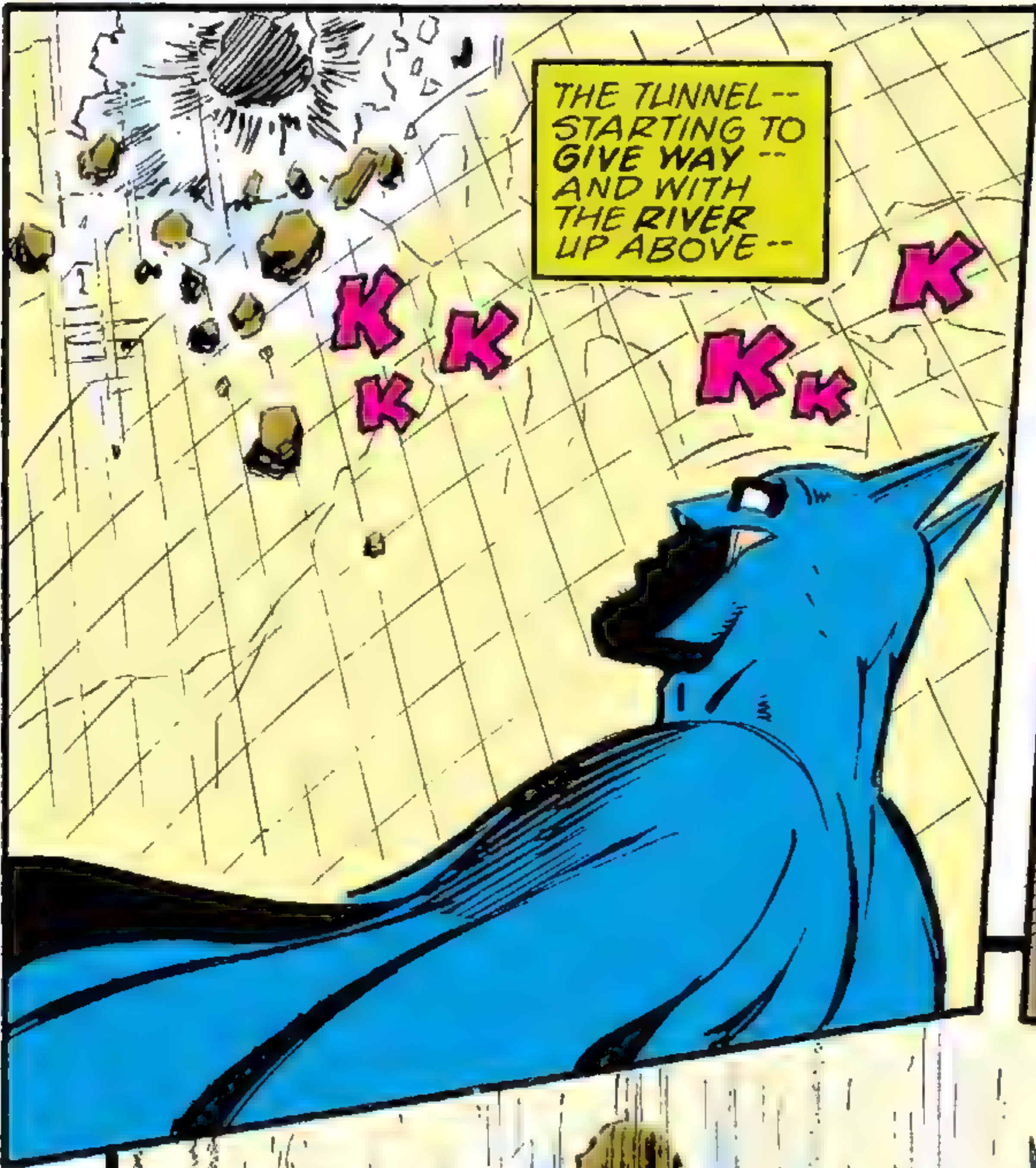
JUST A BOY -- BUT
FOREVER GONE.

JASON!!!

SWOKK

SLASH





THE TUNNEL --
STARTING TO
GIVE WAY --
AND WITH
THE RIVER
UP ABOVE --



G-GOT TO...
GET OUT OF
HERE,
JOKER...

L-LOOKS
LIKE IT WON'T
HOLD FOR
L-LONG, BATS...
SO YOU'D
BETTER M-
MAKE YOUR
CHOICE--



--STOP US...
OR SAVE
YOUR 'PHONE-
PHREAK
MAYOR!

HE'S RIGHT -- I CAN'T
DO BOTH, NOT IN
THIS CONDITION...

... WHICH
LEAVES NO
CHOICE AT
ALL.



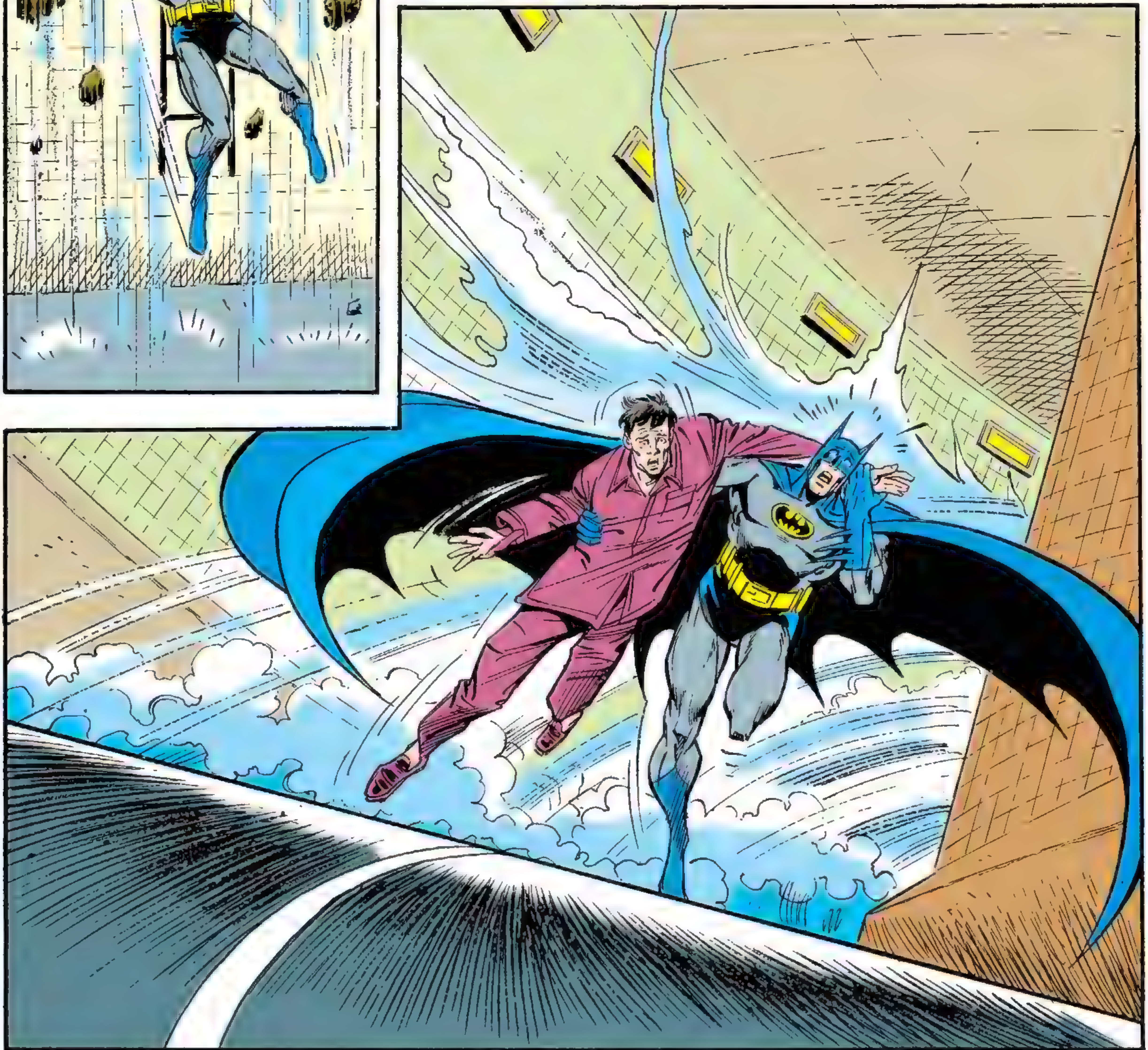
NO WAY I LET
HIM KILL
ANOTHER...



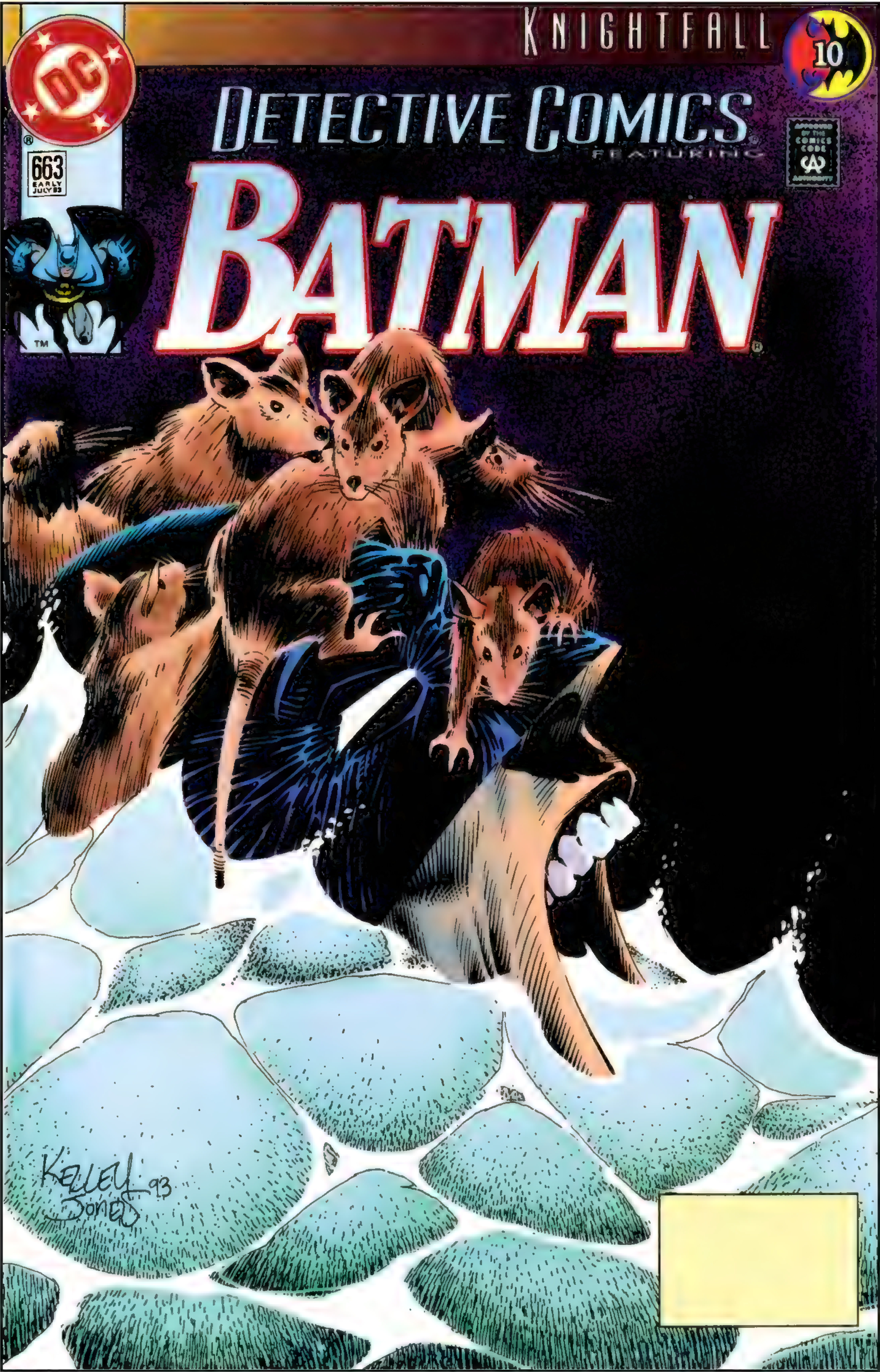
I'VE GOT
TO SAVE
KROL.

COME ON,
YOU JAPING
FOOL! THERE'S
NO TIME TO
WATCH--!

YOU'VE
GOT TO GUIDE
US TO THE
ESCAPE
TUNNELS!



Cover art by KELLEY JONES



NO REST FOR THE *WICKED*

RESCUE OF THE
MAYOR WAS A TRAP
JUST AS I SUSPECTED.

BUT WHAT
CHOICE DID
I HAVE?

JOKER'S PROBABLY
GIGGLING HIMSELF
SICK RIGHT NOW.

MAYBE HE'LL LAUGH
HIMSELF TO DEATH.

CHUCK DIXON
writer

GRAHAM NOLAN
penciller

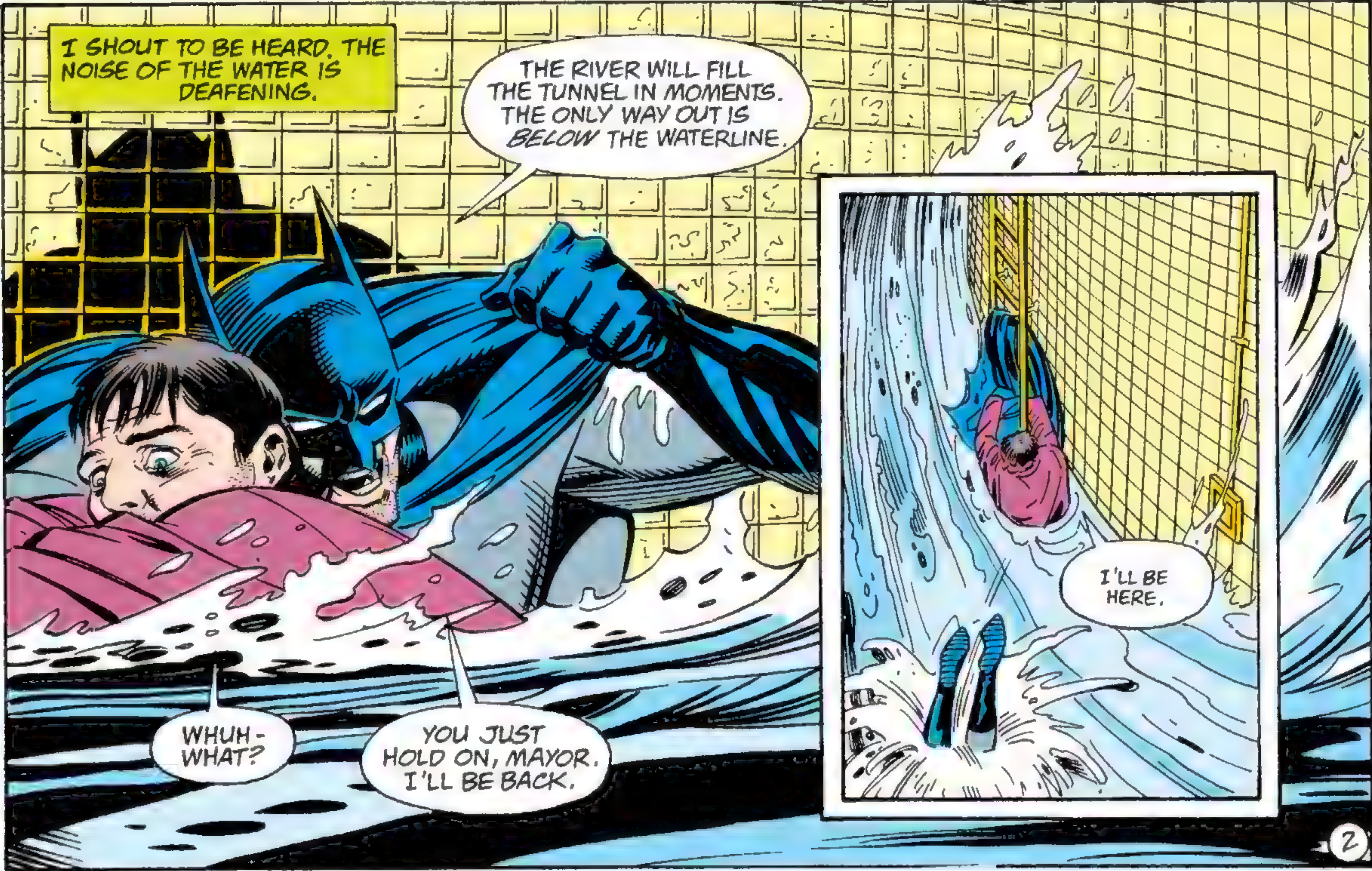
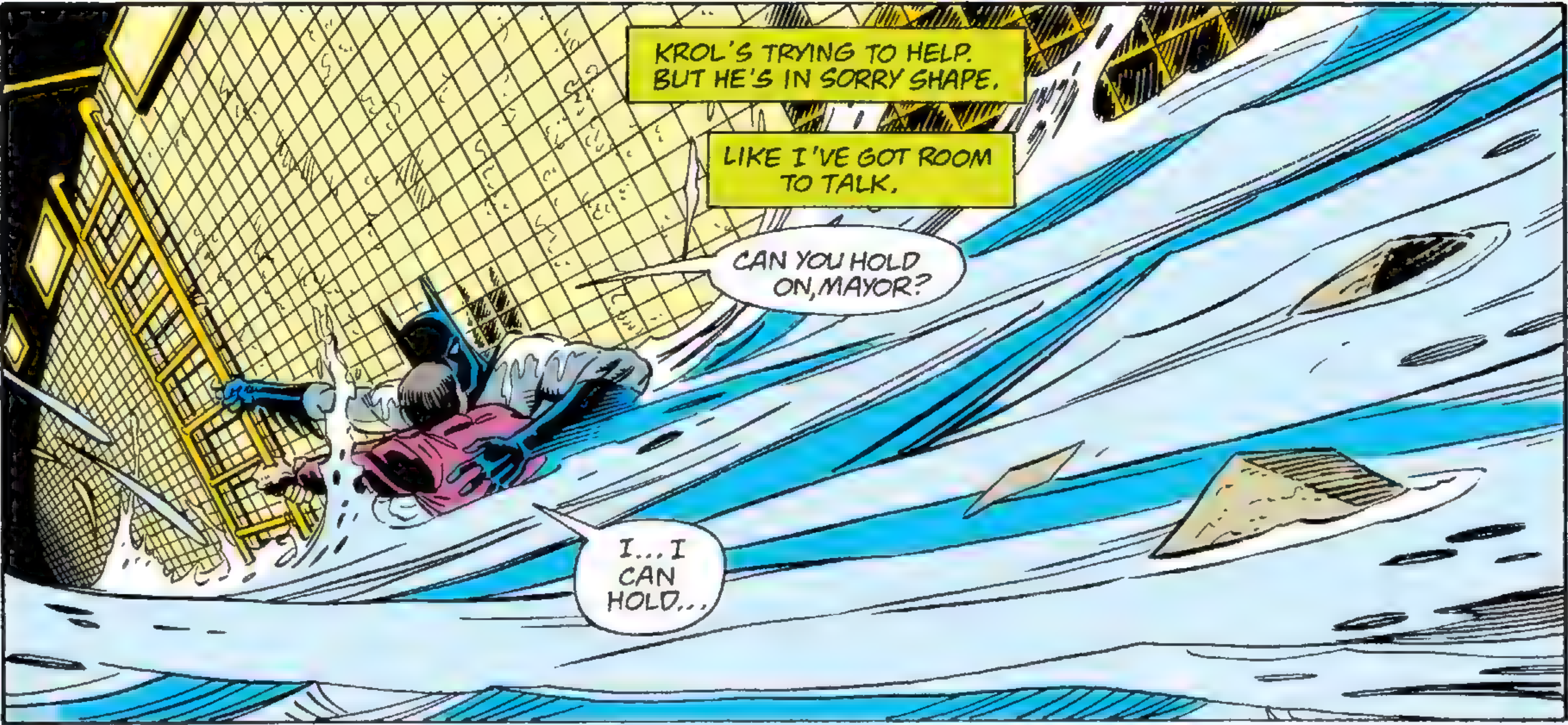
SCOTT HANNA
inker

ADRIENNE ROY
colorist

JOHN COSTANZA
letterer

SCOTT PETERSON and DENNIS O'NEIL
editors

BATMAN created by BOB KANE





KROL SOUNDS SCARED.

HE'S NOT REALLY A WEAK MAN, HE'S A FAIRLY STRONG ONE PUSHED BEYOND HIS LIMITS.

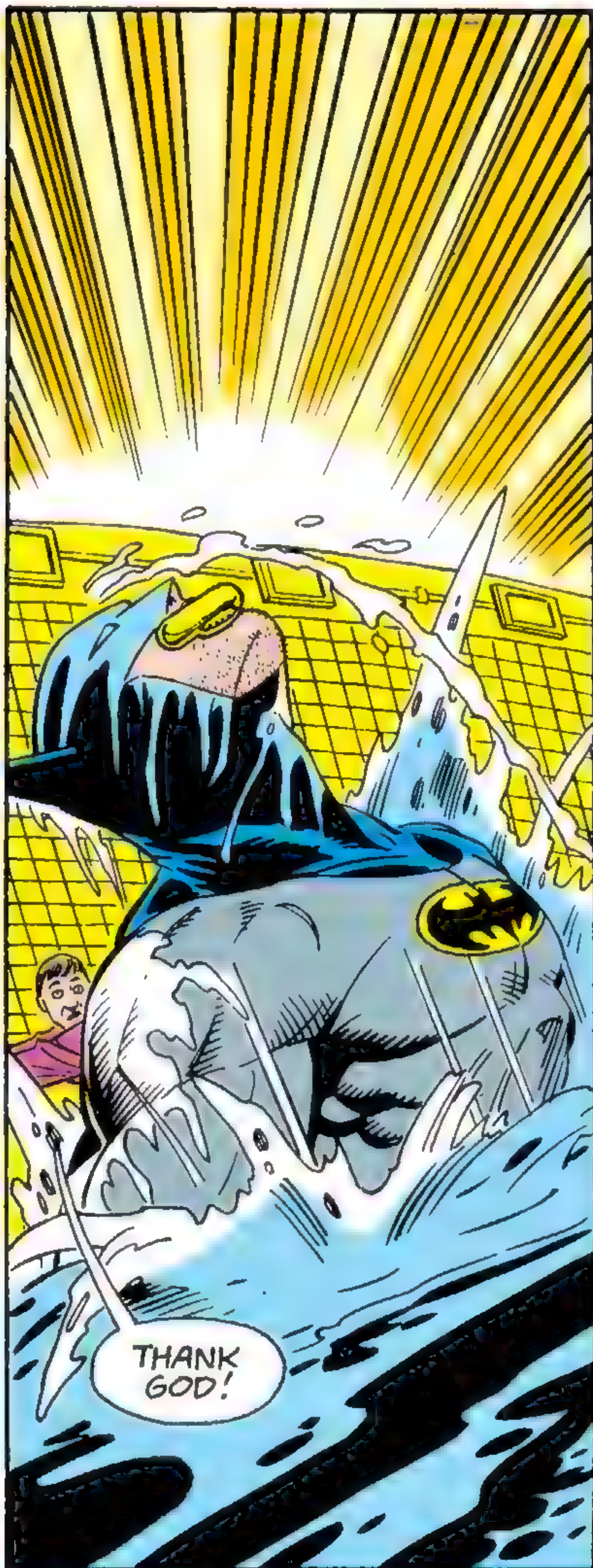
ALL MEN HAVE LIMITS. THEY LEARN WHAT THEY ARE AND THEN LEARN NOT TO EXCEED THEM.



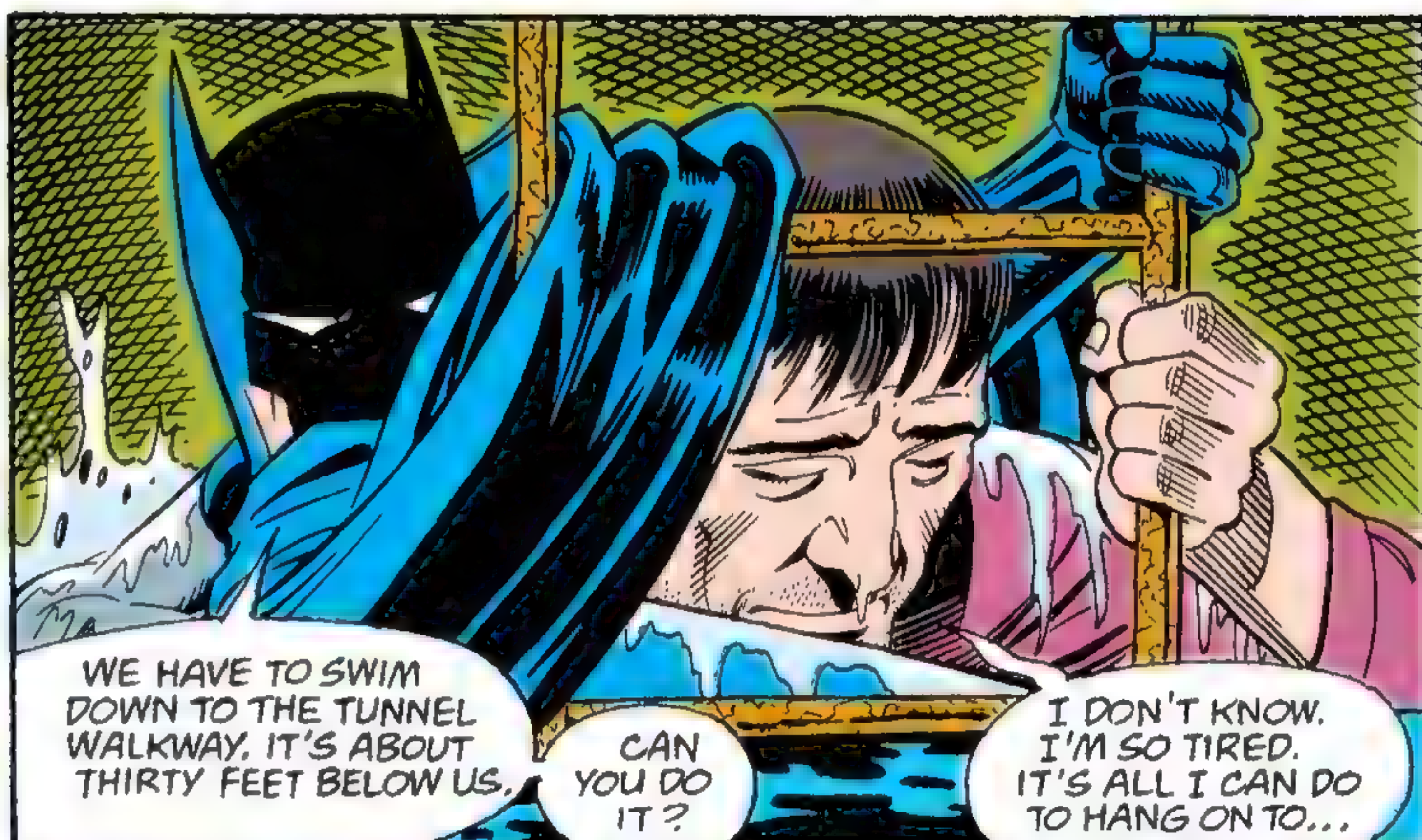
I IGNORE MINE.



THIS IS WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR. THE LAST CHANCE FOR THE MAYOR AND ME.



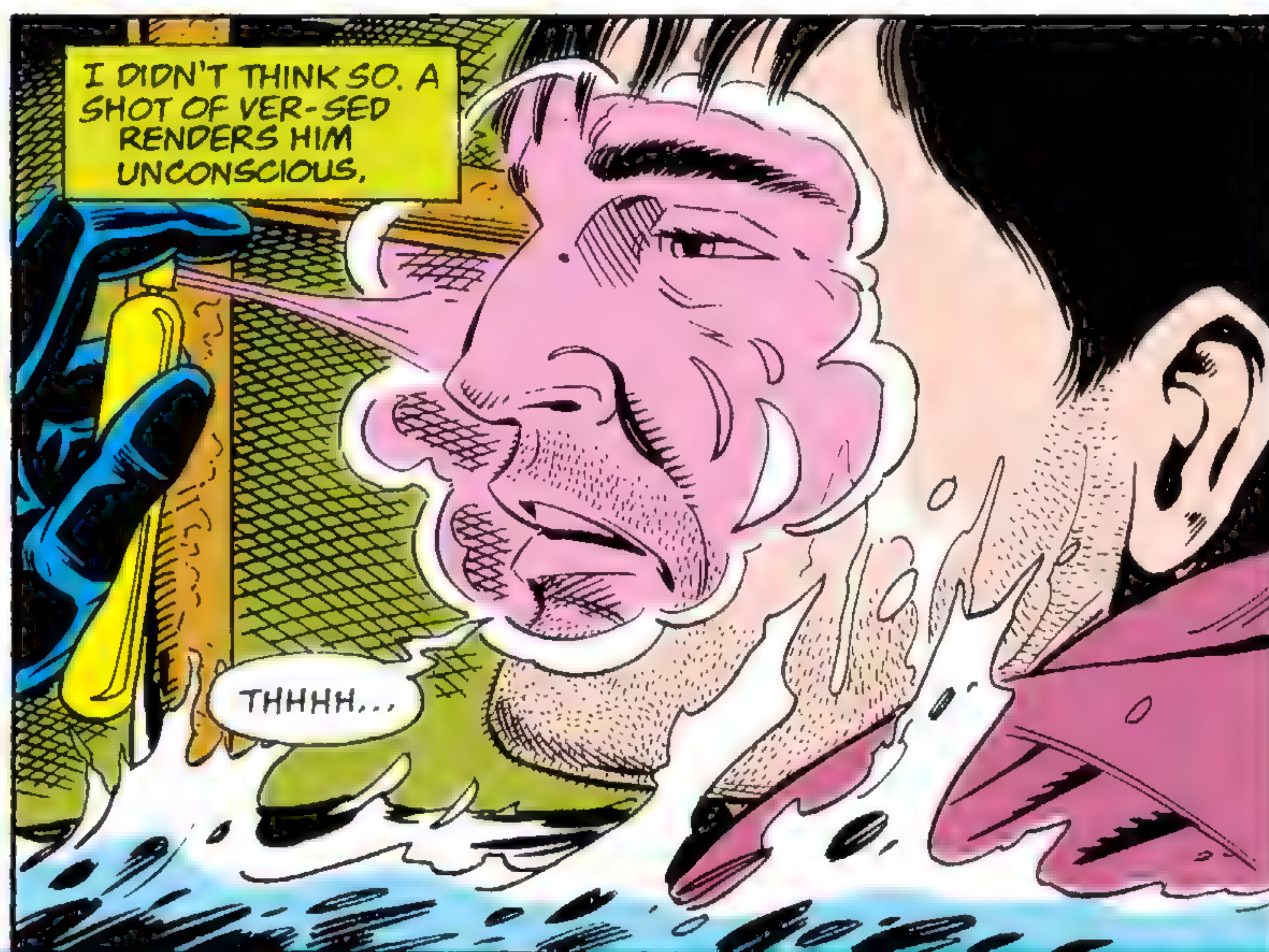
THANK
GOD!



WE HAVE TO SWIM
DOWN TO THE TUNNEL
WALKWAY. IT'S ABOUT
THIRTY FEET BELOW US.

CAN
YOU DO
IT?

I DON'T KNOW.
I'M SO TIRED.
IT'S ALL I CAN DO
TO HANG ON TO...



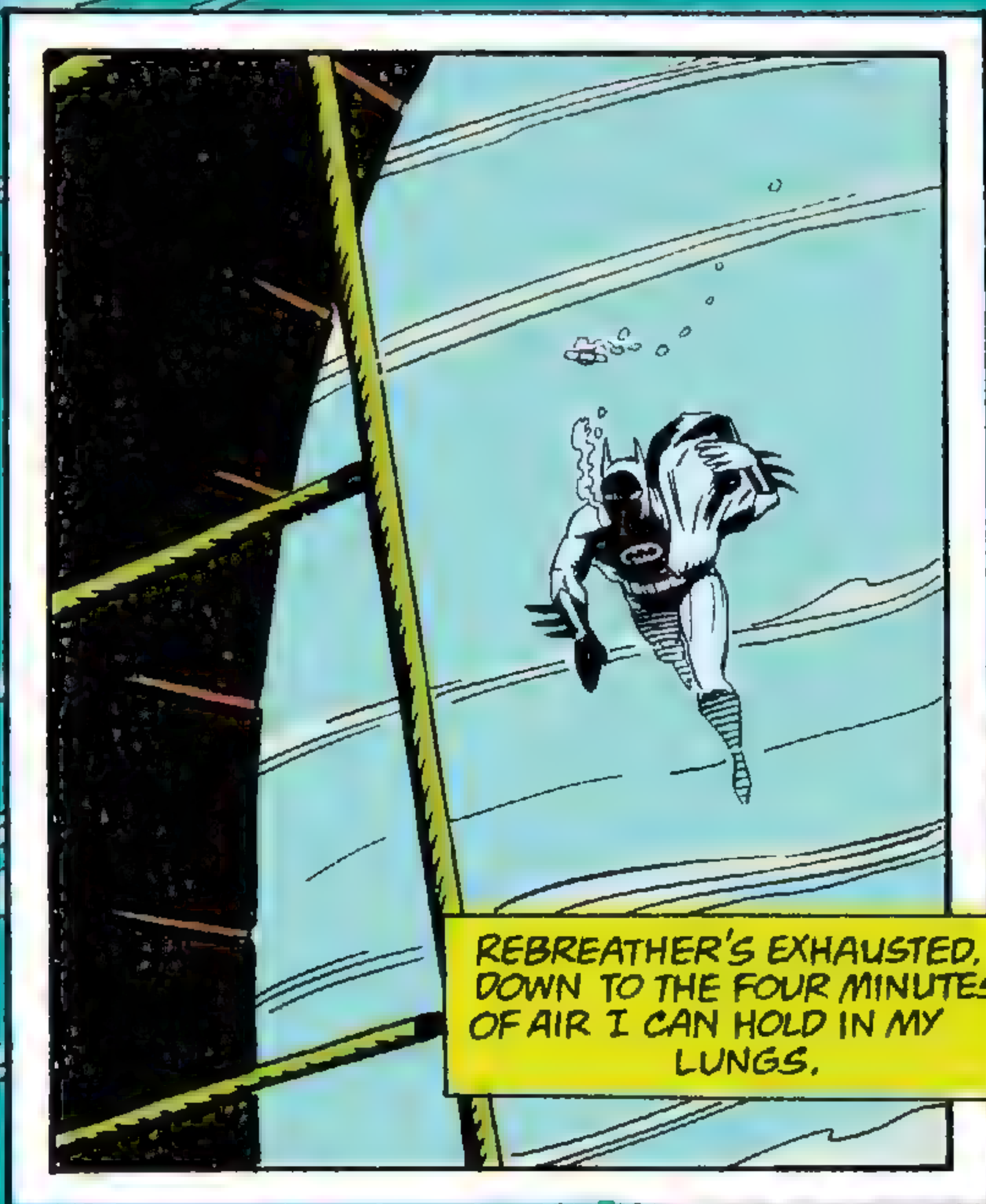
I DIDN'T THINK SO. A
SHOT OF VER-SED
RENDERS HIM
UNCONSCIOUS.

THHHH...

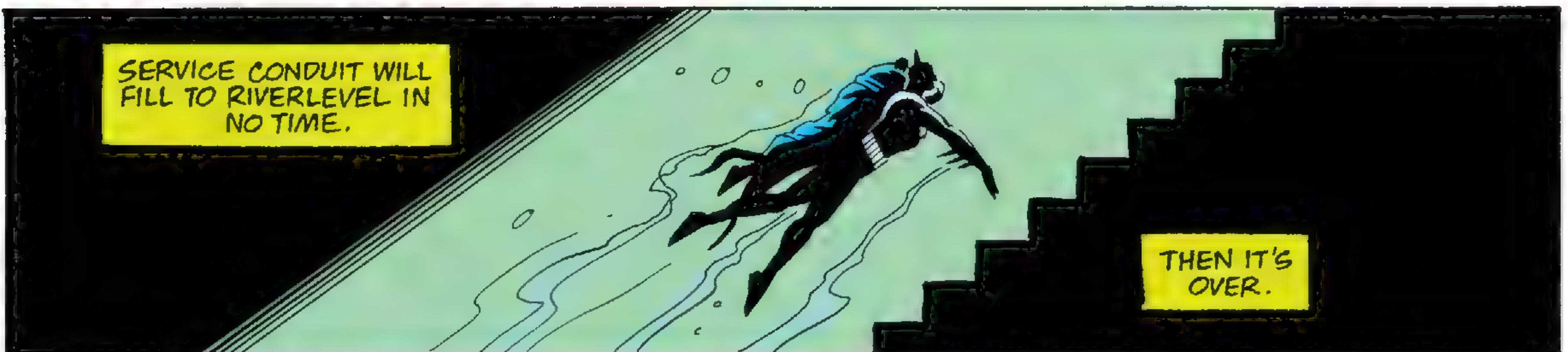
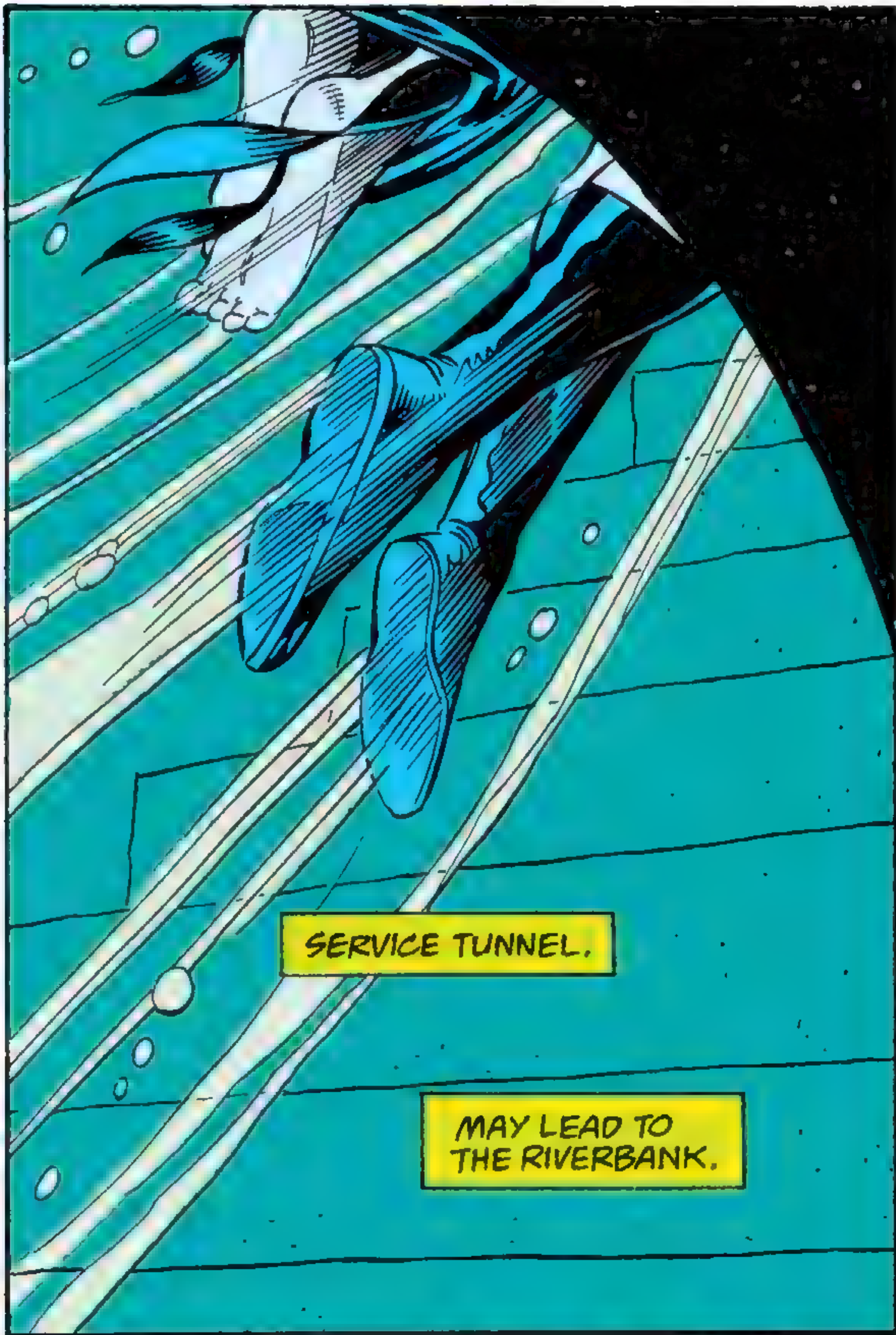


THIS WAY HE
CAN'T PANIC. THE
CAPE WILL HOLD
A FEW MINUTES
OF AIR AROUND
HIM.

IF I FAIL THEN
HE'LL JUST
NEVER WAKE UP.



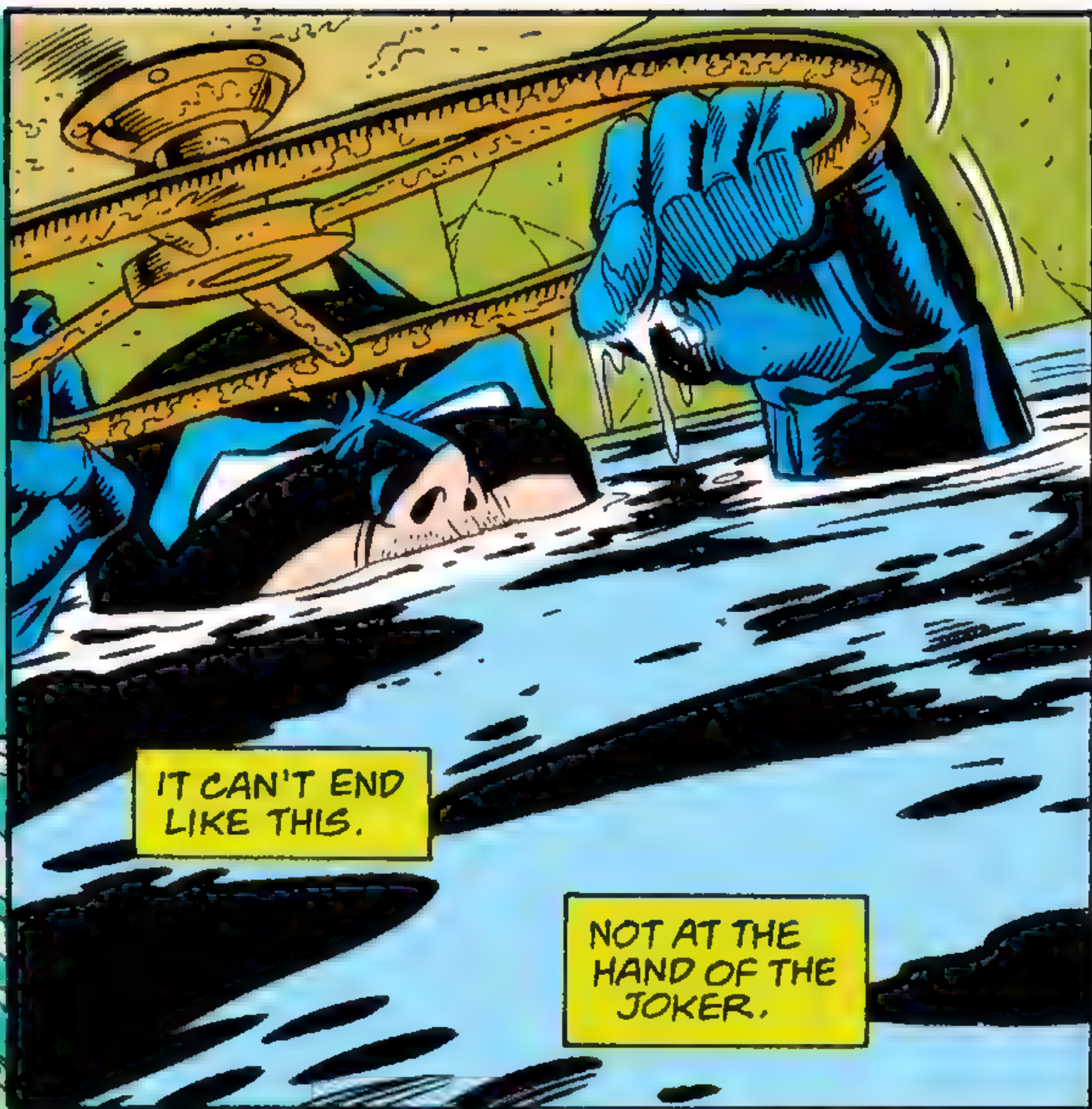
REBREATHES EXHAUSTED,
DOWN TO THE FOUR MINUTES
OF AIR I CAN HOLD IN MY
LUNGS.





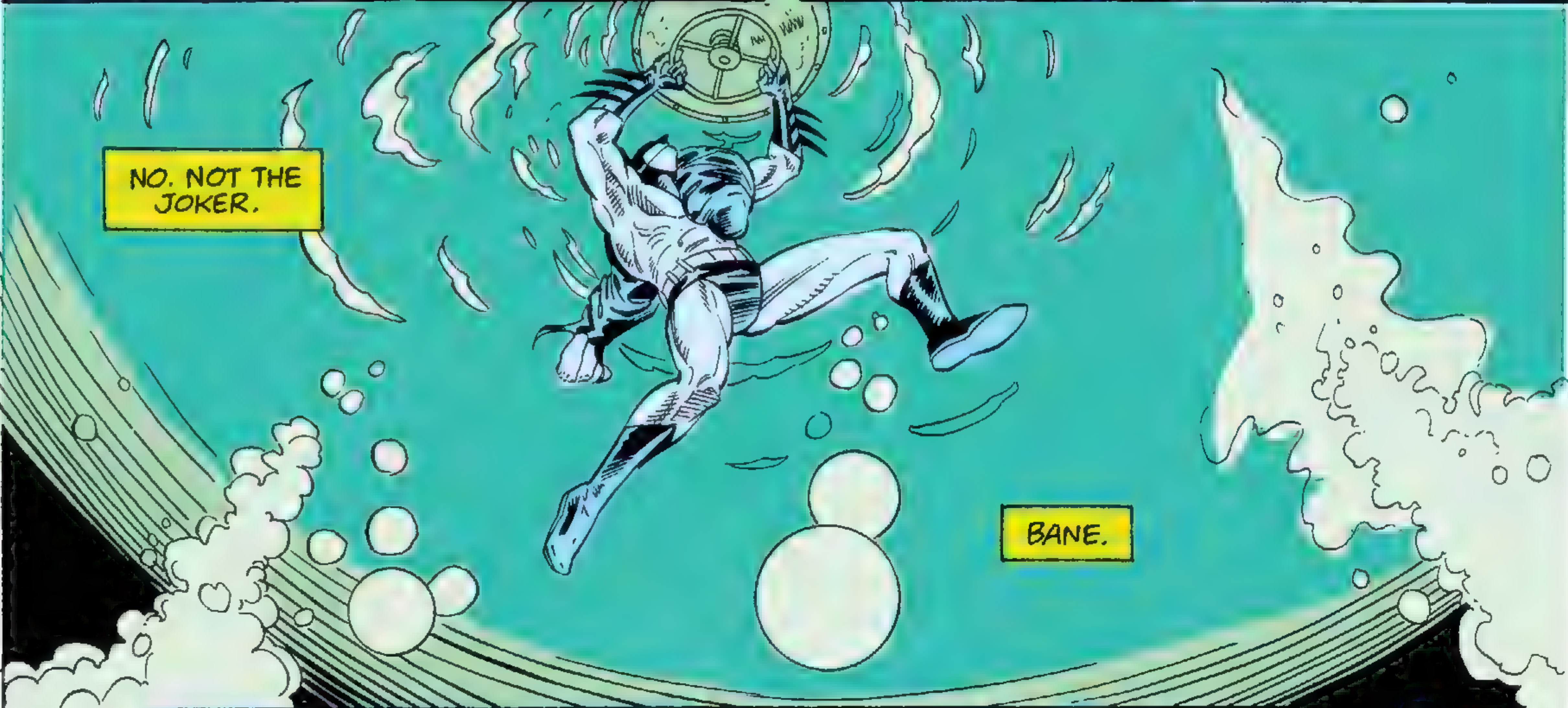
HATCH RUSTED
SHUT. MAYBE
BLOCKED.

STOP COMPLAINING
AND GET THE JOB
DONE.



IT CAN'T END
LIKE THIS.

NOT AT THE
HAND OF THE
JOKER.



NO. NOT THE
JOKER.

BANE.



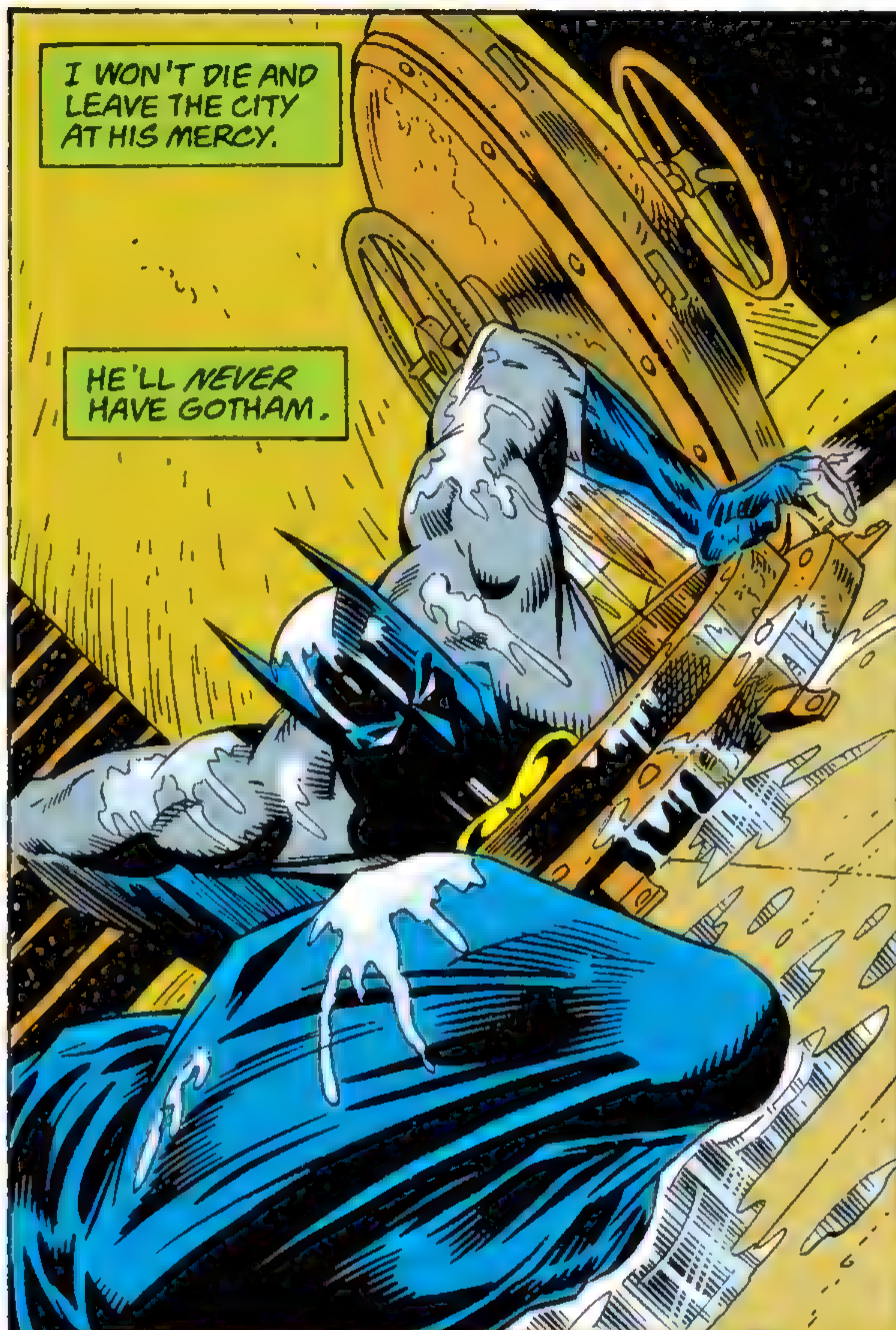
HE ENGINEERED
THIS.



HE'S THE ONE
WHO WANTS
ME DEAD.

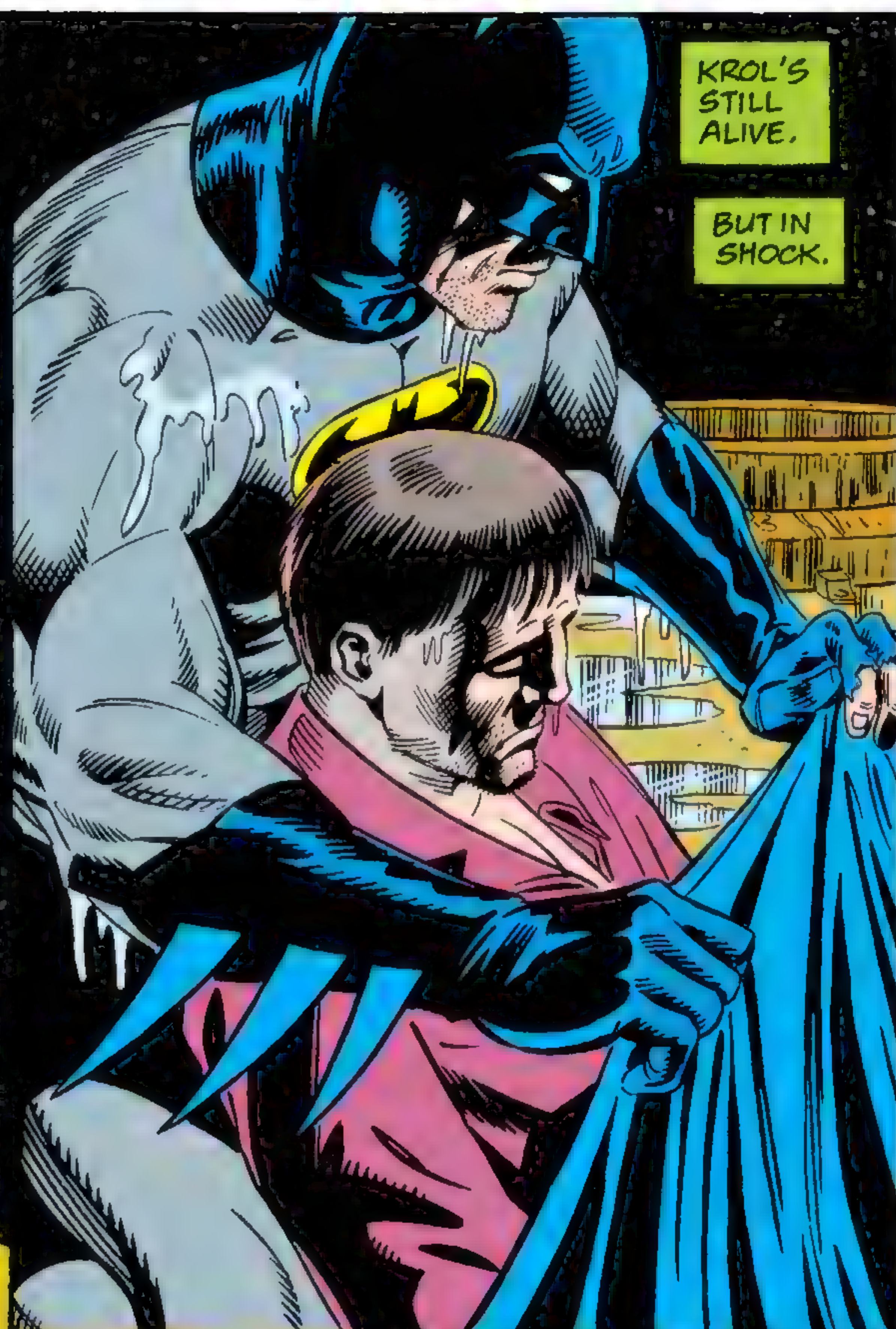
SKRIK SKRIK

BANE.



I WON'T DIE AND
LEAVE THE CITY
AT HIS MERCY.

HE'LL NEVER
HAVE GOTHAM.



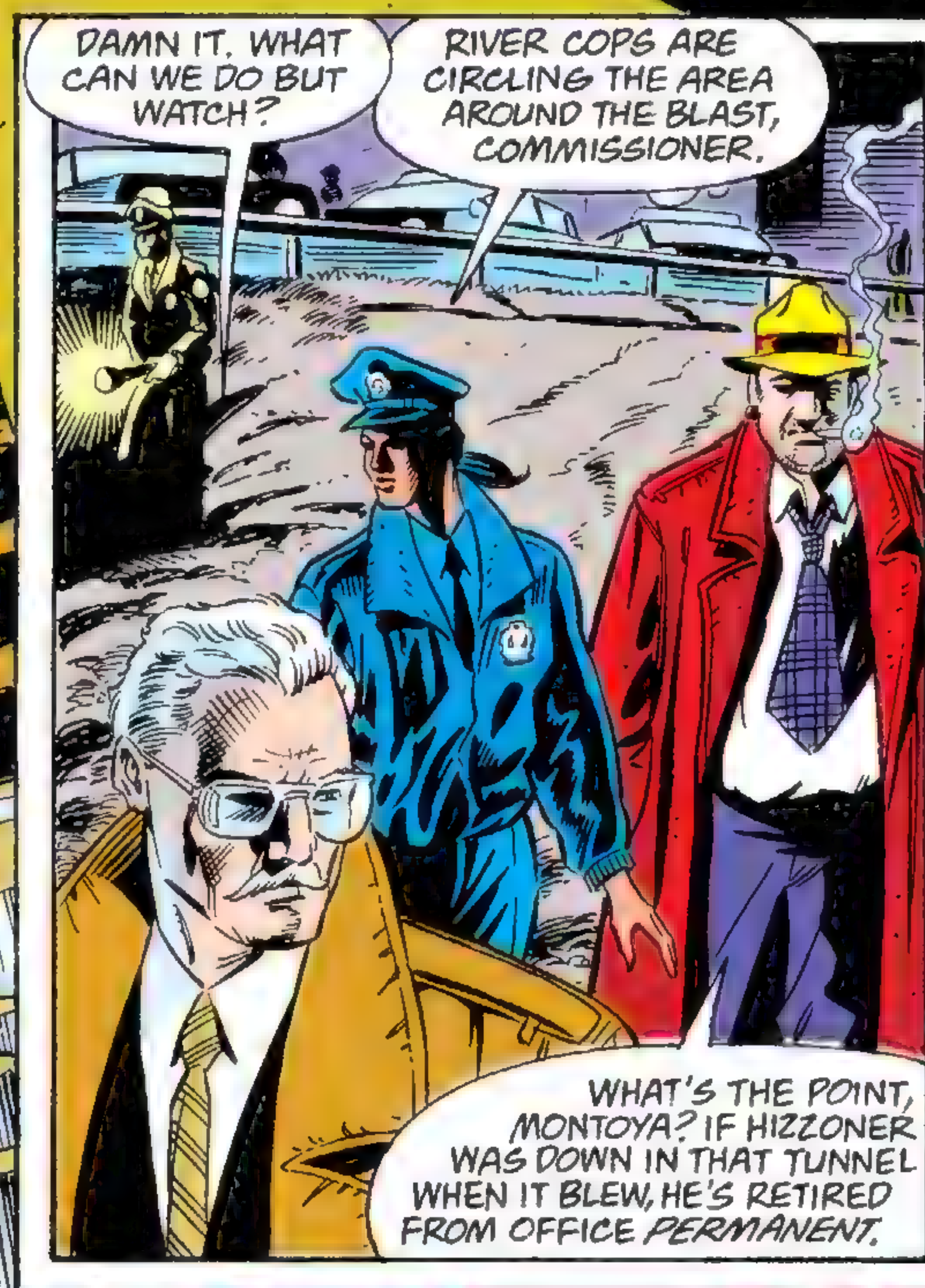
KROL'S
STILL
ALIVE.

BUT IN
SHOCK.



I CAN HEAR
HARBOR SOUNDS.

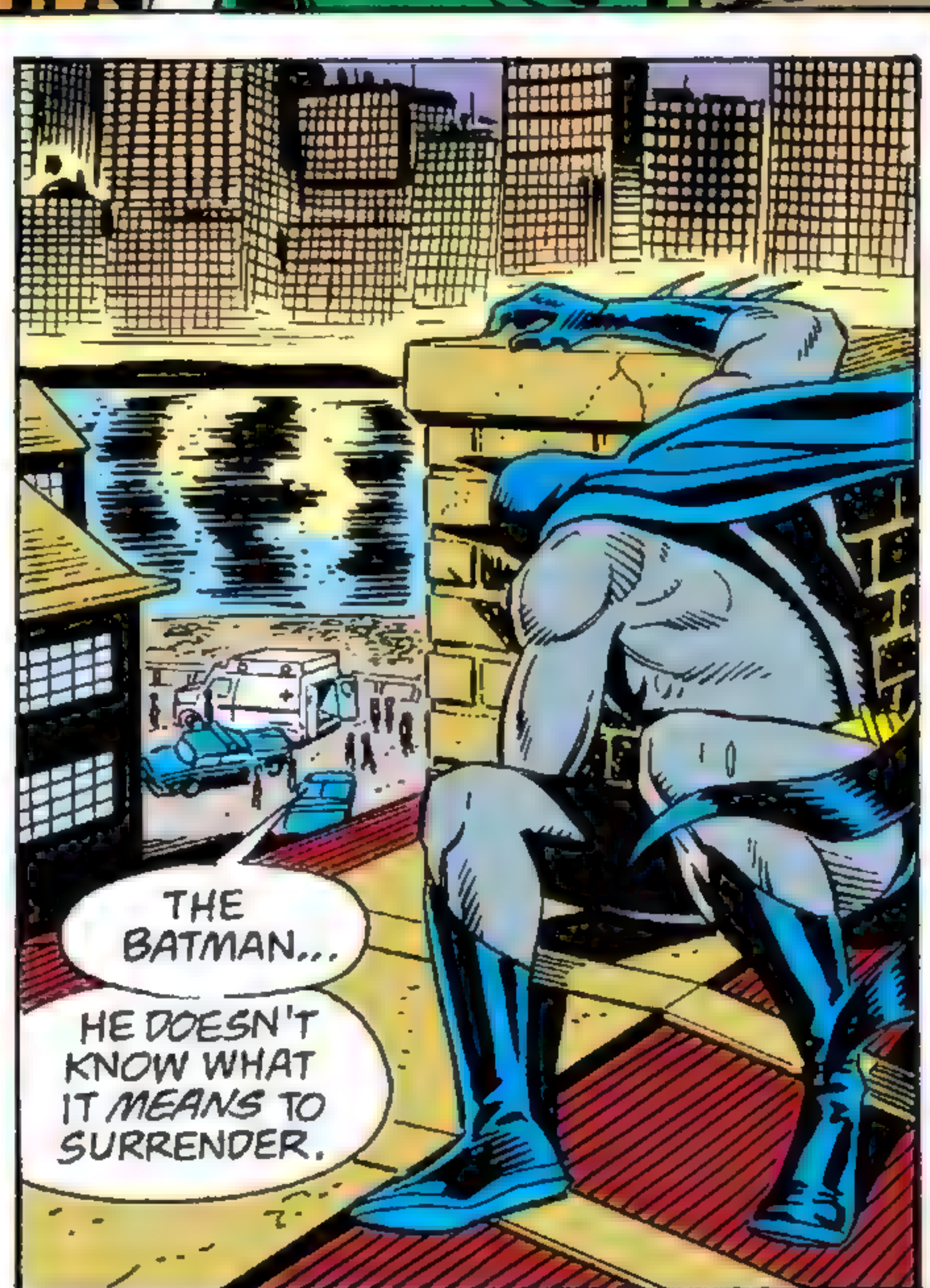
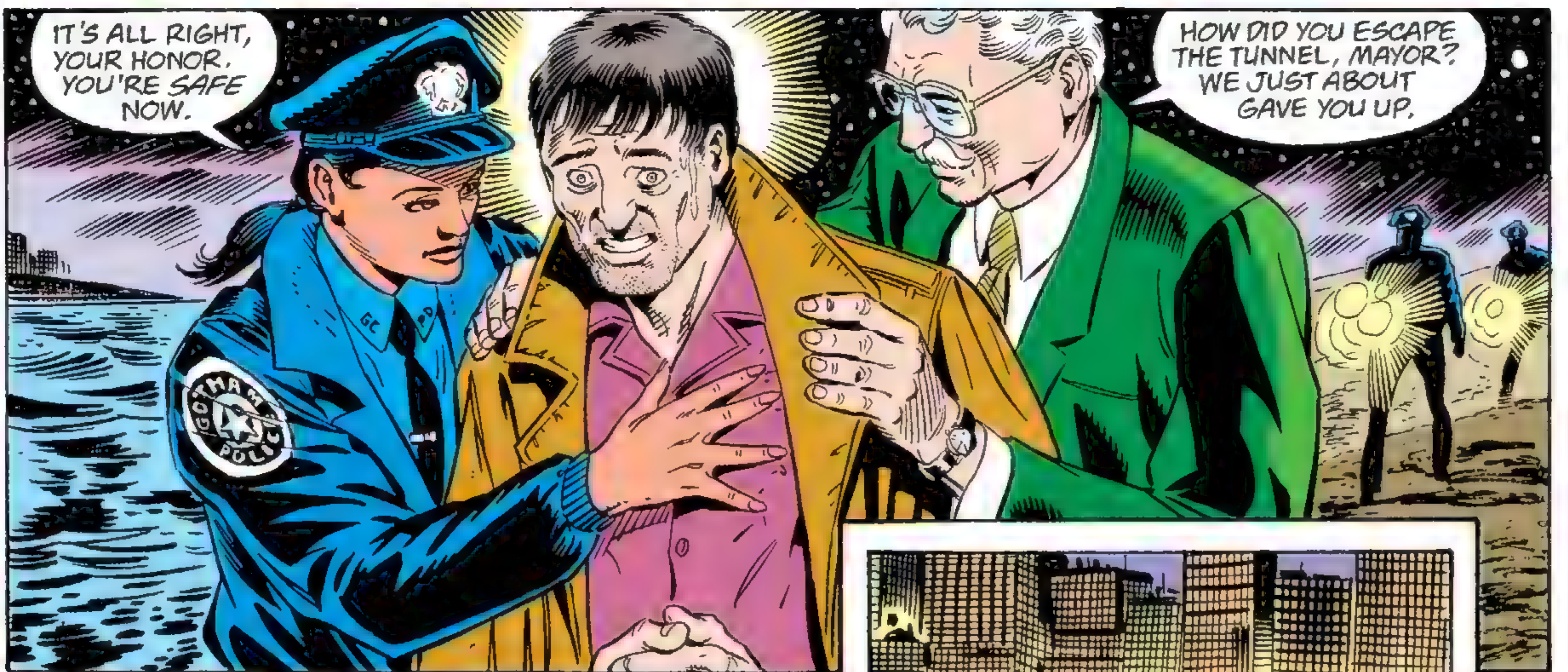
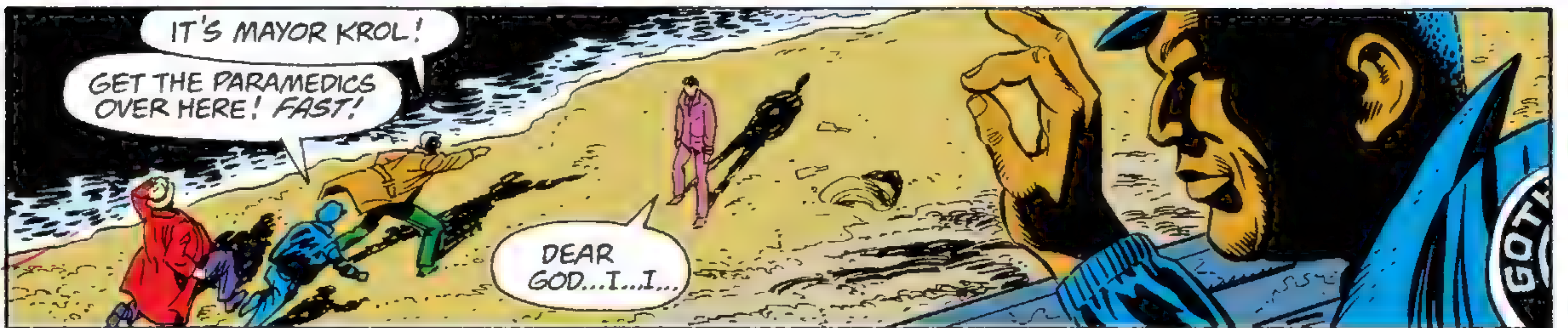
I CAN SMELL THE
IRON-TINGED AIR
OF THE CITY.

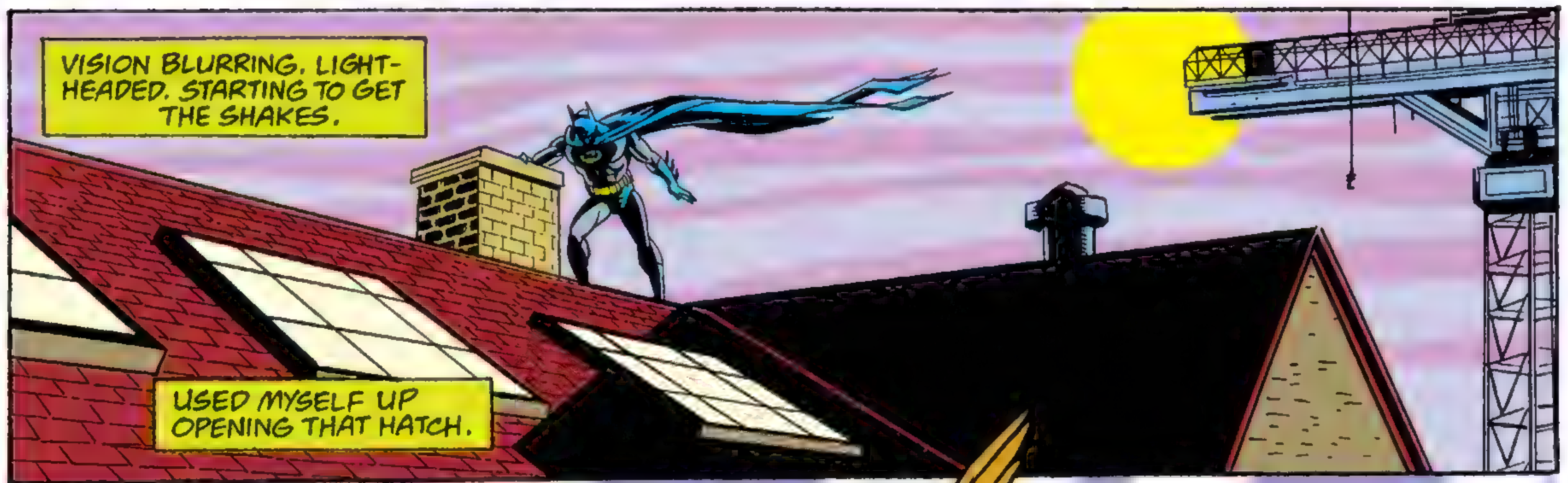


DAMN IT, WHAT
CAN WE DO BUT
WATCH?

RIVER COPS ARE
CIRCLING THE AREA
AROUND THE BLAST,
COMMISSIONER.

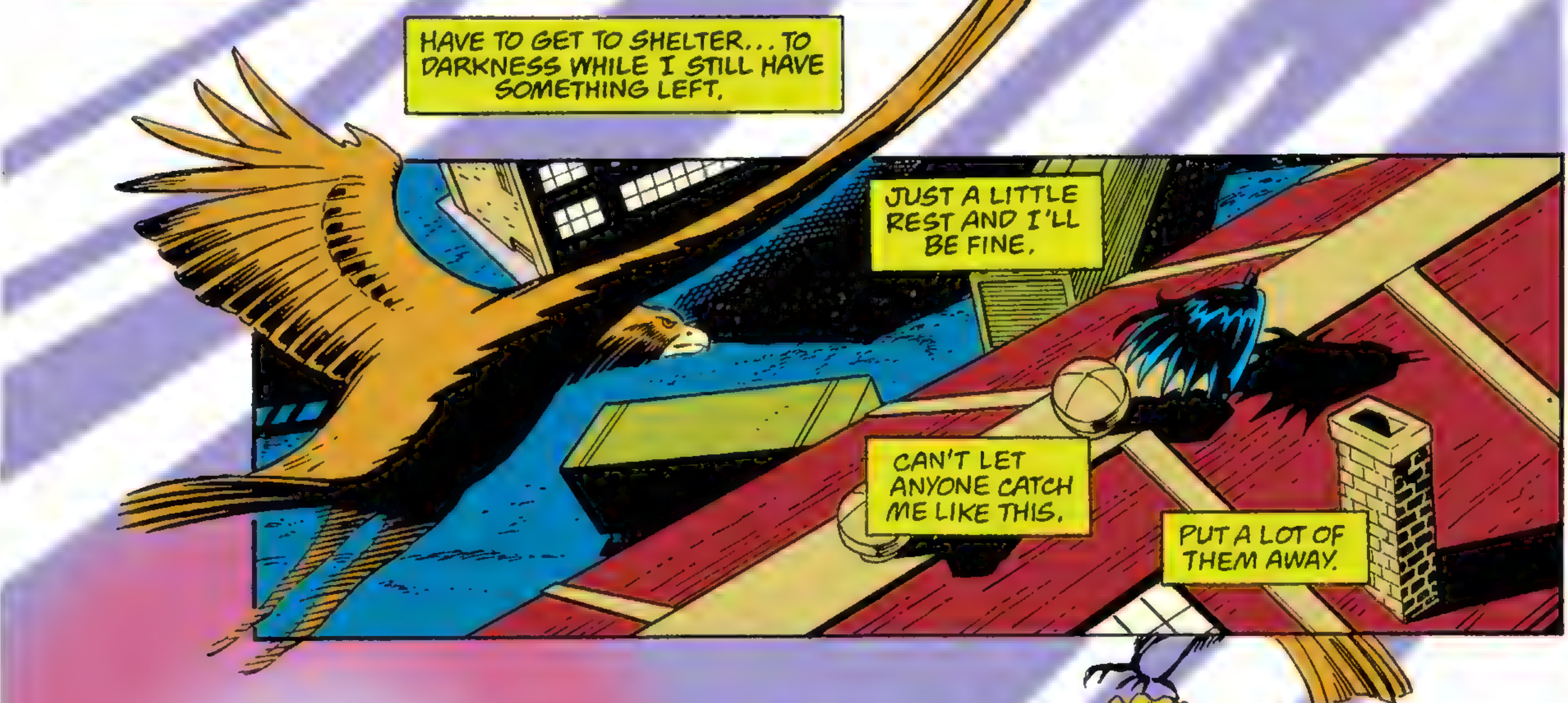
WHAT'S THE POINT,
MONTOKA? IF HIZZONER
WAS DOWN IN THAT TUNNEL
WHEN IT BLEW, HE'S RETIRED
FROM OFFICE PERMANENT.





VISION BLURRING. LIGHT-HEADED. STARTING TO GET THE SHAKES.

USED MYSELF UP OPENING THAT HATCH.



HAVE TO GET TO SHELTER... TO DARKNESS WHILE I STILL HAVE SOMETHING LEFT.

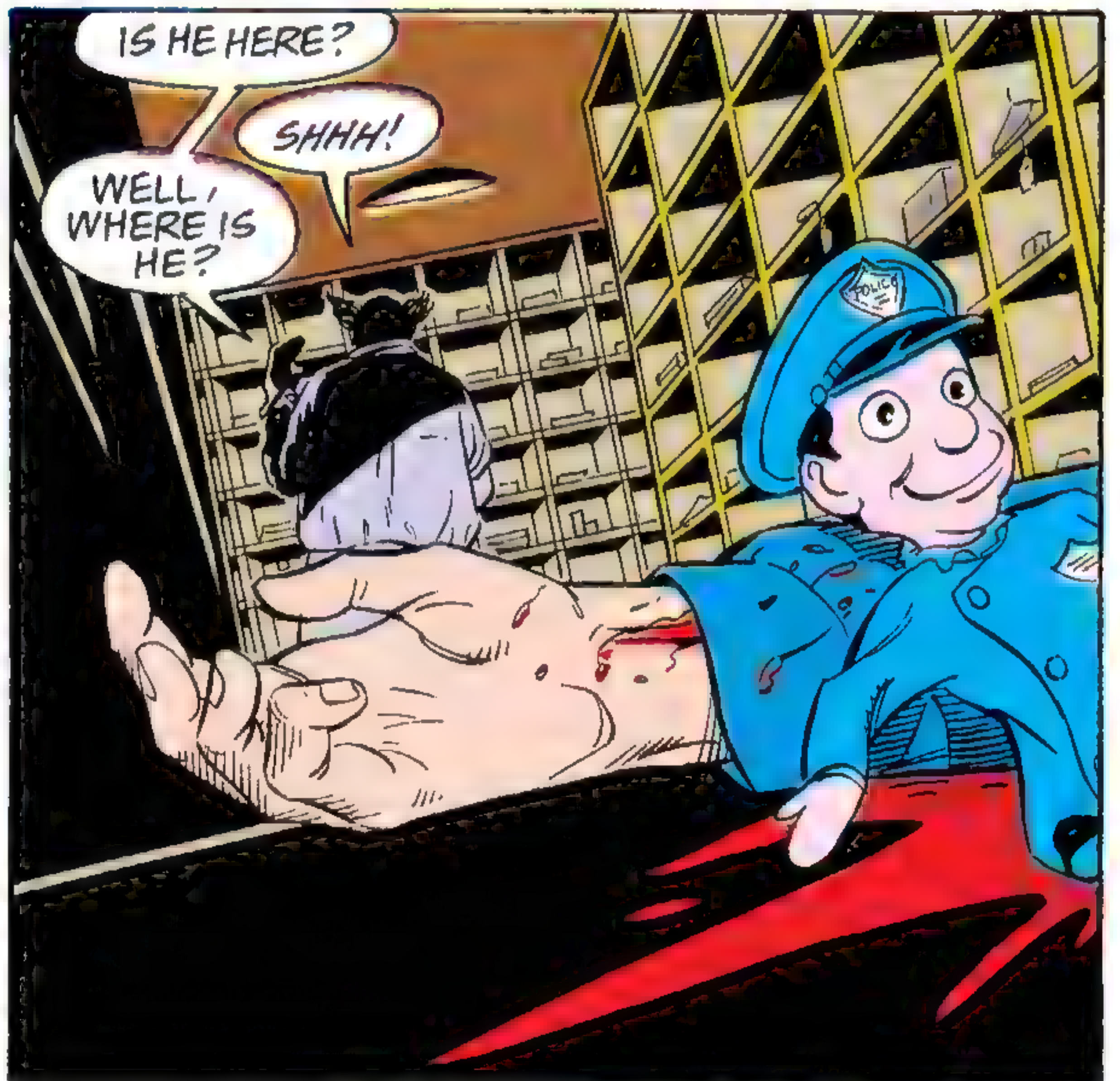
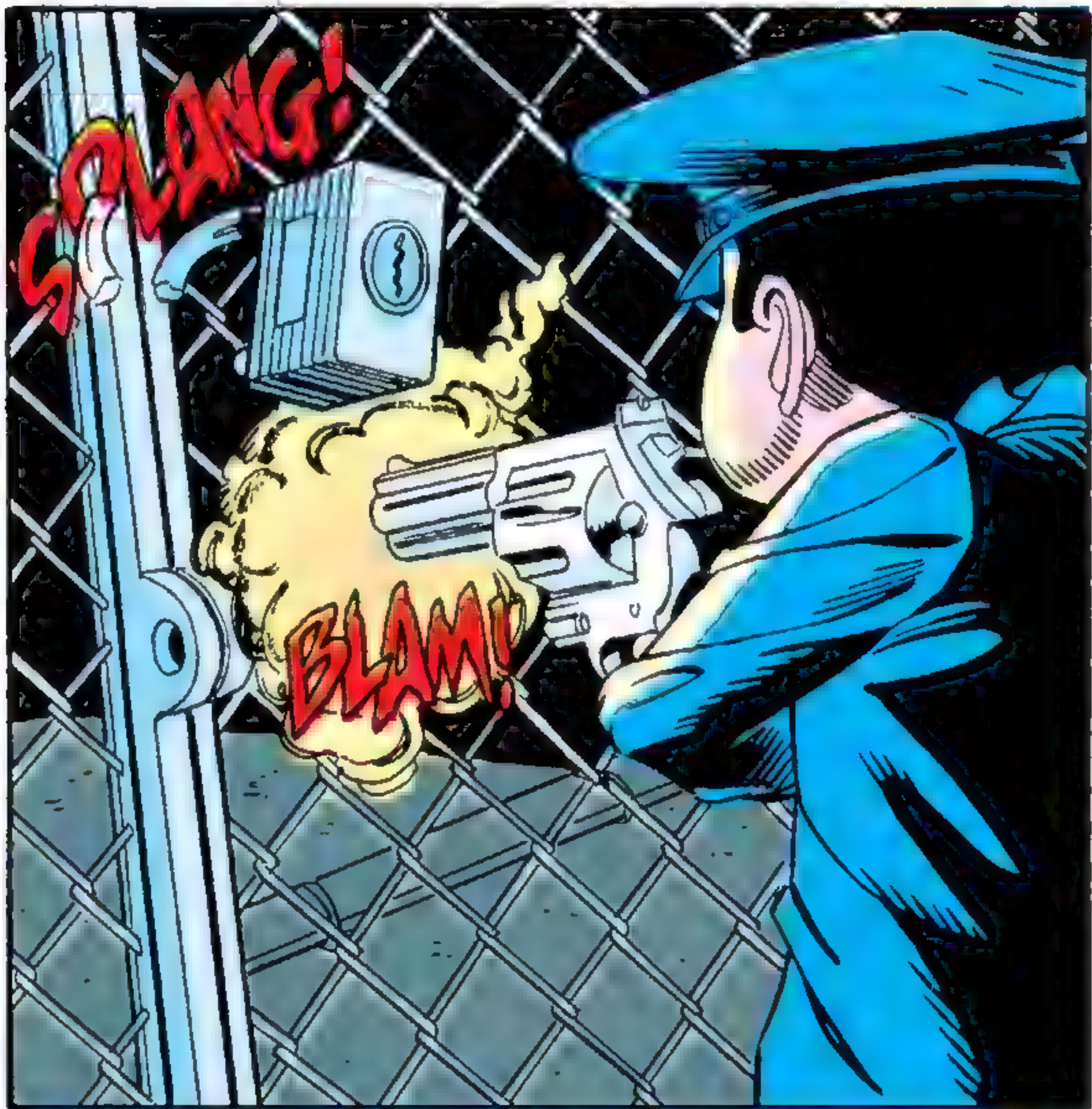
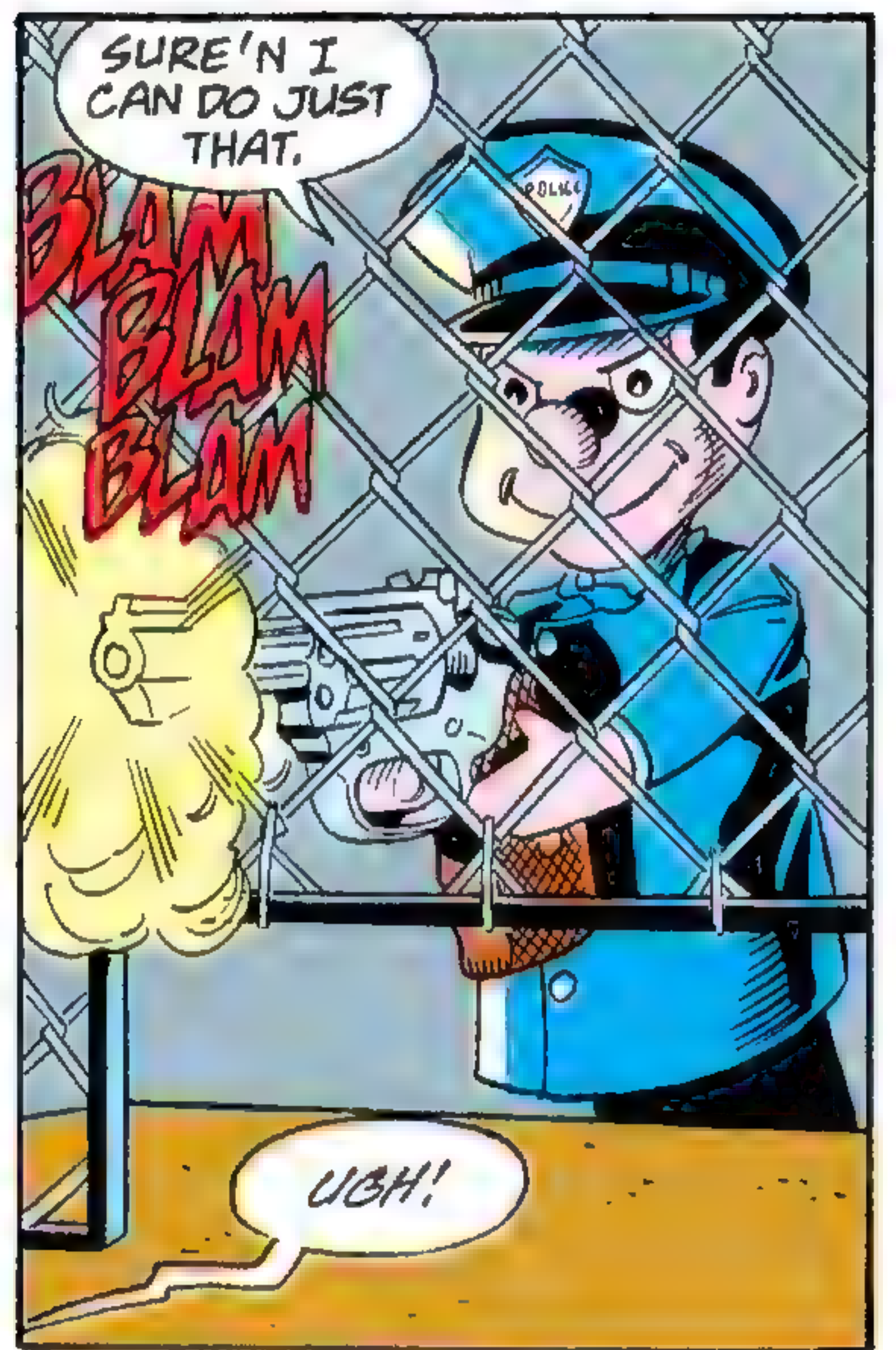
JUST A LITTLE REST AND I'LL BE FINE.

CAN'T LET ANYONE CATCH ME LIKE THIS.

PUT A LOT OF THEM AWAY.



BUT STILL TOO MANY ENEMIES LOOSE ON THE STREETS.



"AW, HE DON'T
LOOK SO TOUGH."

JUST A FEW MOMENTS'
REST AND THEN BACK
TO THE STREETS.

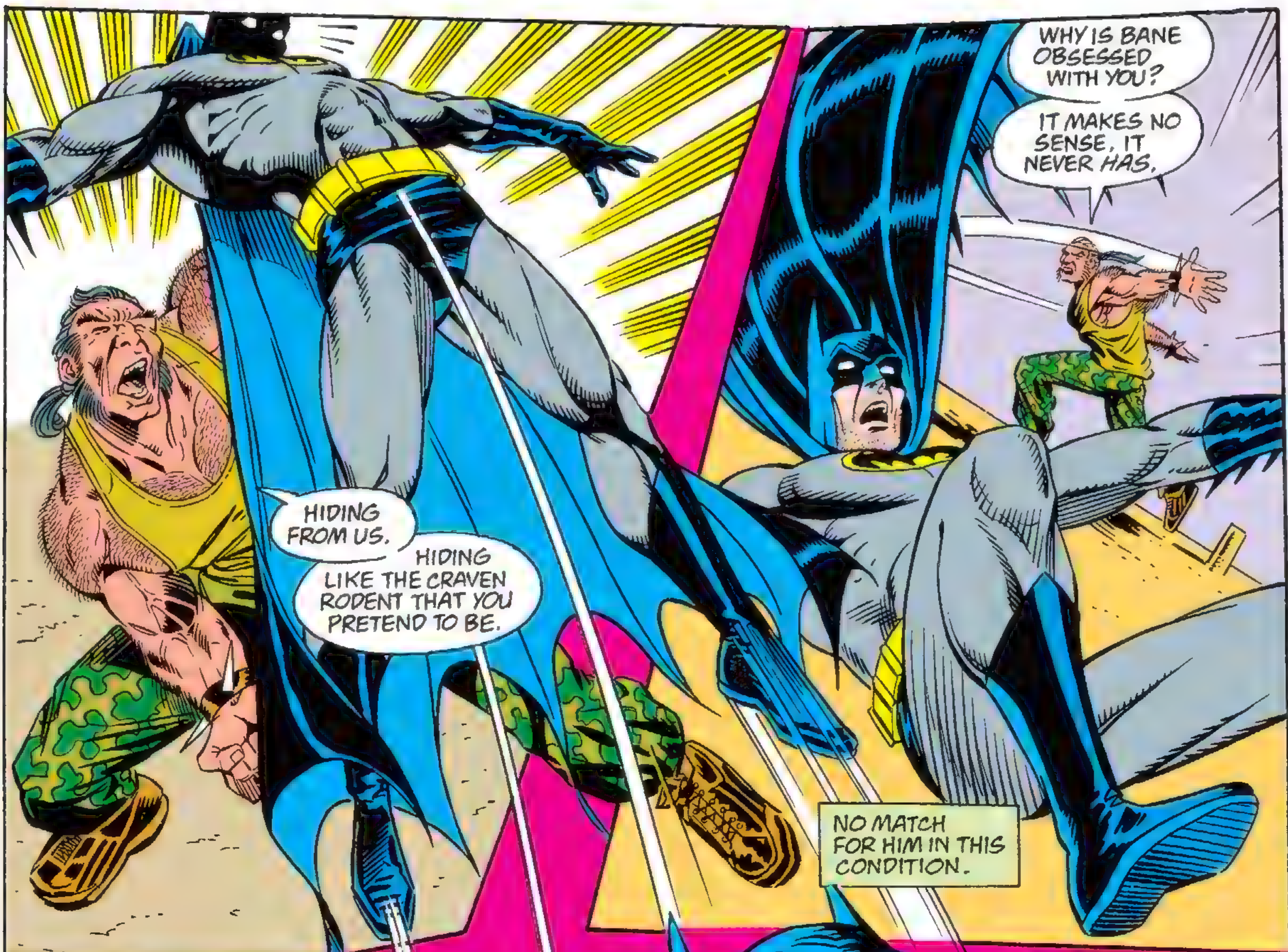
A SOUND.

IT STARTLES
THE BIRDS.

A FALCON'S CRY.

ROBIN SAID ONE OF
BANE'S MEN IS A
FALCONER.

COULD THEY BE...?



WHY IS BANE
OBSESSED
WITH YOU?

IT MAKES NO
SENSE, IT
NEVER HAS.

HIDING
FROM US.

HIDING
LIKE THE CRAVEN
RODENT THAT YOU
PRETEND TO BE.

NO MATCH
FOR HIM IN THIS
CONDITION.

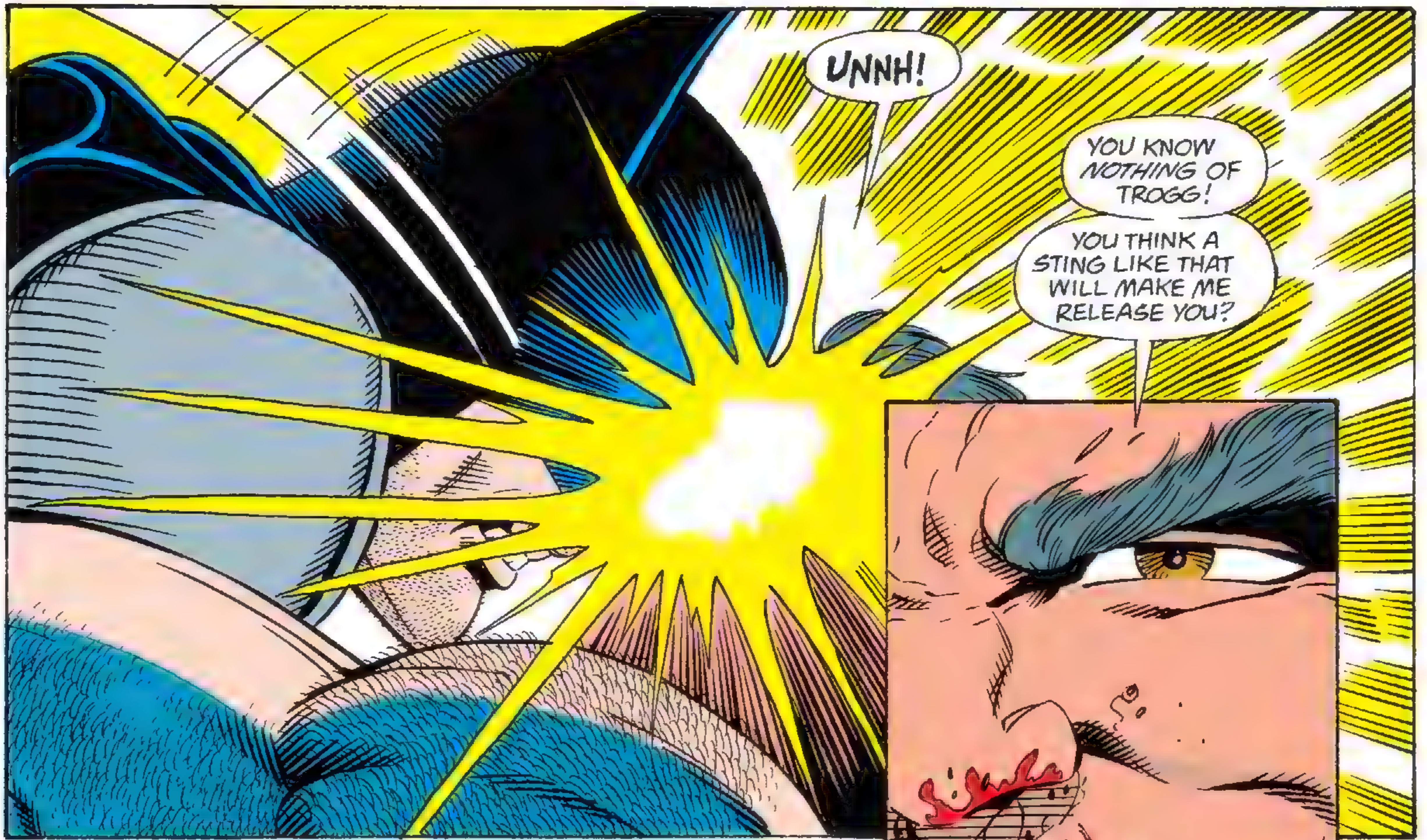


HAVE TO RELY
ON MY ARSENAL.

TROGG WILL
SHOW HIM THAT
YOU ARE BENEATH
HIS CONSIDERATION.

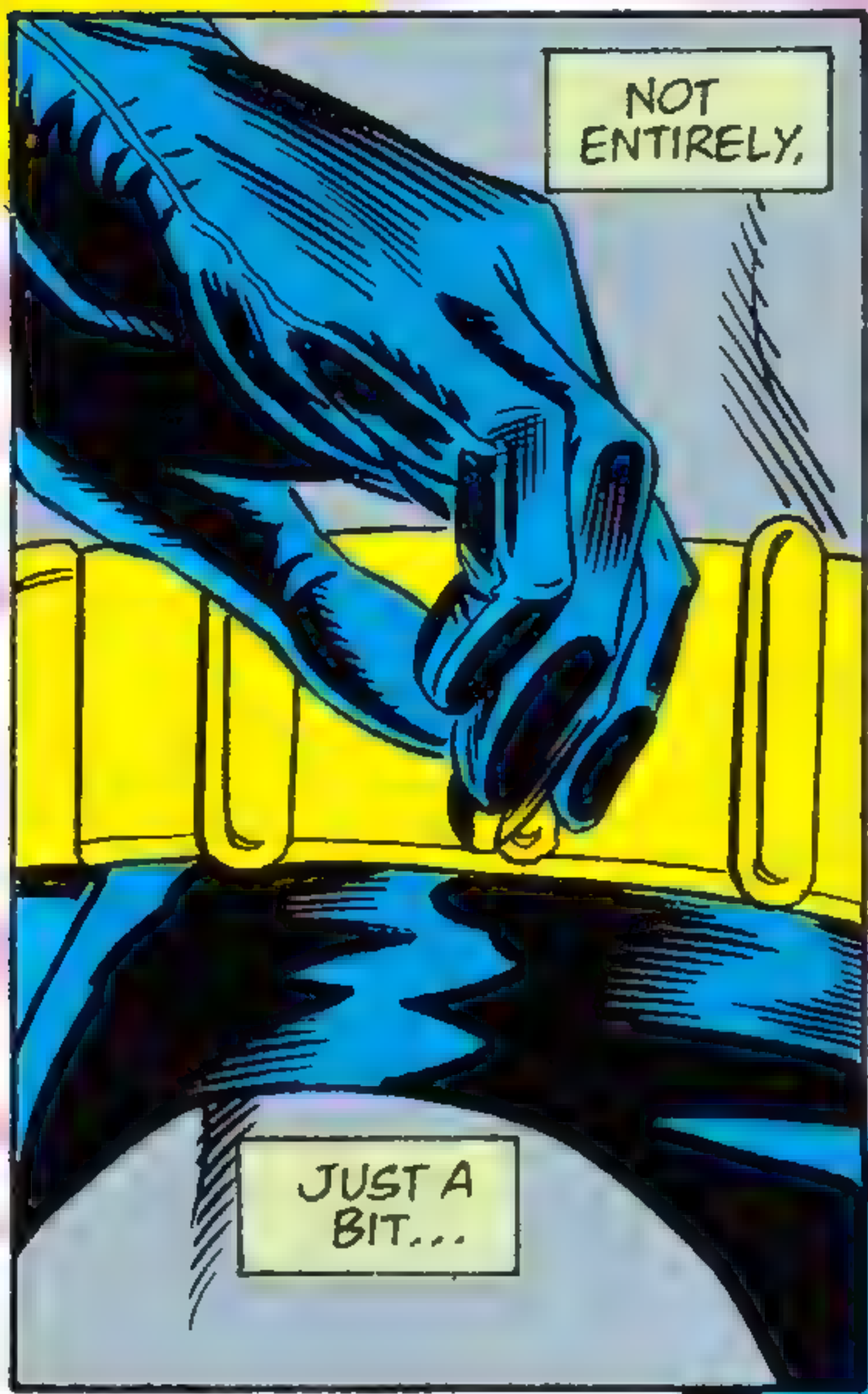
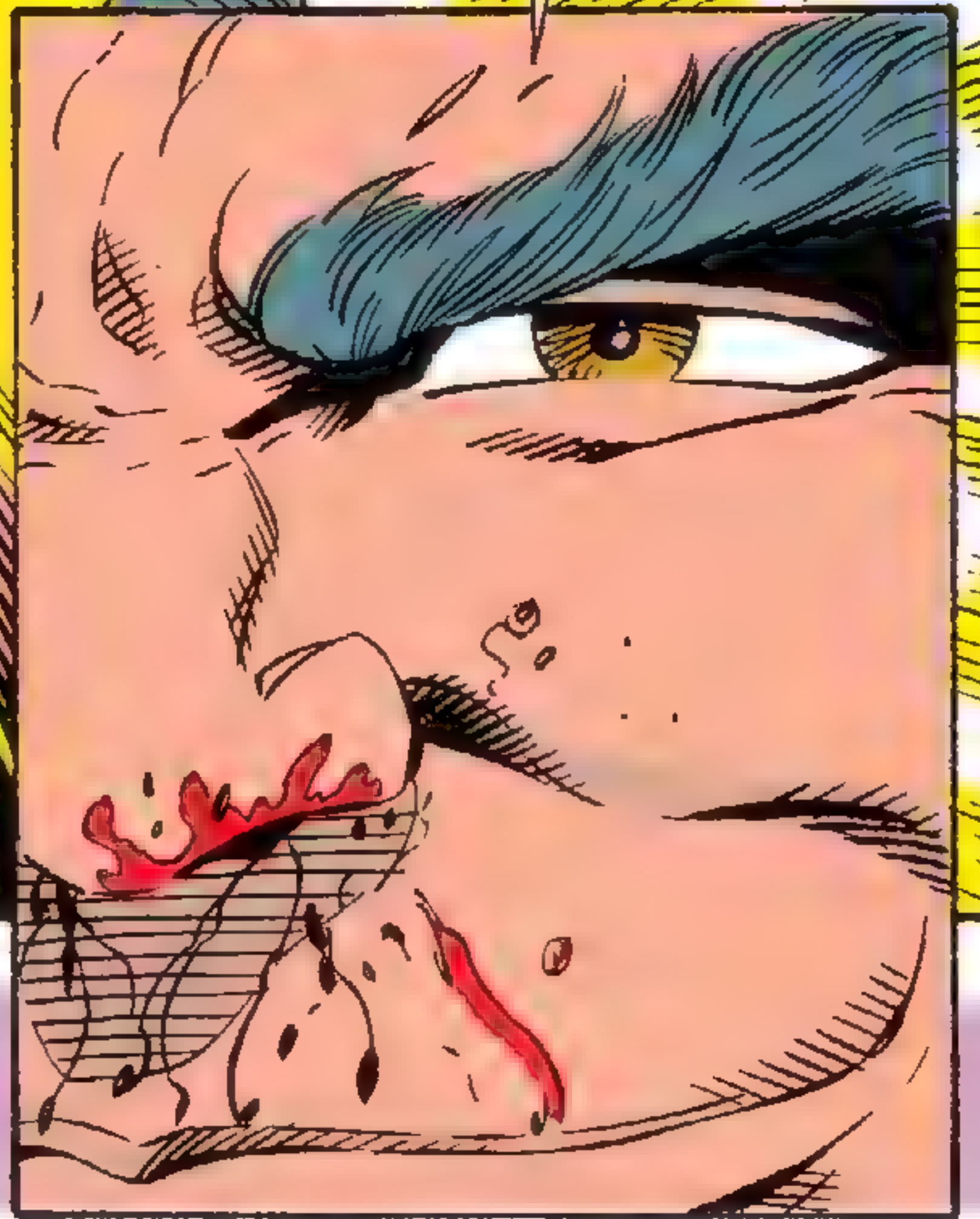
WHEN I
CRUSH THE LIFE
FROM YOU!

A WET SNAP IN
MY SIDE. HAS TO
BE A RIB.

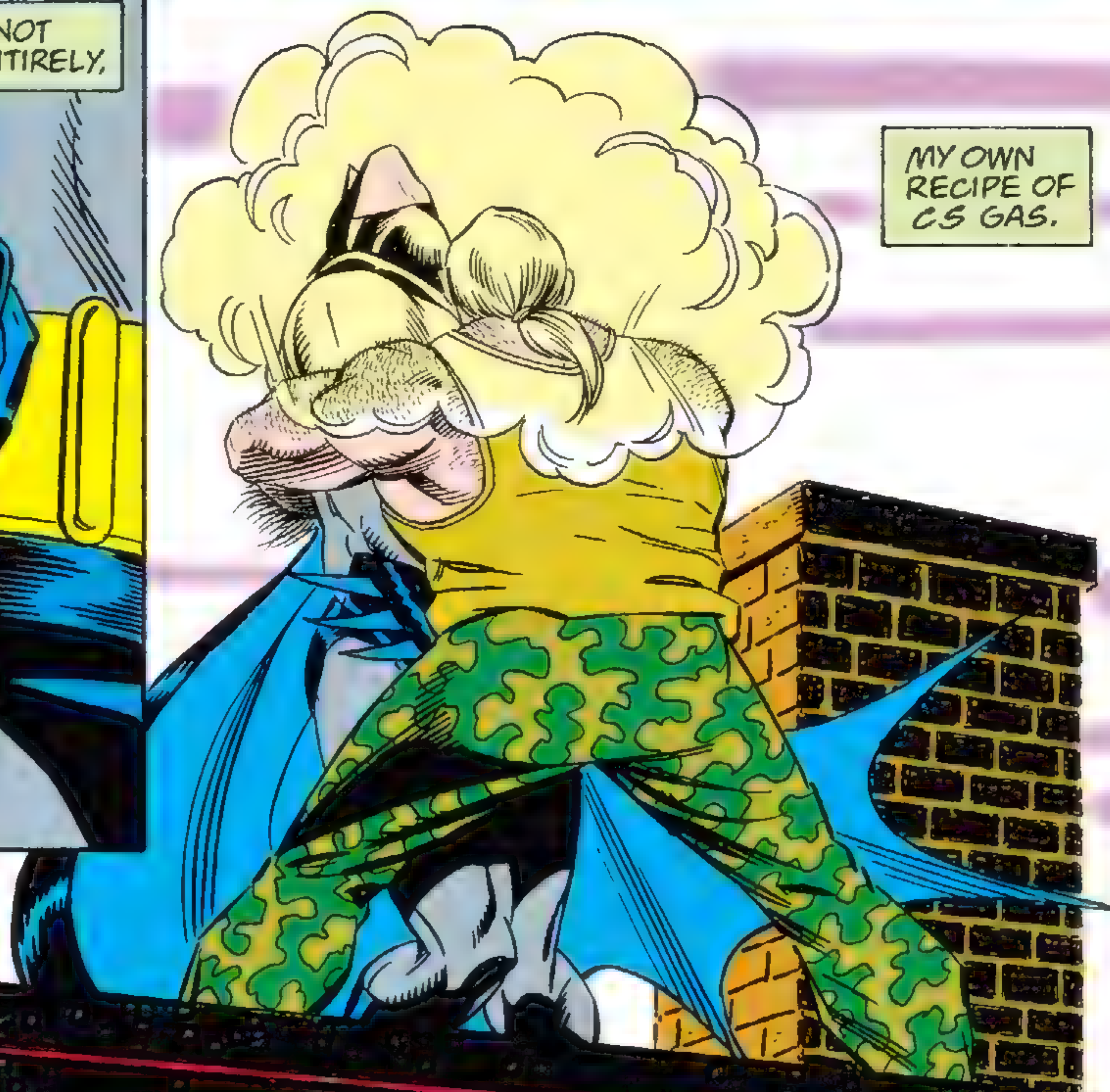


YOU KNOW
NOTHING OF
TROGG!

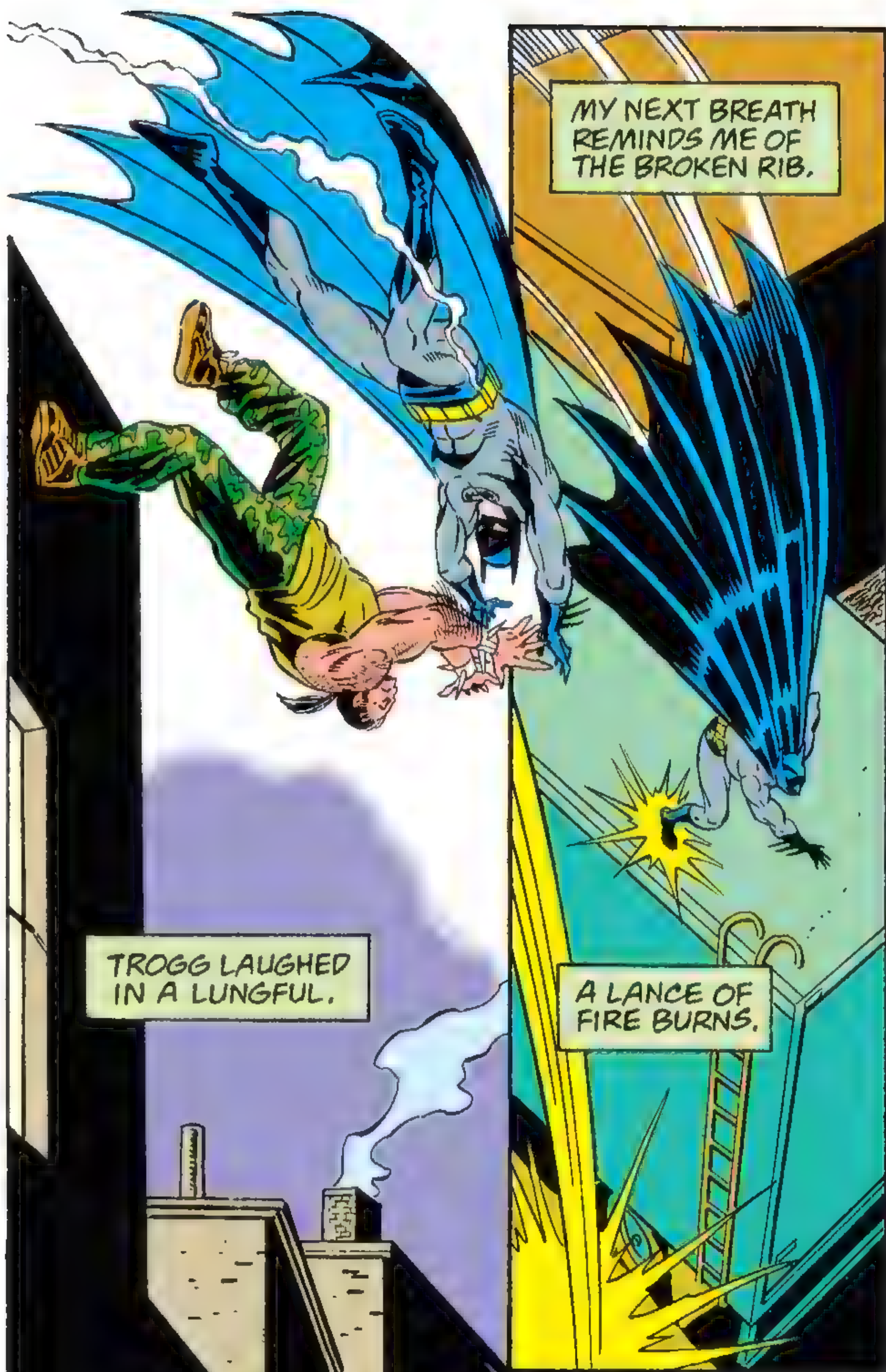
YOU THINK A
STING LIKE THAT
WILL MAKE ME
RELEASE YOU?



JUST A
BIT...



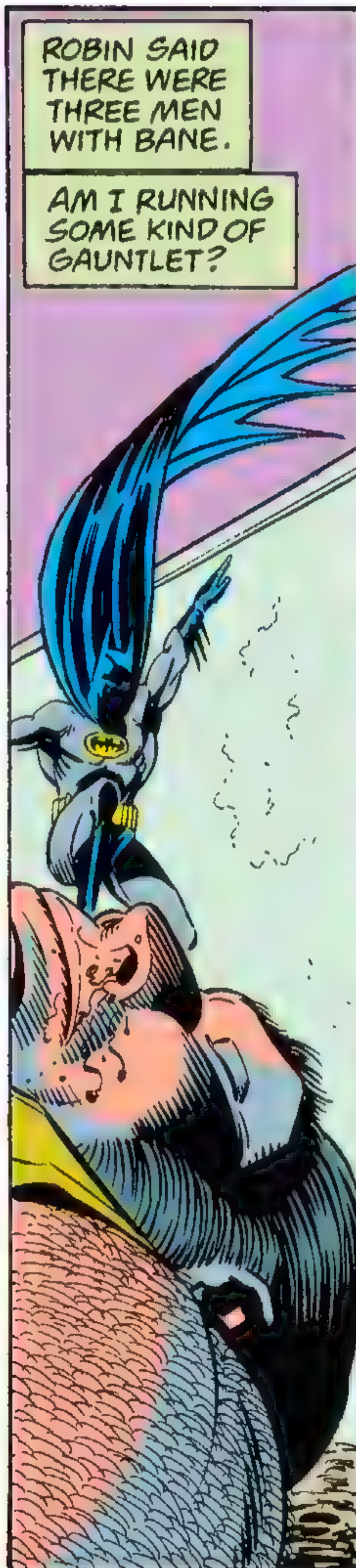
UNCONTROLLABLE
NAUSEA AND DIS-
ORIENTATION.



TROGG LAUGHED
IN A LUNGFUL.

MY NEXT BREATH
REMINDS ME OF
THE BROKEN RIB.

A LANCE OF
FIRE BURNS.



ROBIN SAID
THERE WERE
THREE MEN
WITH BANE.

AM I RUNNING
SOME KIND OF
GAUNTLET?



HEAD
SWIMMING.

PAIN IN MY SIDE
GETTING SHARPER.



ISOLATE THE
PAIN. LOCK
IT AWAY.

PUT IN A TINY BOX
IN A CORNER OF
MY MIND.

SHHINK!

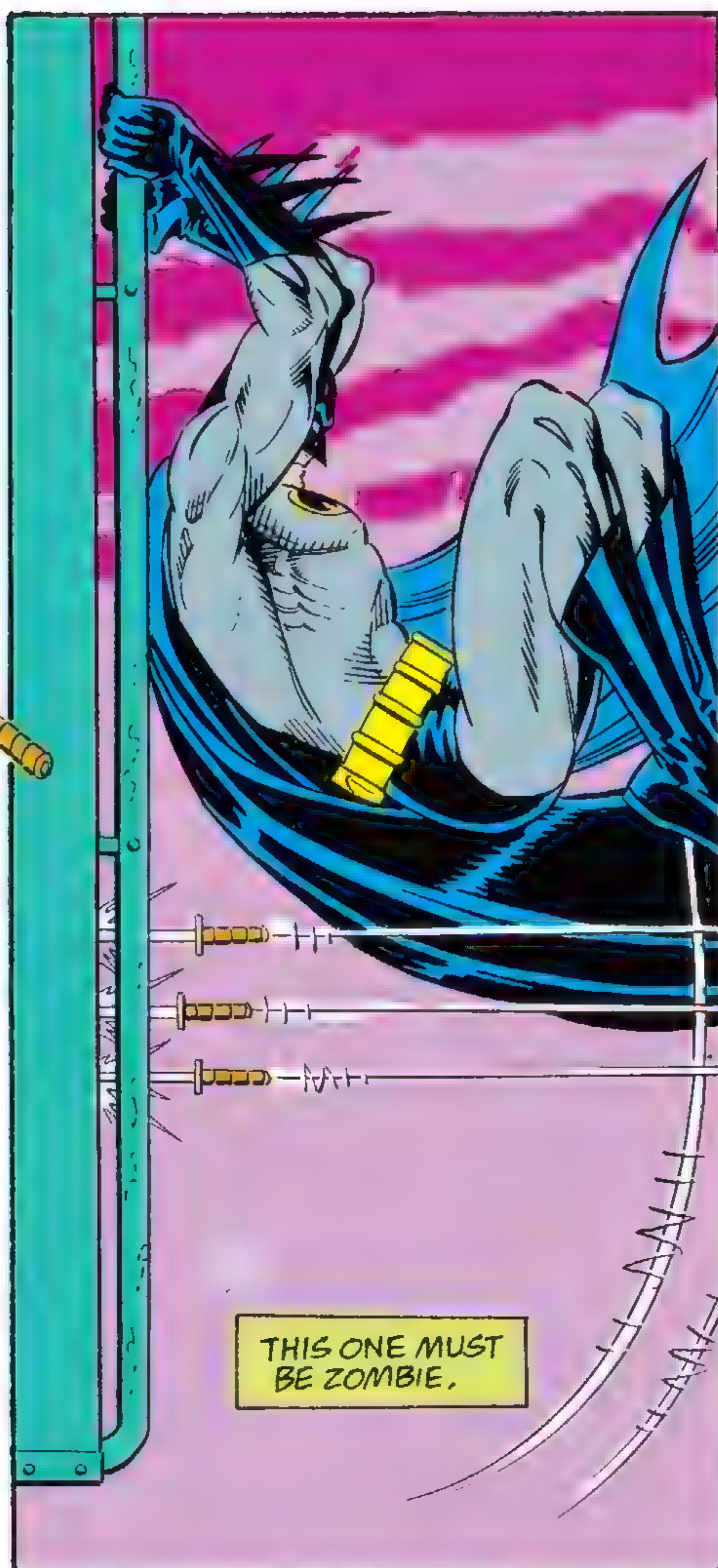
I'M THE CITY'S
ONLY HOPE.



I'M ALL THAT STANDS BETWEEN THESE MONSTERS AND GOTHAM.

IT TAKES AN EXCELLENT EYE TO MISS THAT ACCURATELY.

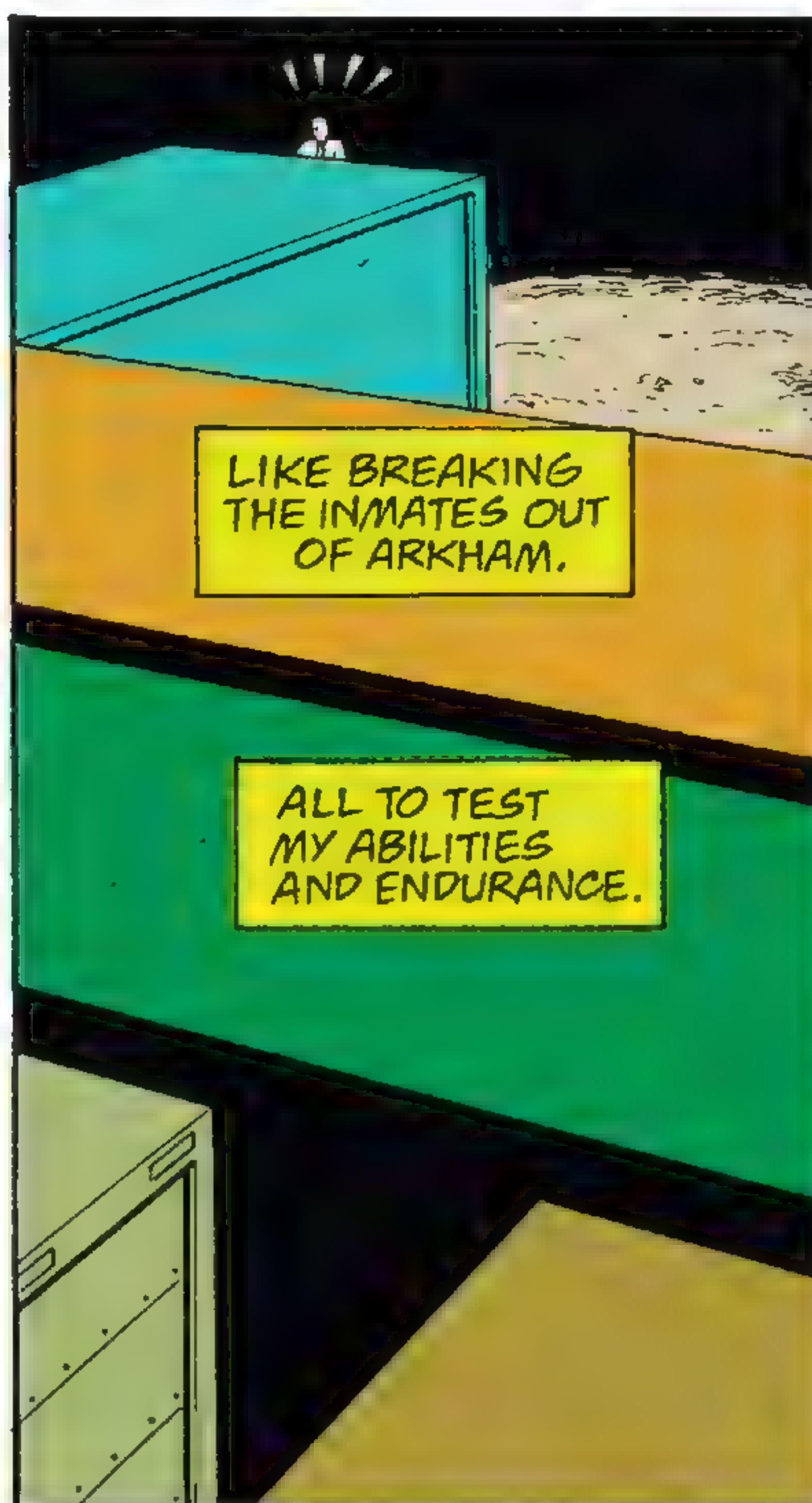
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT I DO NOT RELY ON BRUTE STRENGTH.



THIS ONE MUST BE ZOMBIE.



SO IT'S ANOTHER TEST.



LIKE BREAKING THE INMATES OUT OF ARKHAM.

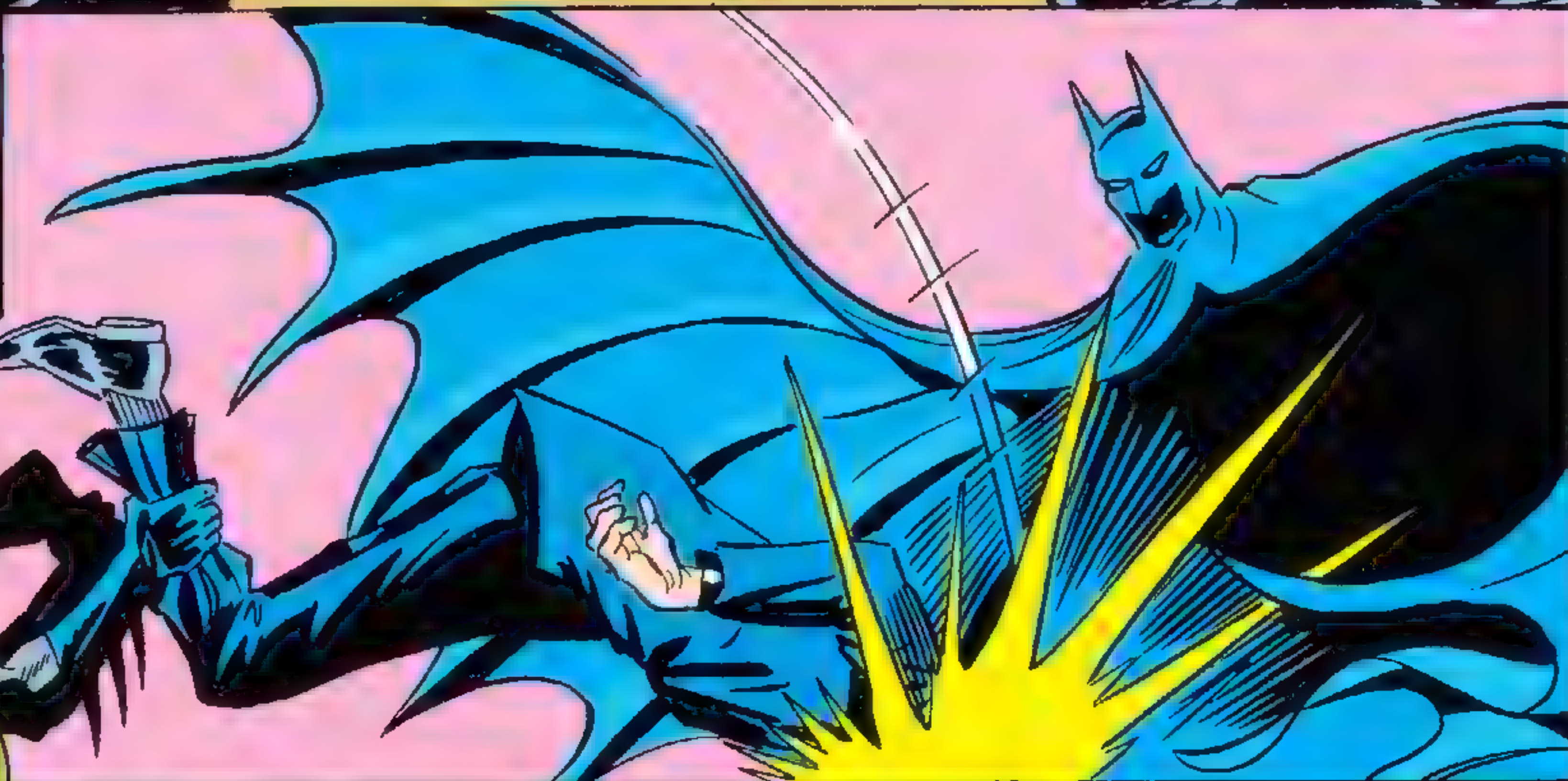
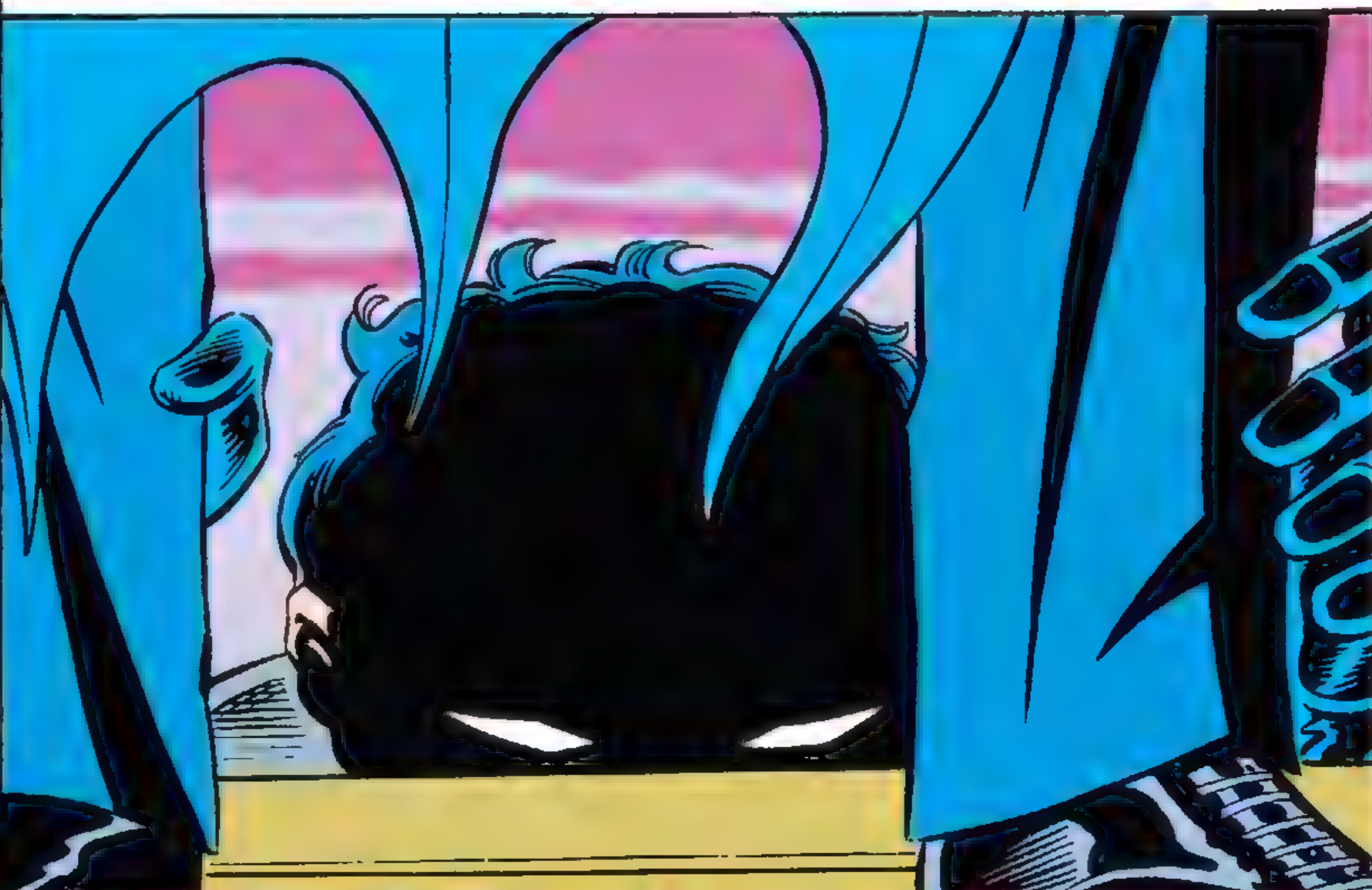
ALL TO TEST MY ABILITIES AND ENDURANCE.

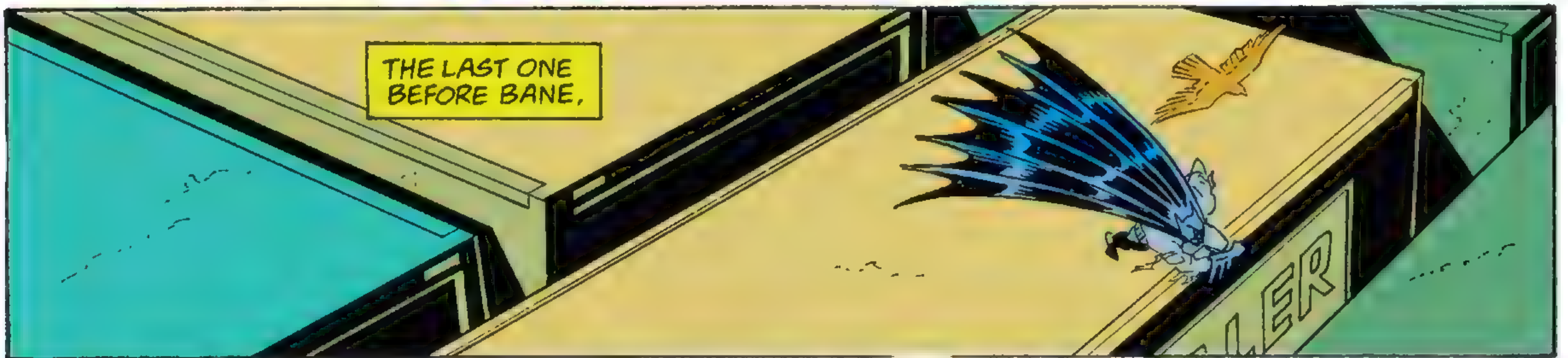


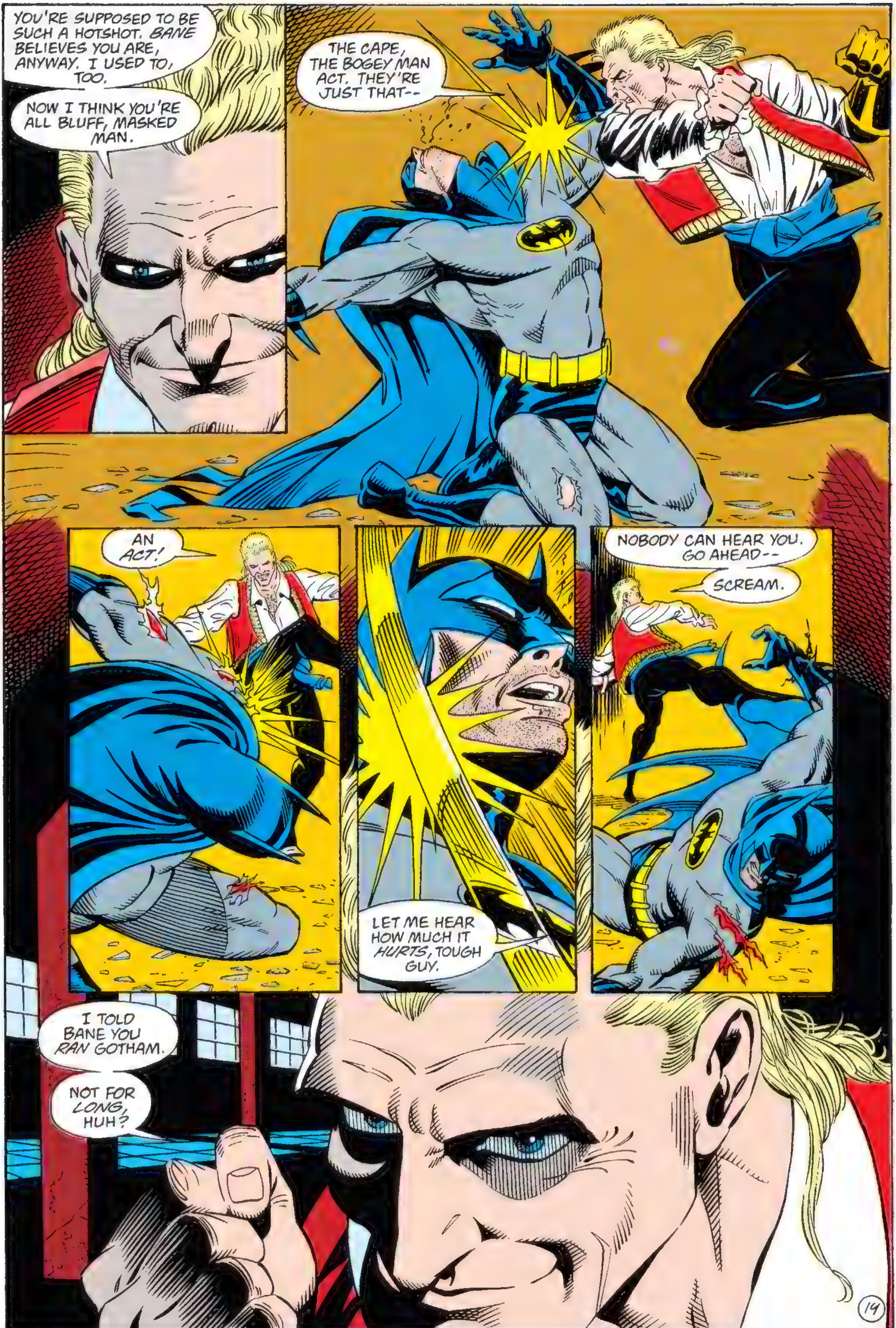
AS THOUGH BANE WERE STUDYING ME.

TO WHAT END?

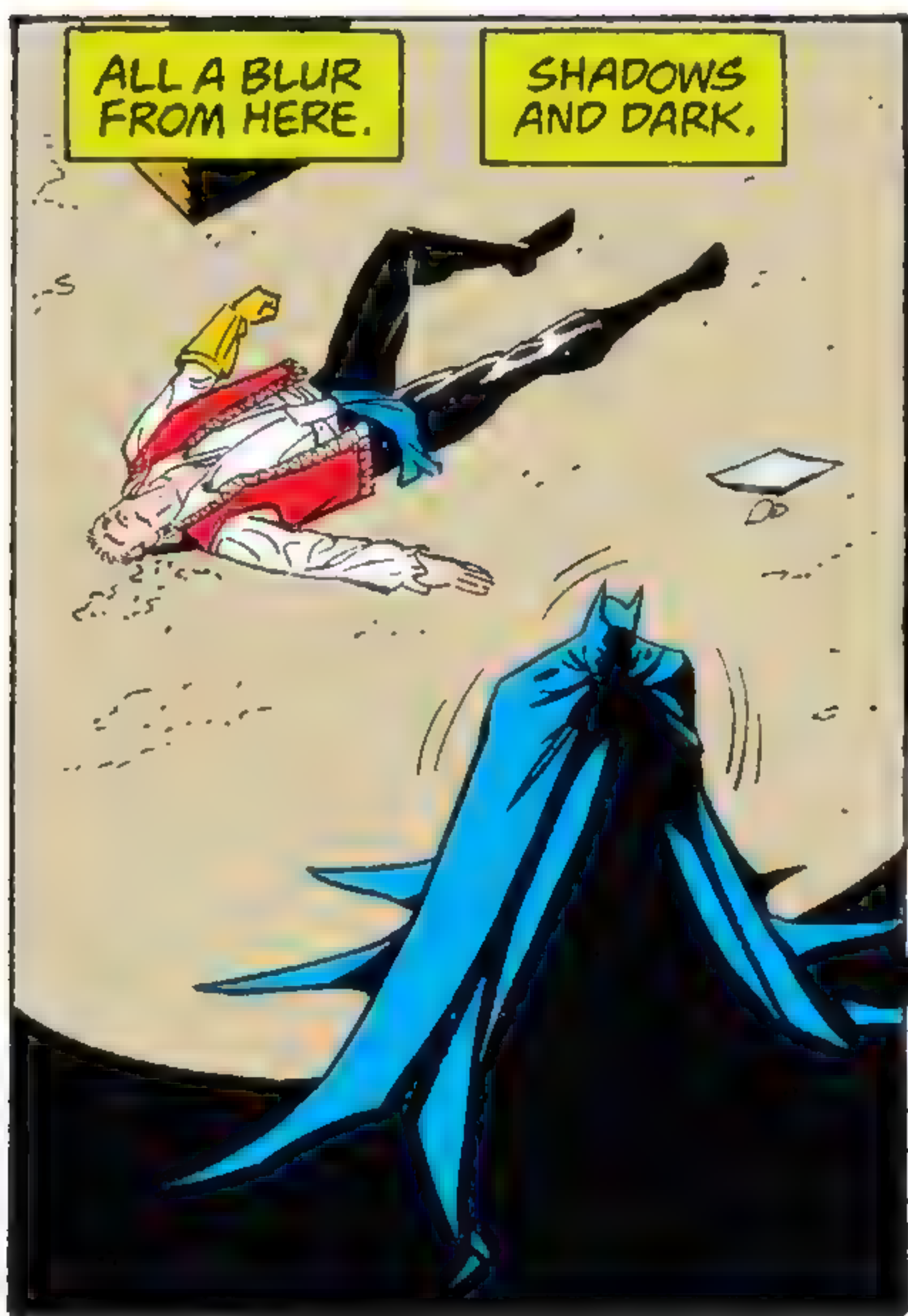






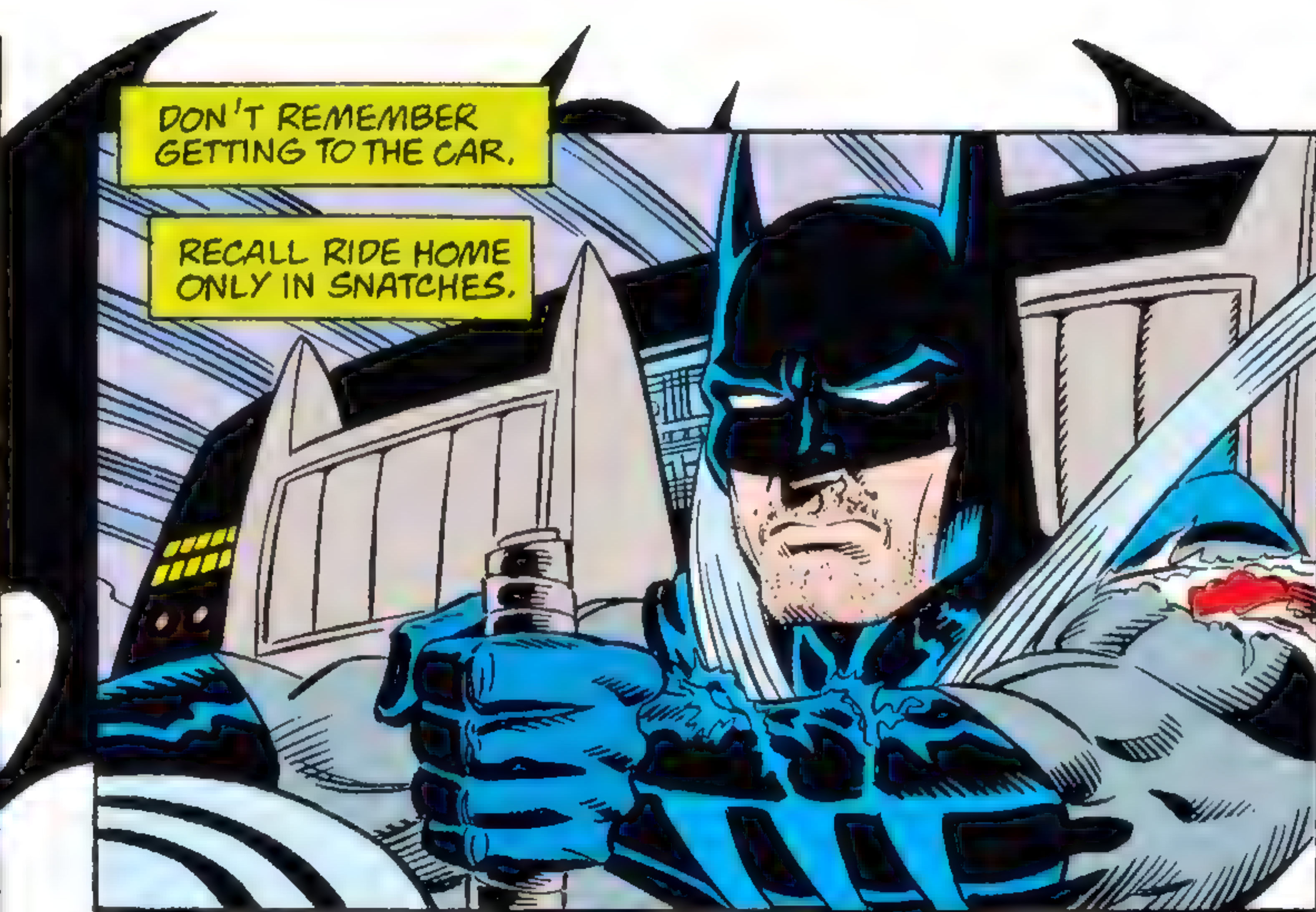






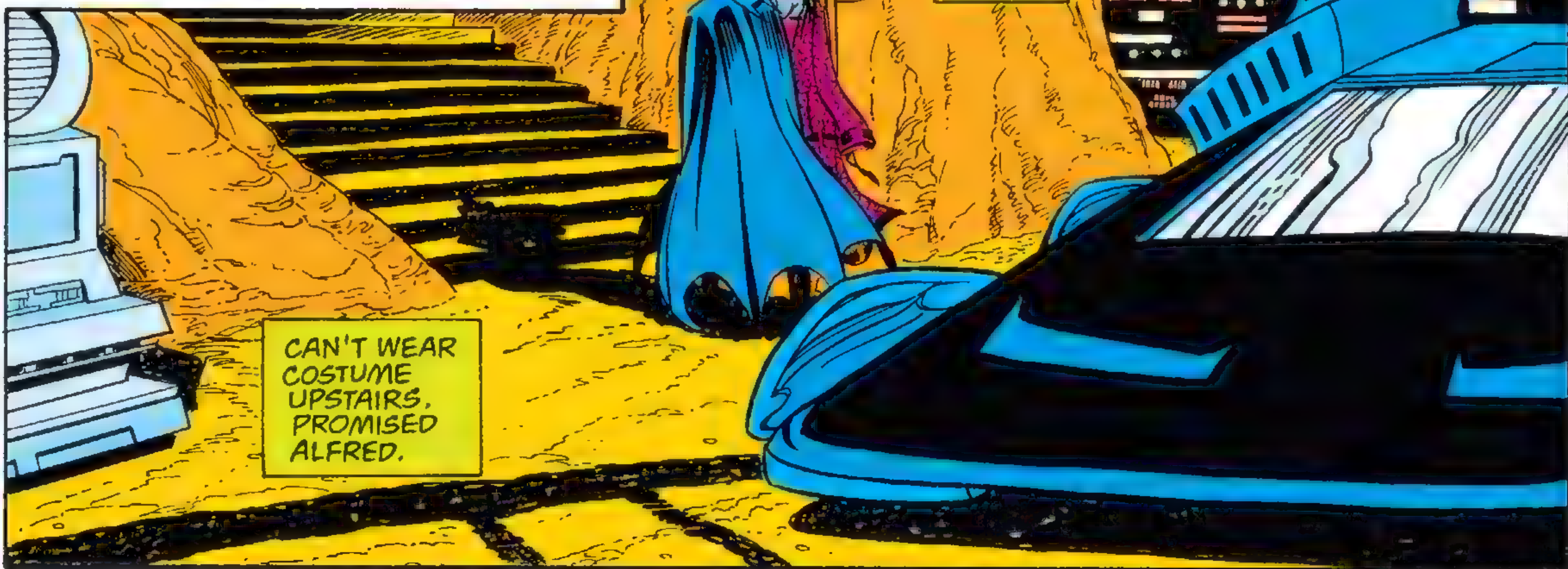
ALL A BLUR FROM HERE.

SHADOWS AND DARK.



DON'T REMEMBER GETTING TO THE CAR.

RECALL RIDE HOME ONLY IN SNATCHES.



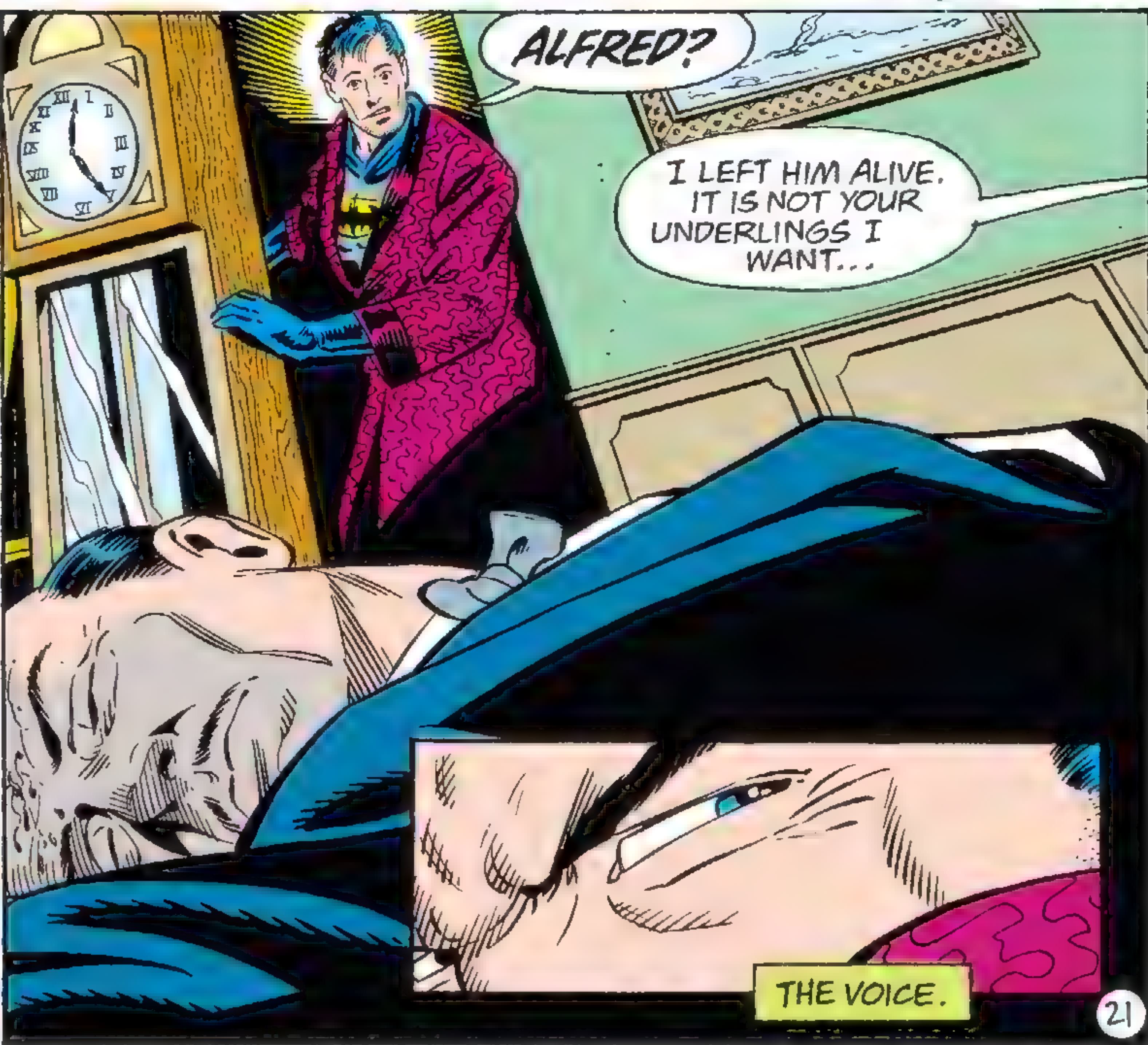
HOME.

CAN'T WEAR COSTUME UPSTAIRS, PROMISED ALFRED.



WHERE IS ALFRED?

I COULD HAVE PUT UP WITH HIS SARCASM IN EXCHANGE FOR SOME HELP UP THE STAIRS.



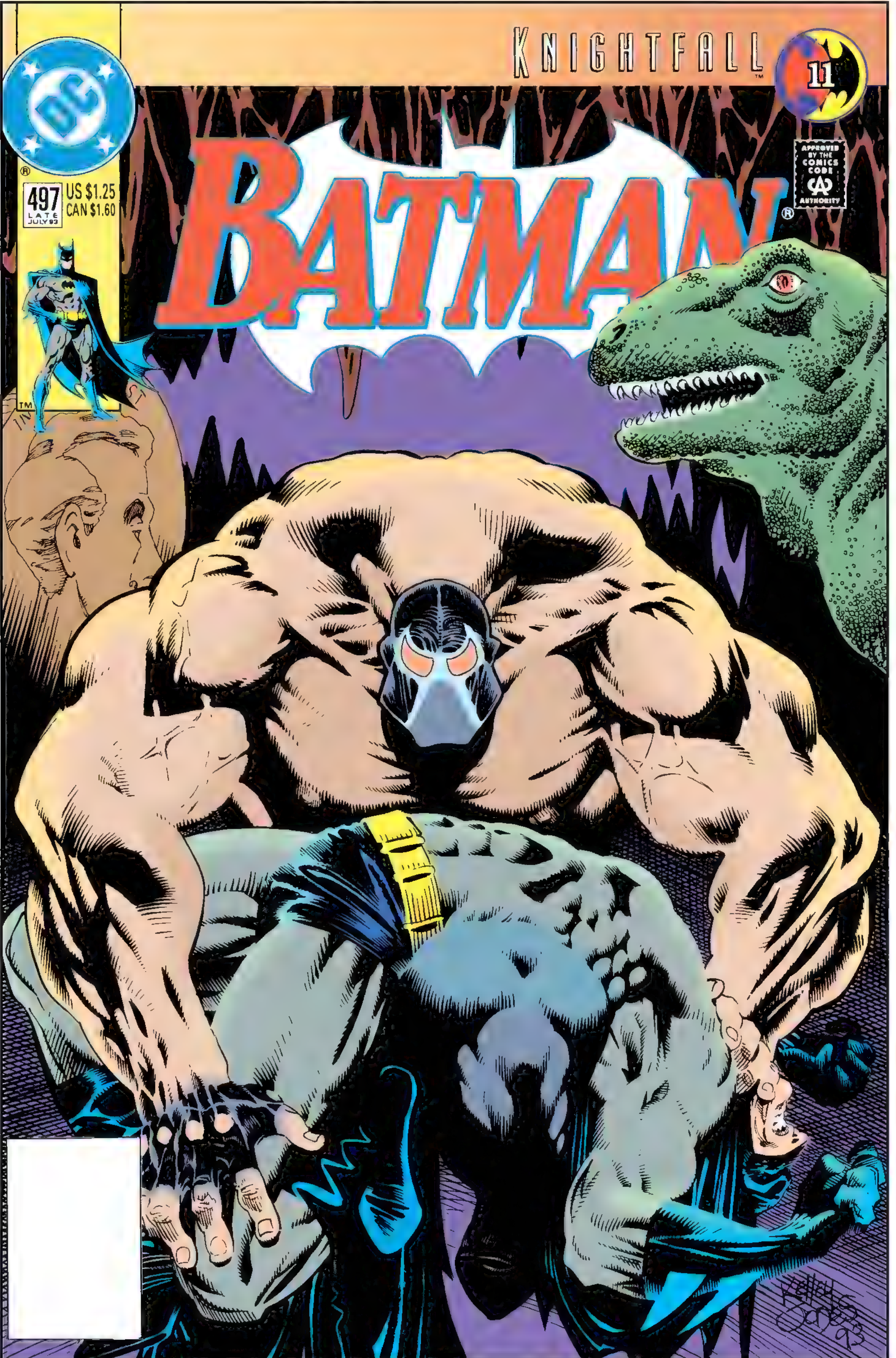
ALFRED?

I LEFT HIM ALIVE. IT IS NOT YOUR UNDERLINGS I WANT...

THE VOICE.



Cover art by KELLEY JONES





FEEL SO BAD,
I WANT TO DIE...

...AND
NOW...



... HE'S HERE, IN
WAYNE MANOR ...

BANE.

... READY AND
WILLING TO
GRANT MY WISH.

THE BROKEN BAT

DOUG
MOENCH
WRITER

JIM
APARO
ARTIST

DICK
GIORDANO
INKER

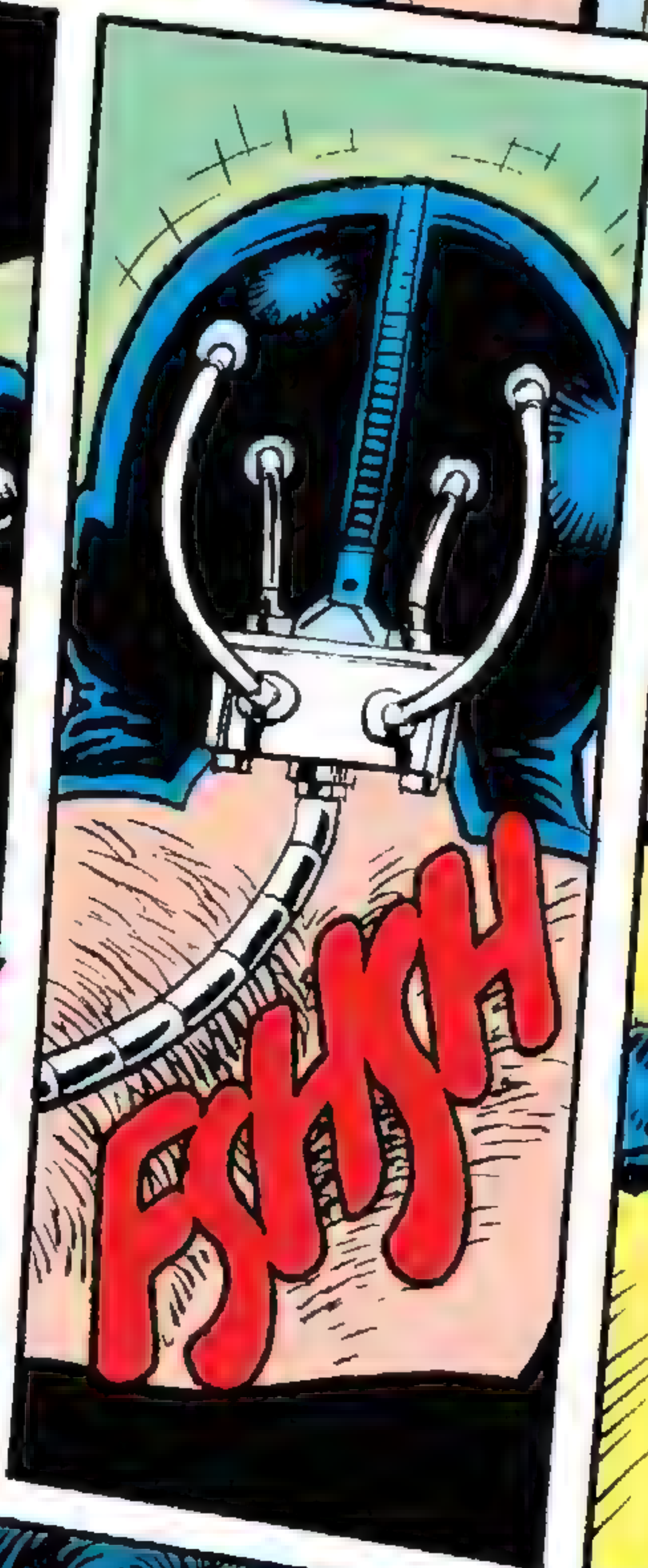
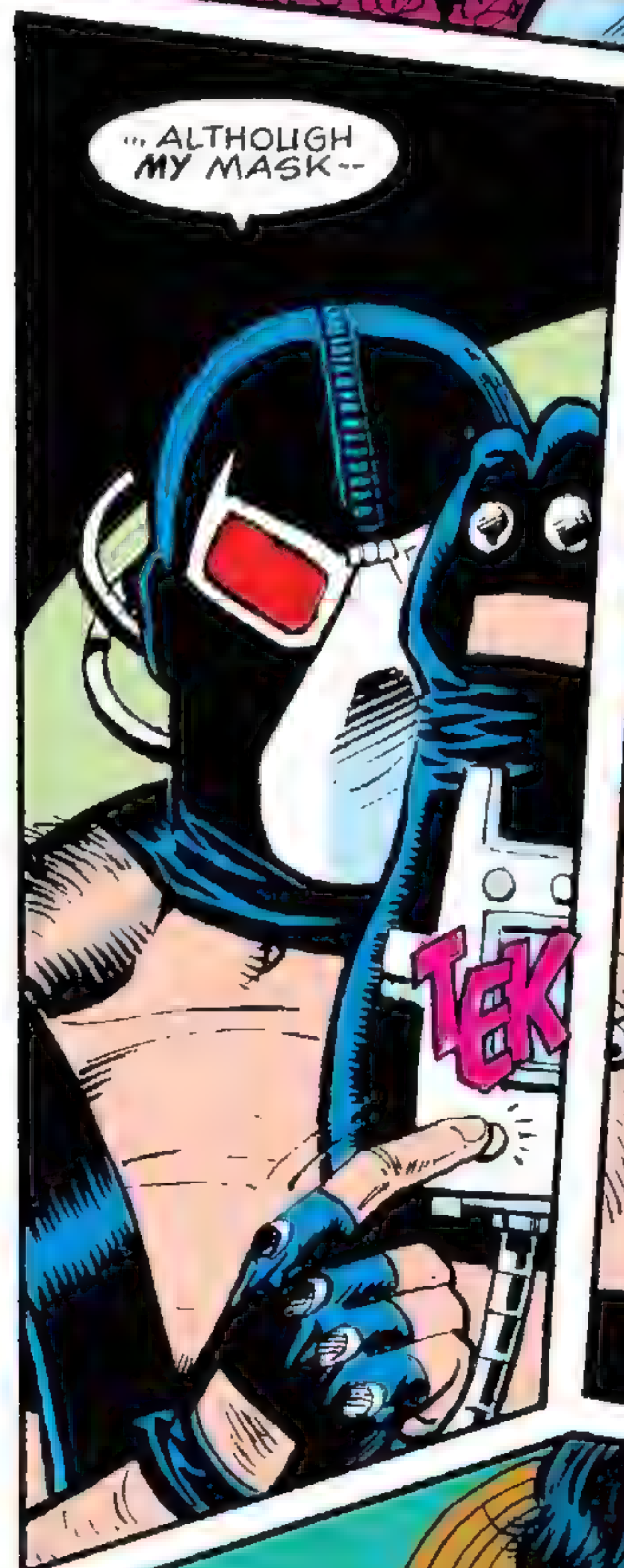
ADRIENNE
ROY
COLORIST

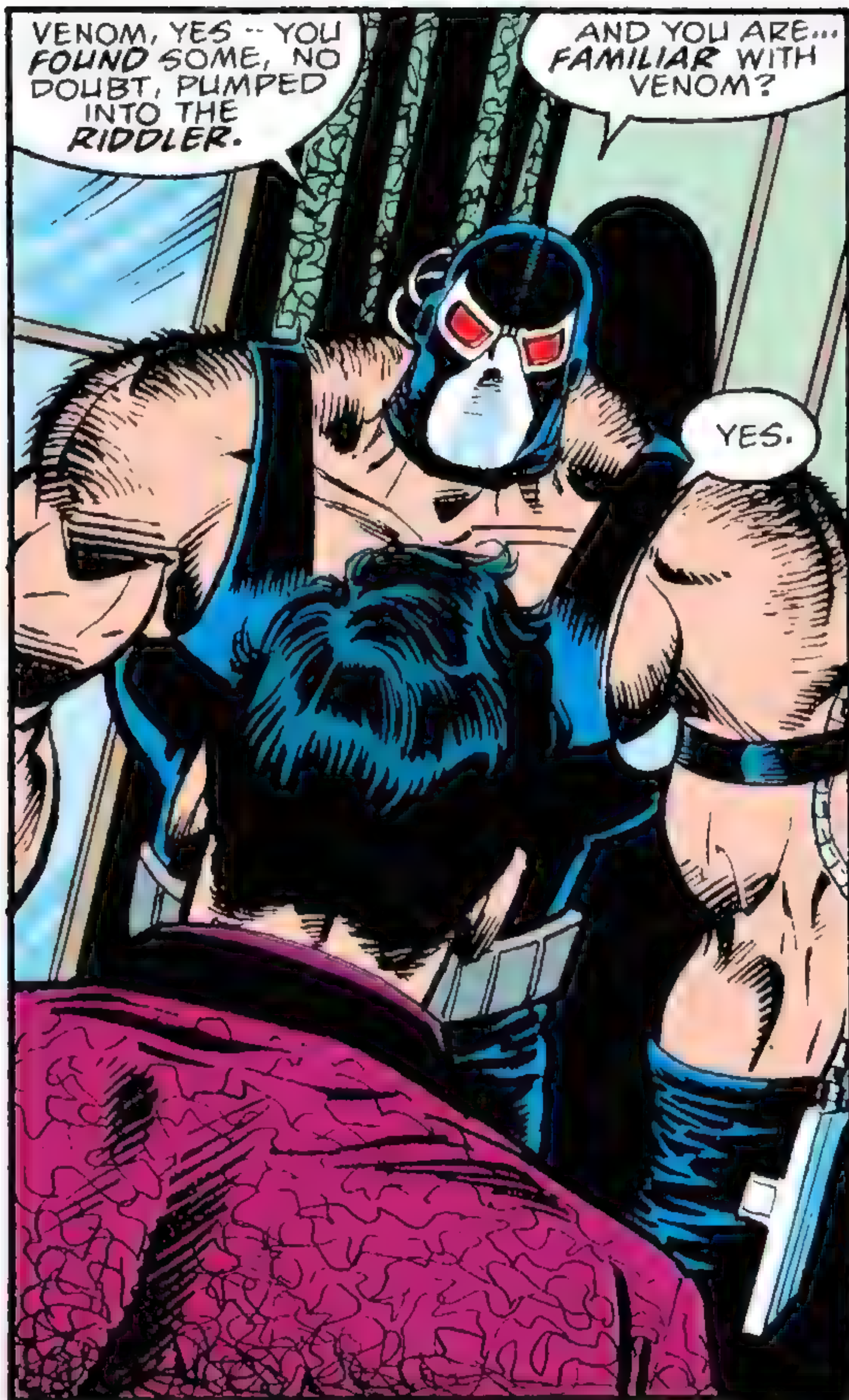
RICHARD
STARKINGS
LETTERER

JORDAN B.
GORFINKEL
ASST. EDITOR

DENNIS
O'NEIL
EDITOR

BATMAN
CREATED BY
**BOB
KANE**

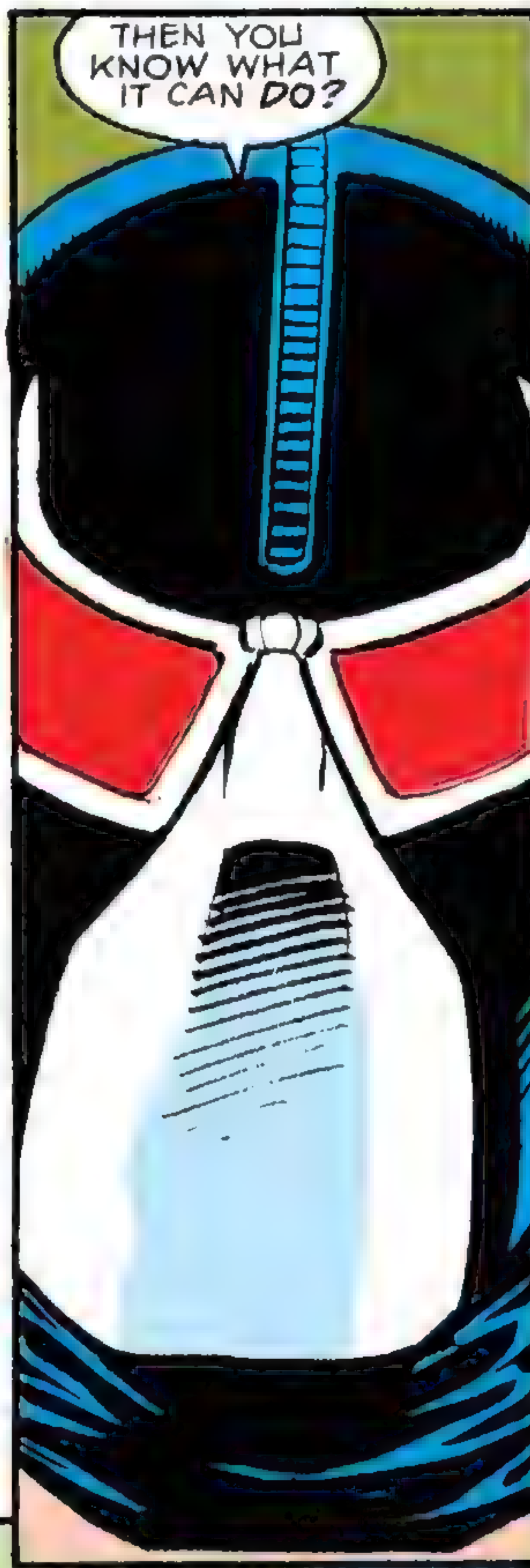




VENOM, YES -- YOU FOUND SOME, NO DOUBT, PUMPED INTO THE RIDDLER.

AND YOU ARE... FAMILIAR WITH VENOM?

YES.



THEN YOU KNOW WHAT IT CAN DO?



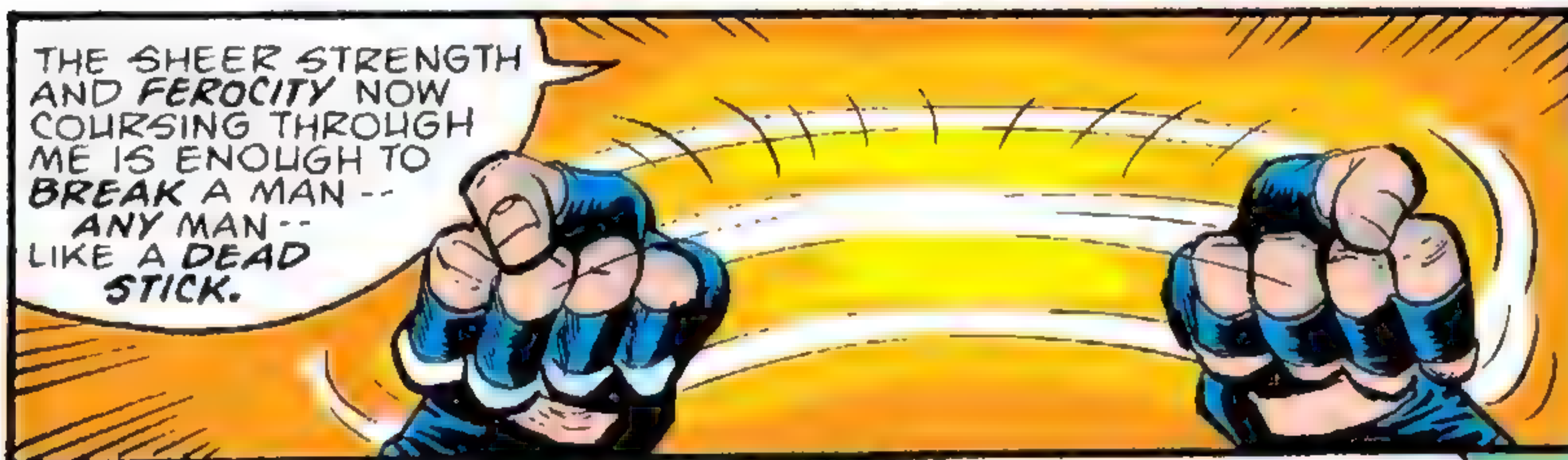
ALL TOO WELL.



YOU THINK SO? I THINK NOT.

I WAS ONCE MADE A GUINEA PIG FOR AN EXPERIMENTAL "IMPROVED CONCENTRATE" OF VENOM.

TRUST ME, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE, YOU KNOW NOTHING OF MY VENOM.

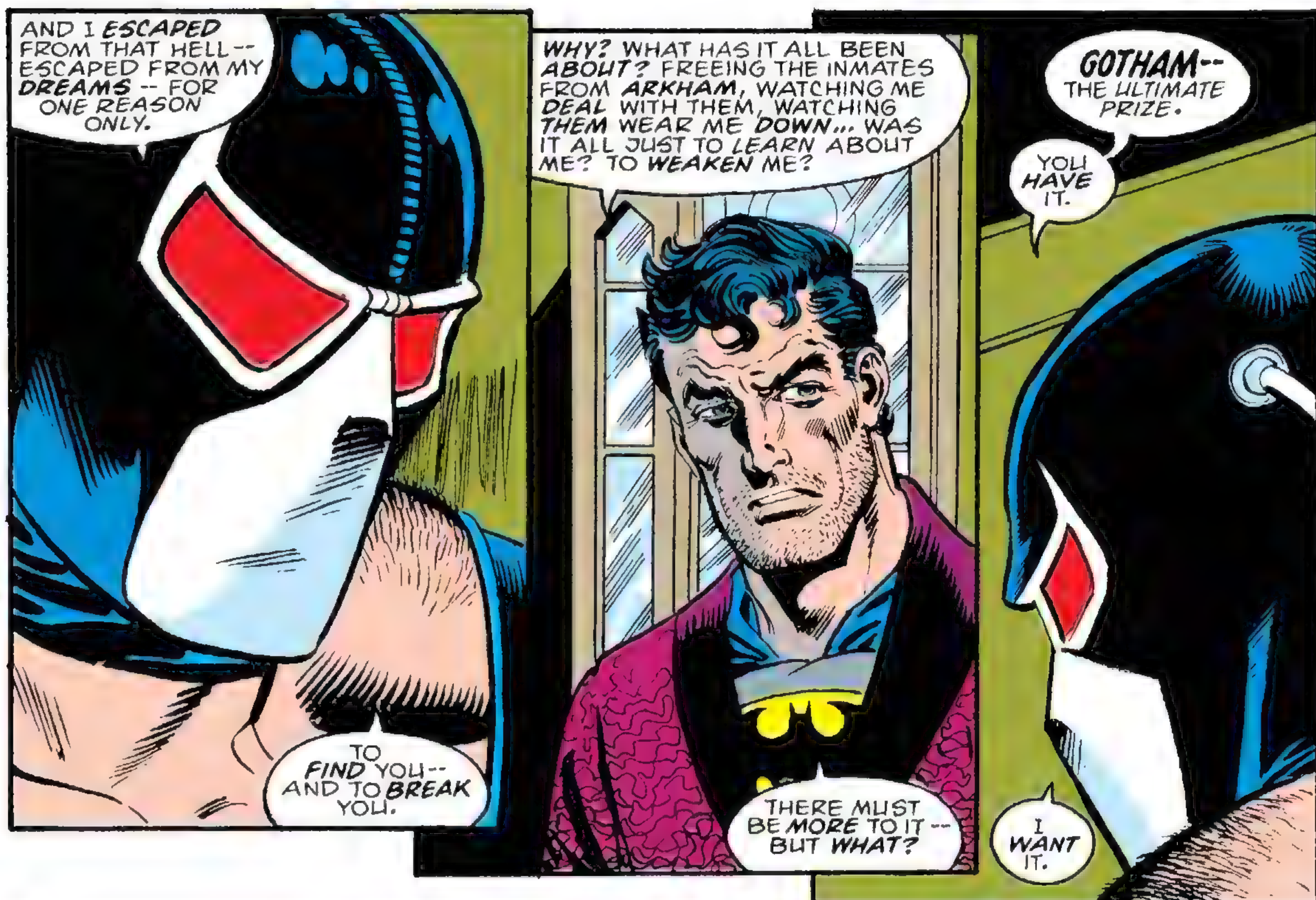


THE SHEER STRENGTH AND FEROCITY NOW COURSE THROUGH ME IS ENOUGH TO BREAK A MAN -- ANY MAN -- LIKE A DEAD STICK.

HOW DID YOU KNOW --

I'VE KNOWN YOU SINCE I LIVED IN THE HELL OF A DARK HOLE THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM HERE.

I'VE KNOWN YOU IN MY DREAMS.



THEN WHILE YOU REVEL IN IT, BANE, I'M SICK OF DEATH -- SICK OF BLOOD -- SICK OF THE CHAOS AND HORROR YOU'VE BROUGHT TO GOTHAM --

-- AND RIGHT INTO MY HOME.

I'VE SPENT MY LIFE FIGHTING YOUR KIND OF MADNESS AND EVIL --

-- AND NOW THAT LIFELONG FIGHT HAS BROUGHT ME TO DEATH'S DOOR, MY OWN DOOR...

I WOULD NOT BE HERE WERE IT OTHER-WISE.

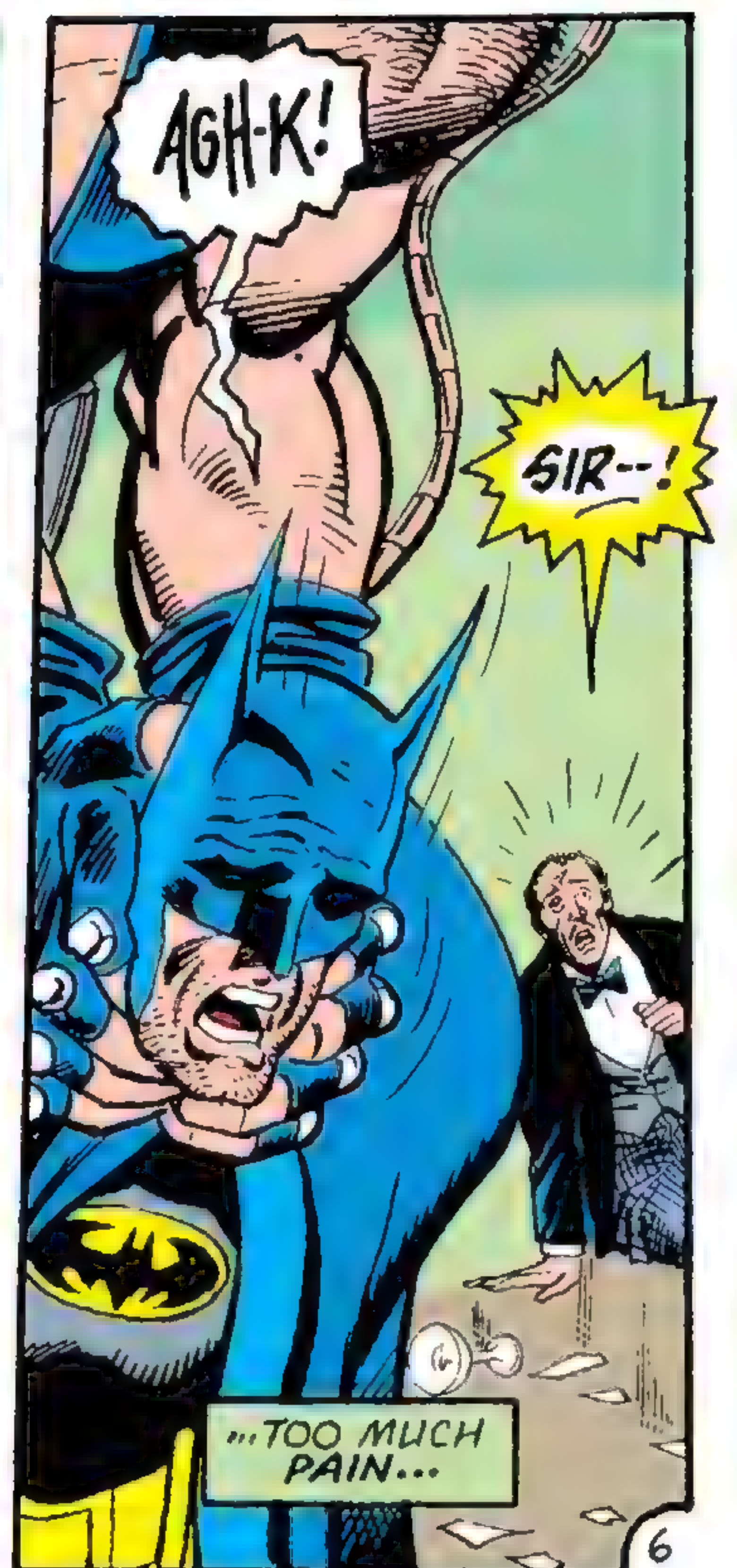
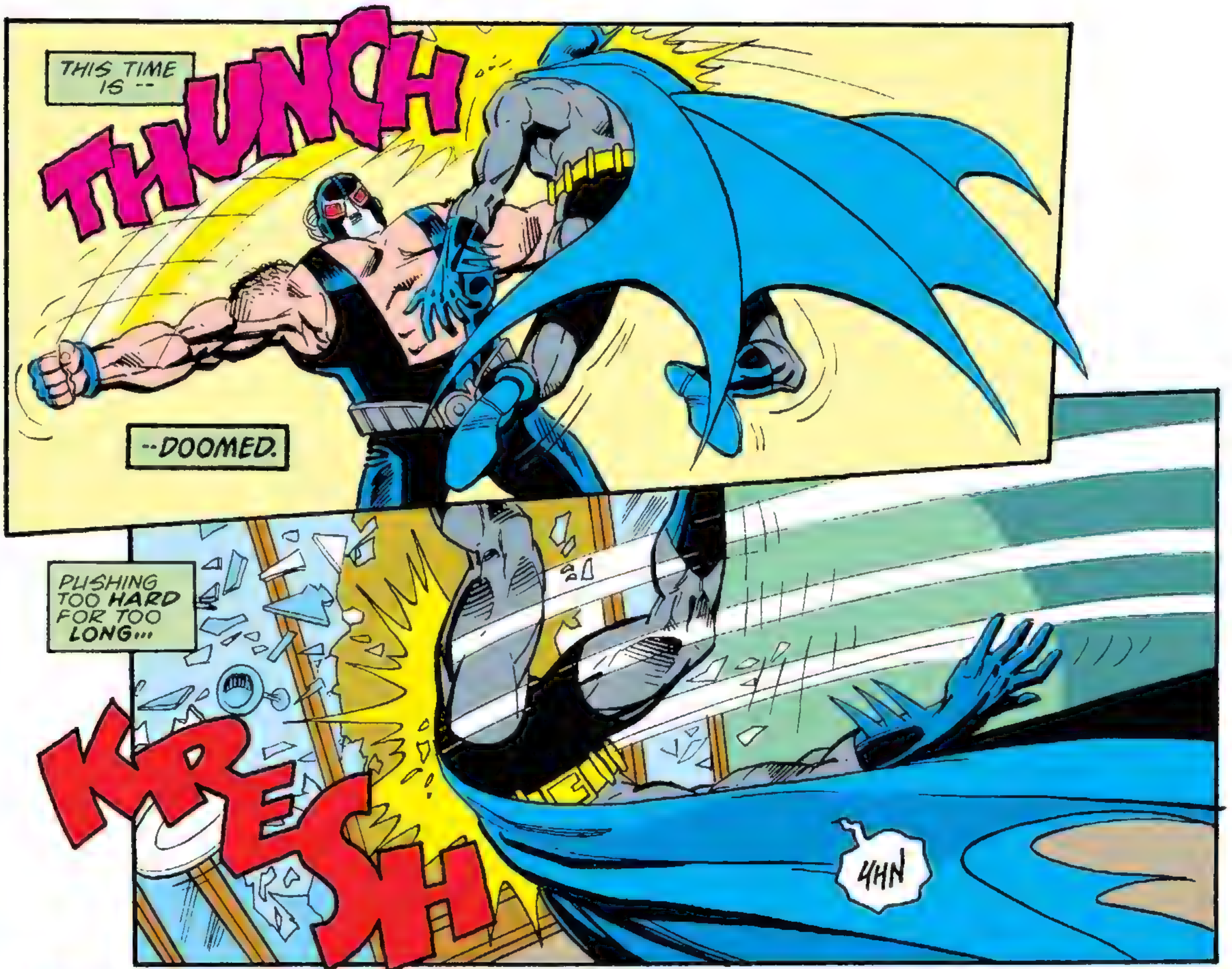
I REALIZE THAT -- AND I REALIZE YOU MAY WELL BE THE SINGLE GREATEST SOURCE OF MADNESS AND EVIL I'VE EVER FACED...

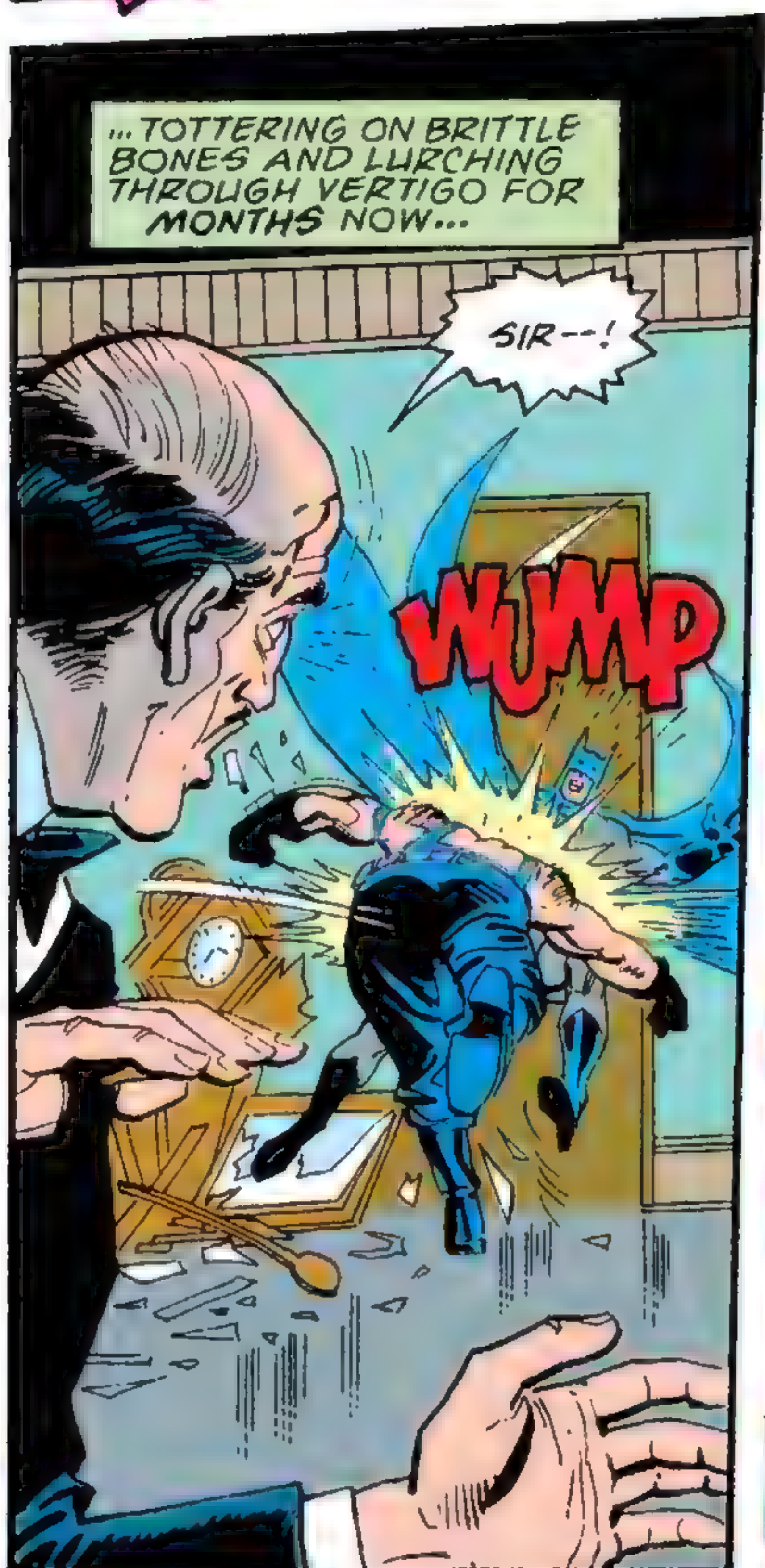
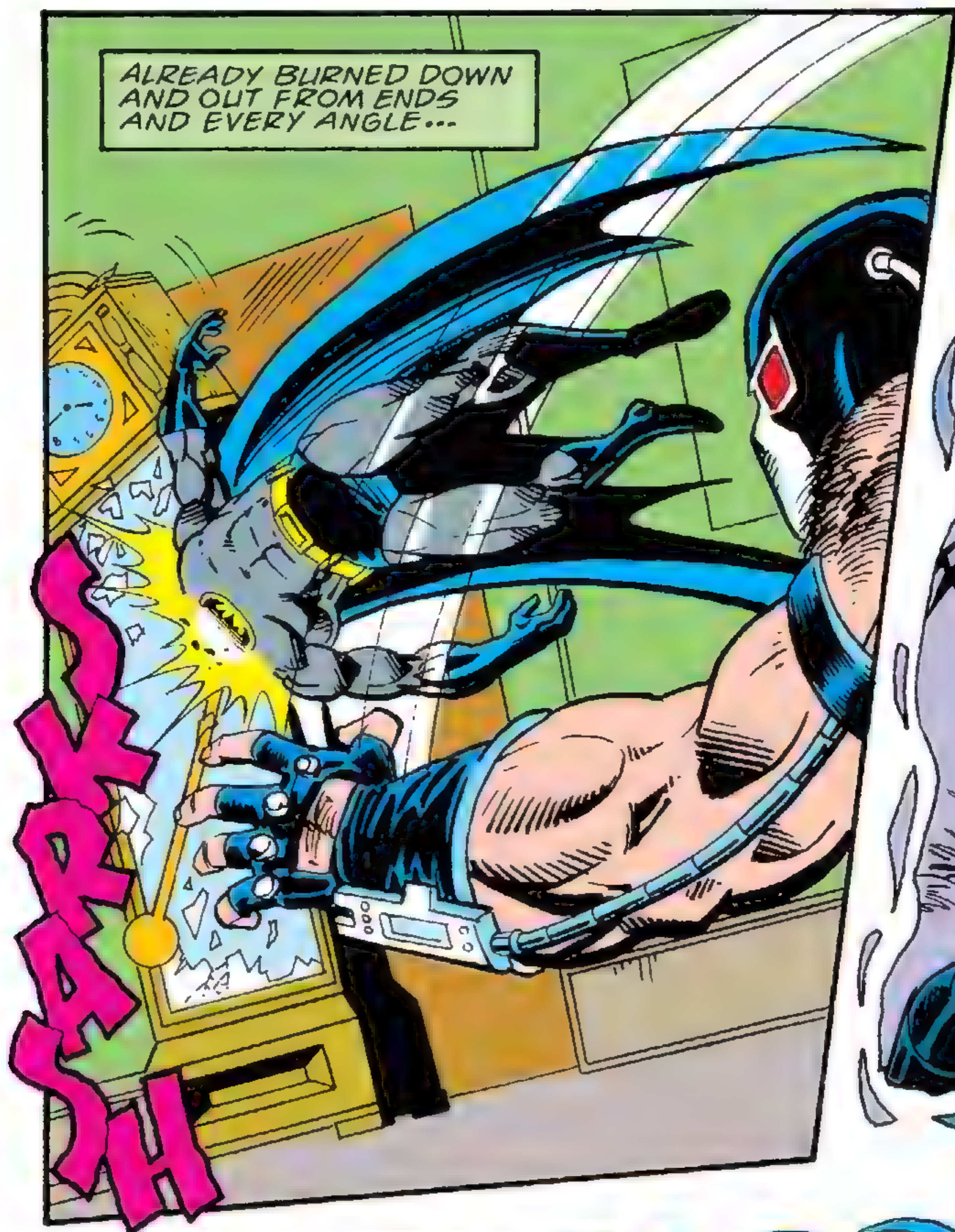
EASILY.

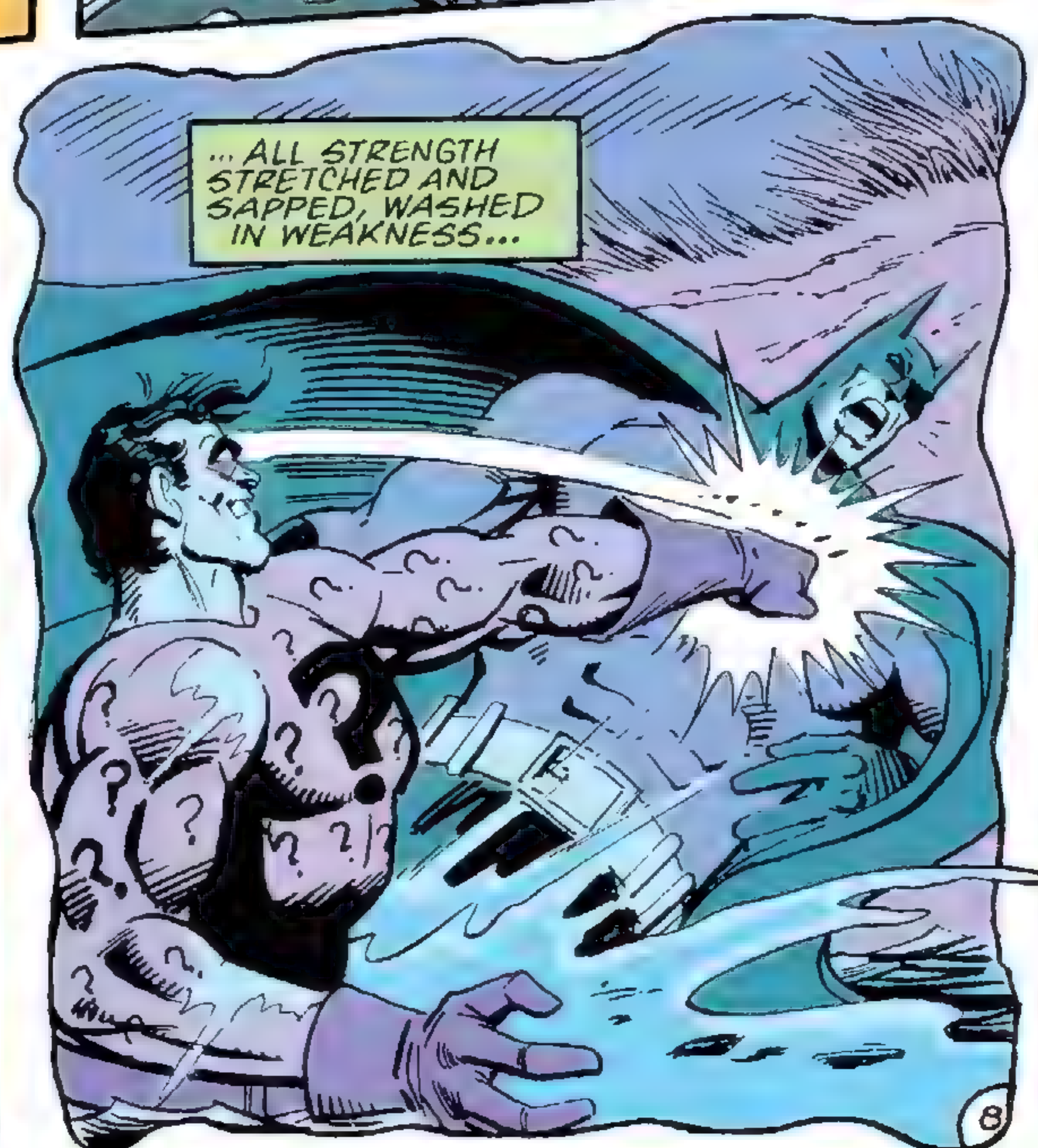
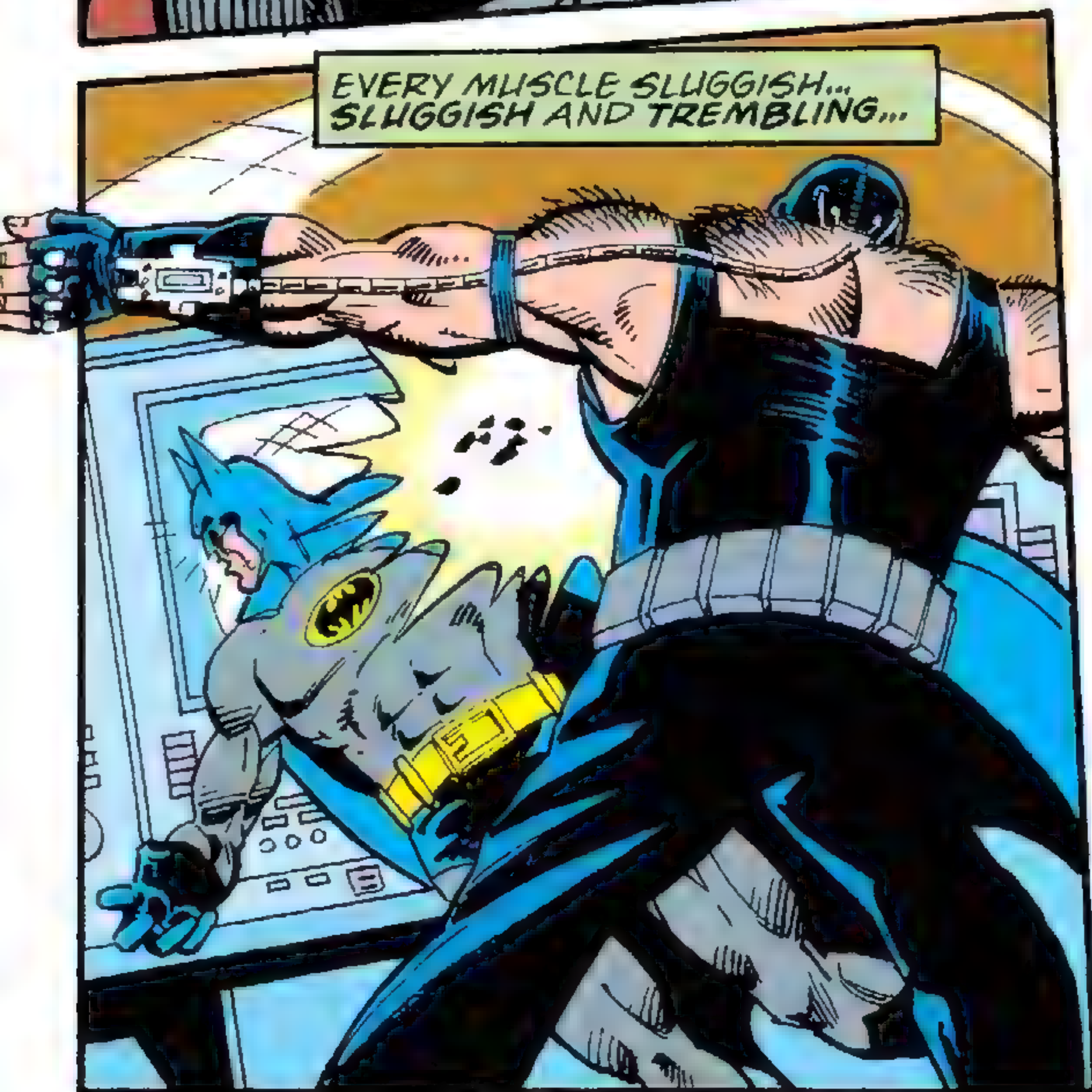
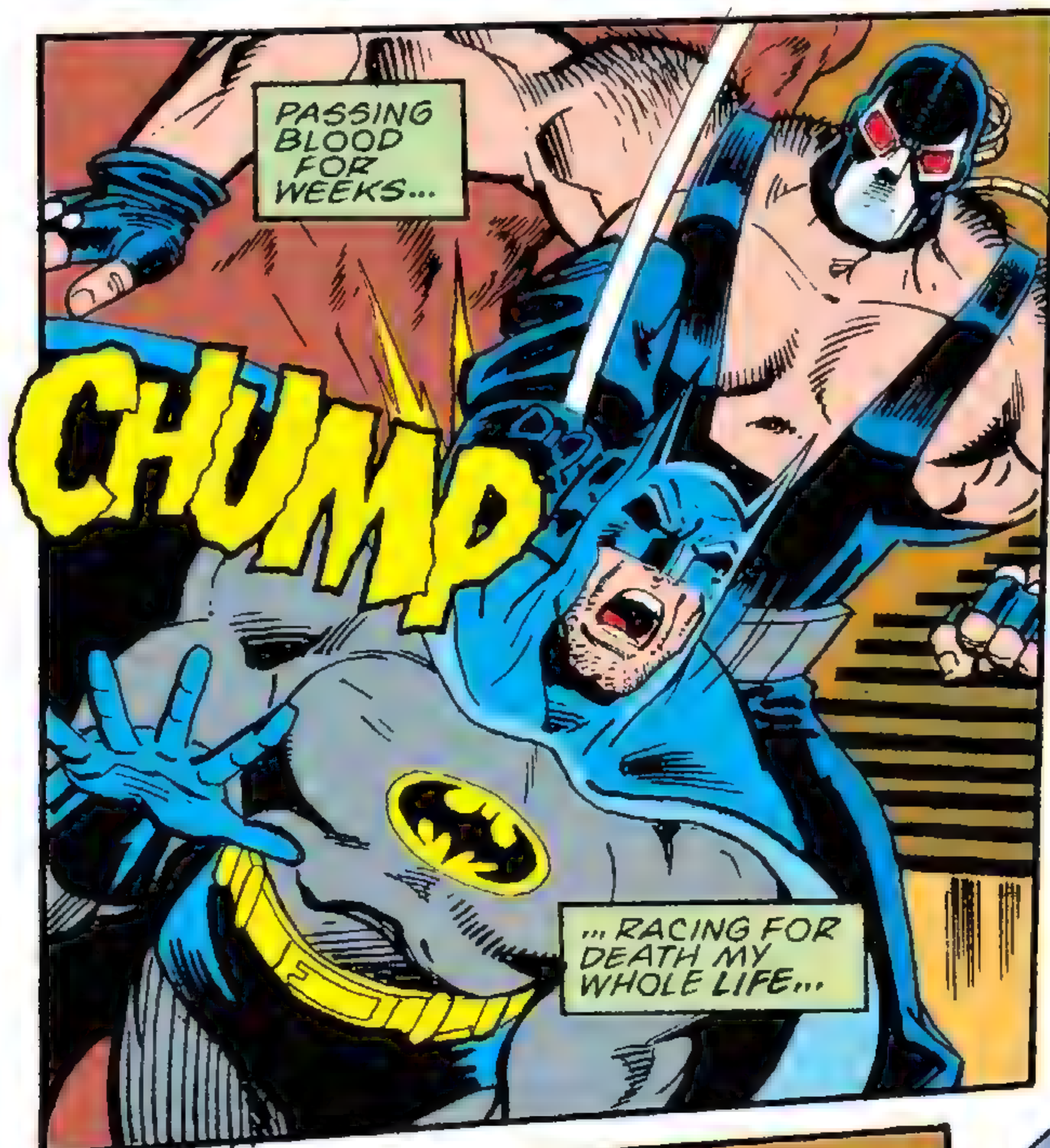
AND IN THAT CASE...

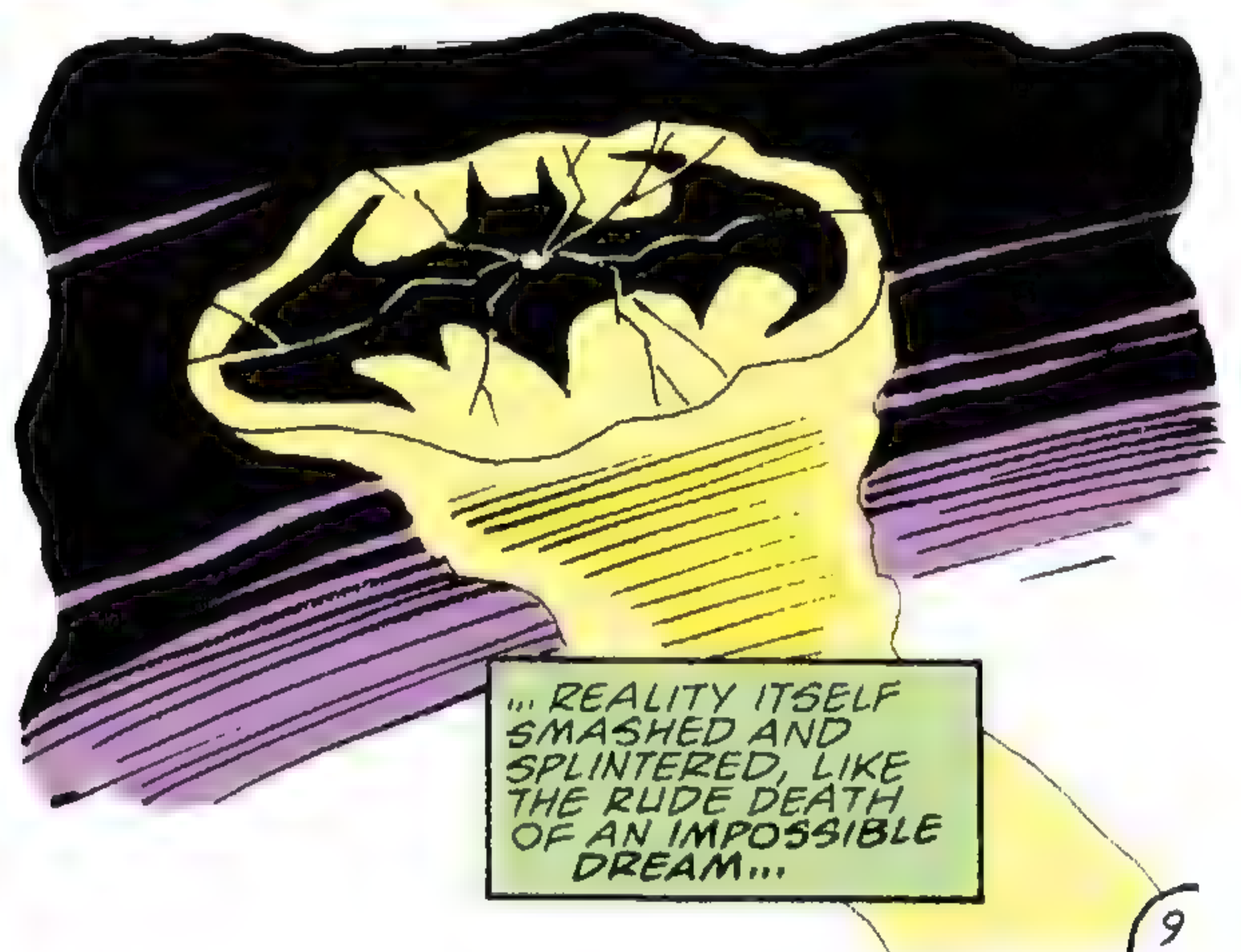
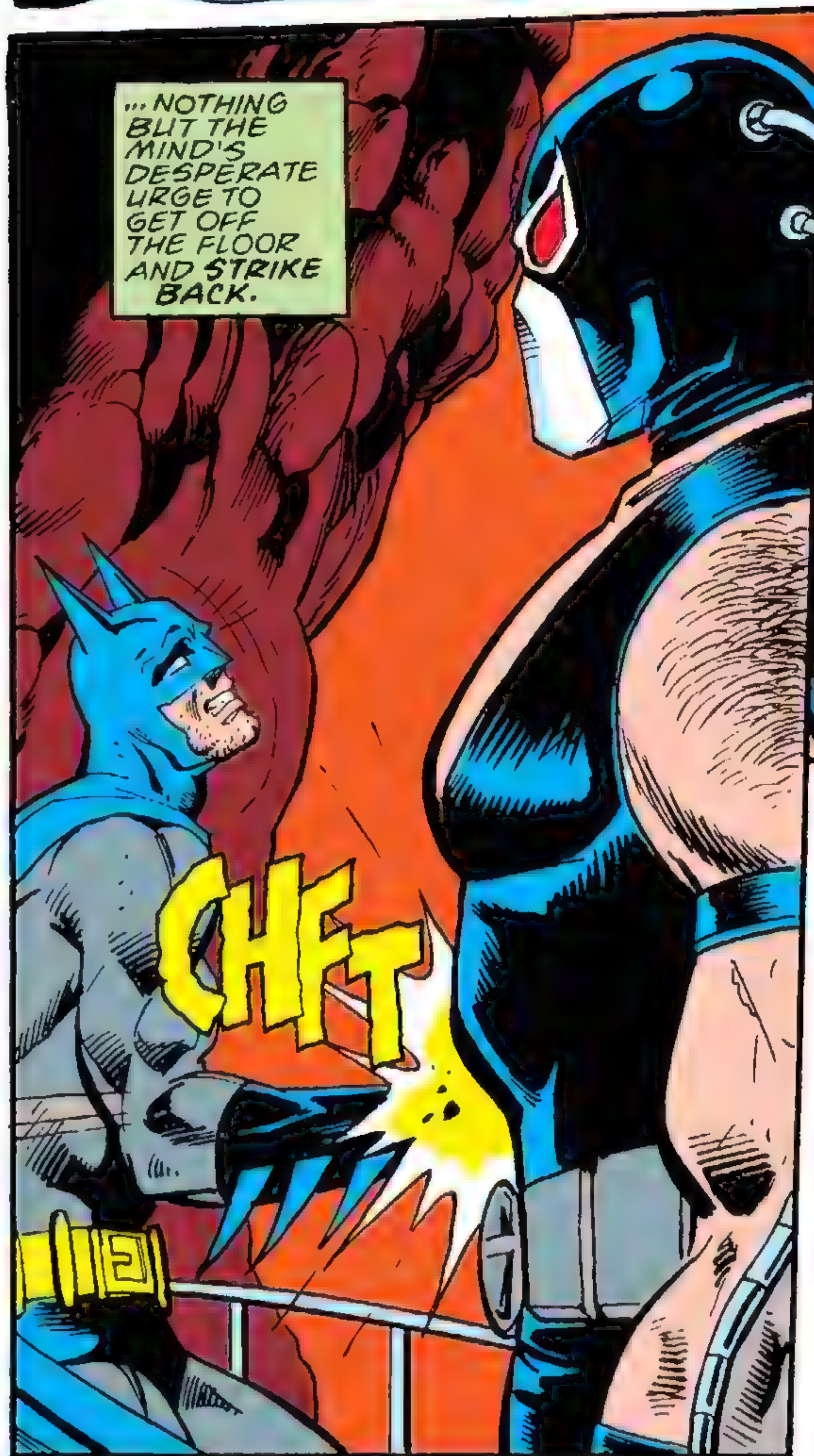
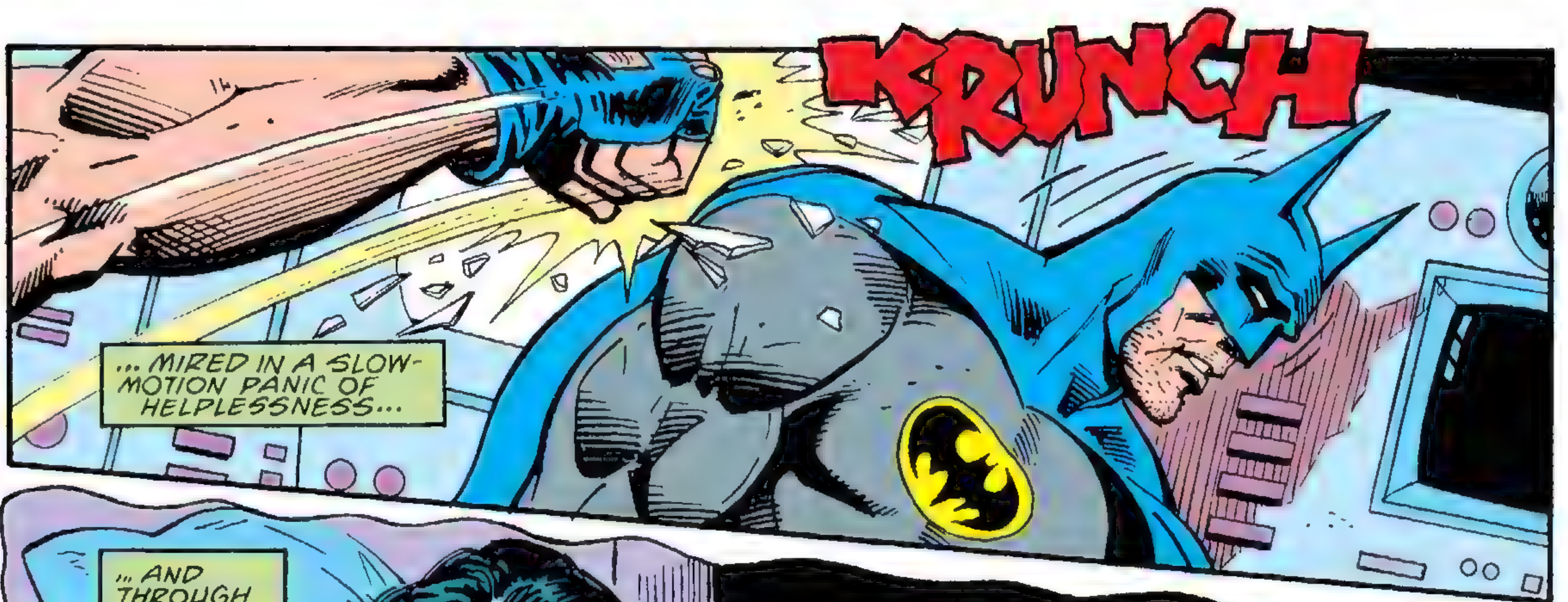
... ONE MORE TIME.

BUT THIS TIME IS DIFFERENT.









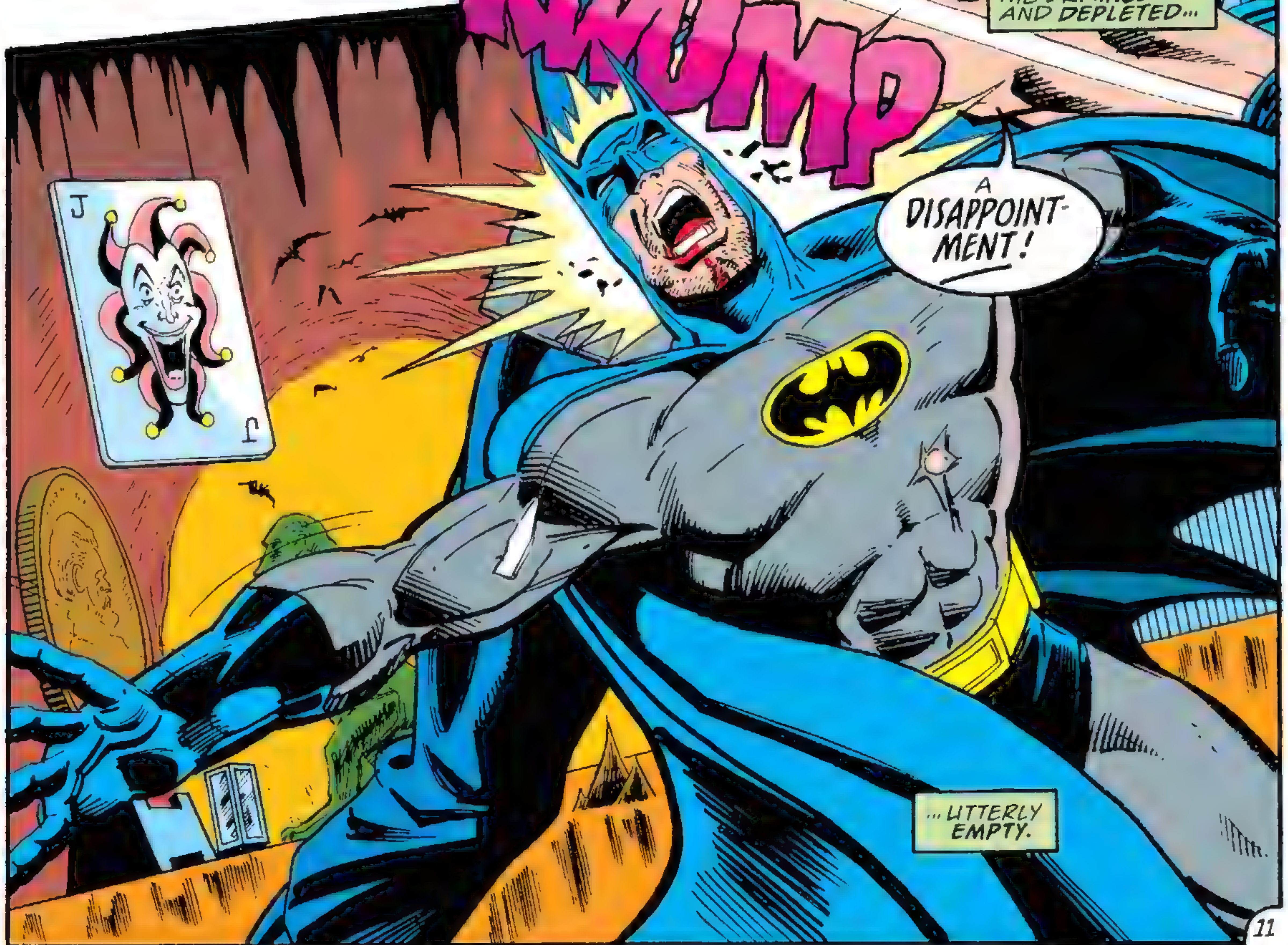
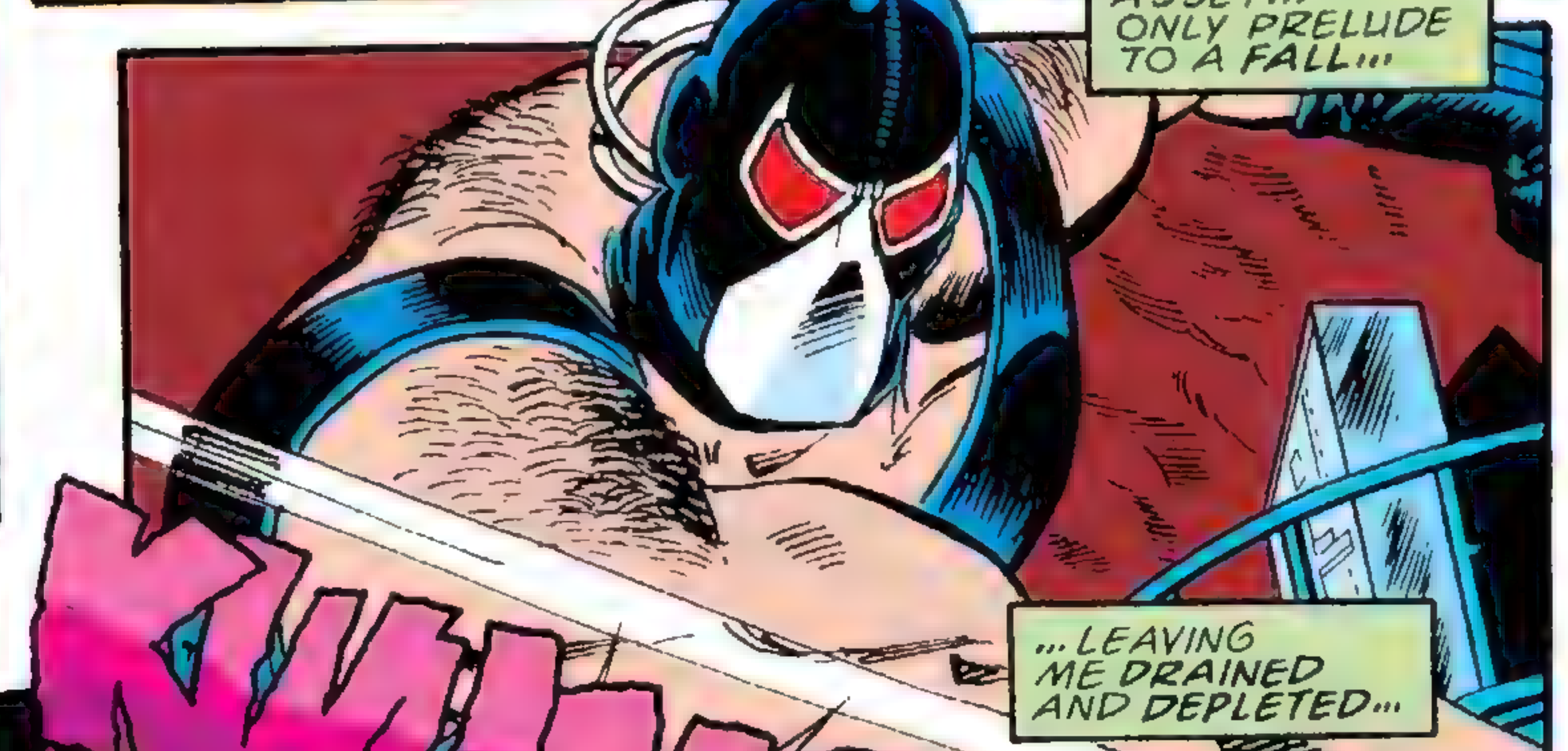
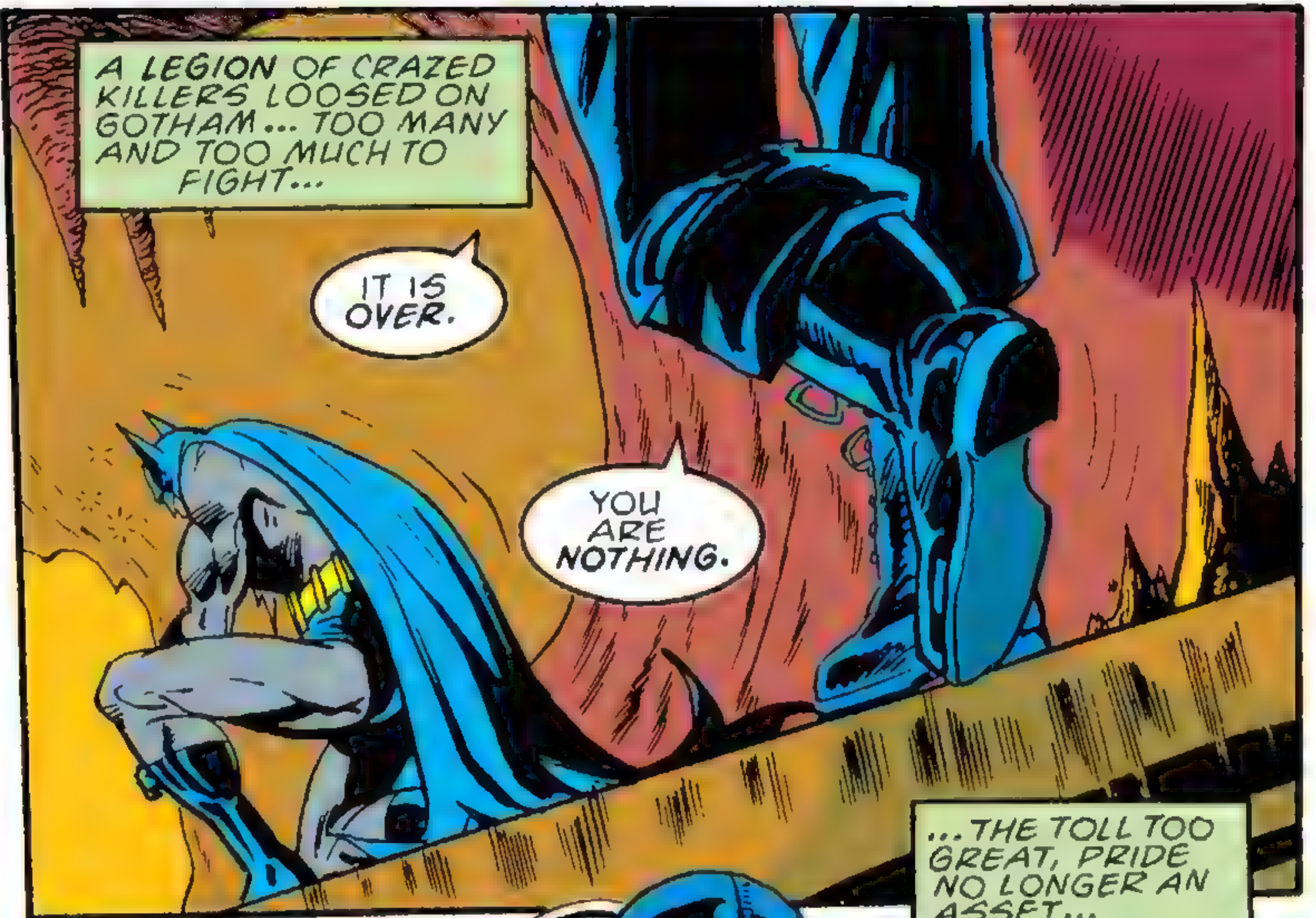
... AWAKENING AGAIN AND AGAIN
TO NOTHING BUT AGONY,
RELENTLESS AND REPEATED...



AND THEN
THE CROWNING
HORROR OF
SHATTERED
ARKHAM...

... SPILLING ITS MAD
GUTS INTO THE LONG
DARK NIGHT OF
HOPELESS HORROR.







BUT STILL
THEY LOOMED
AND LUNGED
FROM THE
DARK...

...LAUGHING
DEMONS
WITH BAD
INTENT...



...BEARING
PAIN AND
NOTHING
MORE...

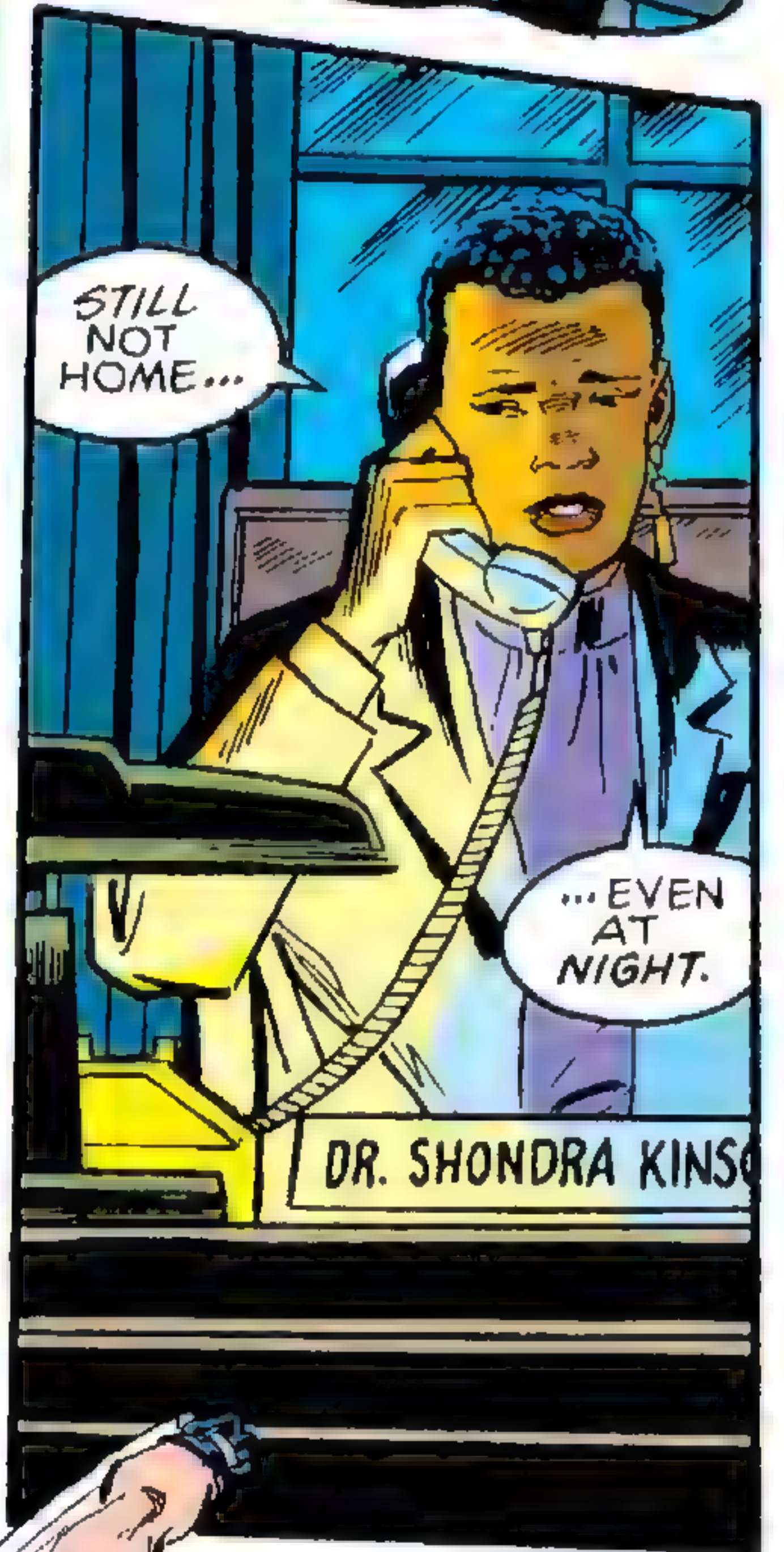
...CHIPPING
AWAY AT
WHATEVER
WAS LEFT...

WUMP



...WEARING
ME DOWN
TOWARD
NOTHING...

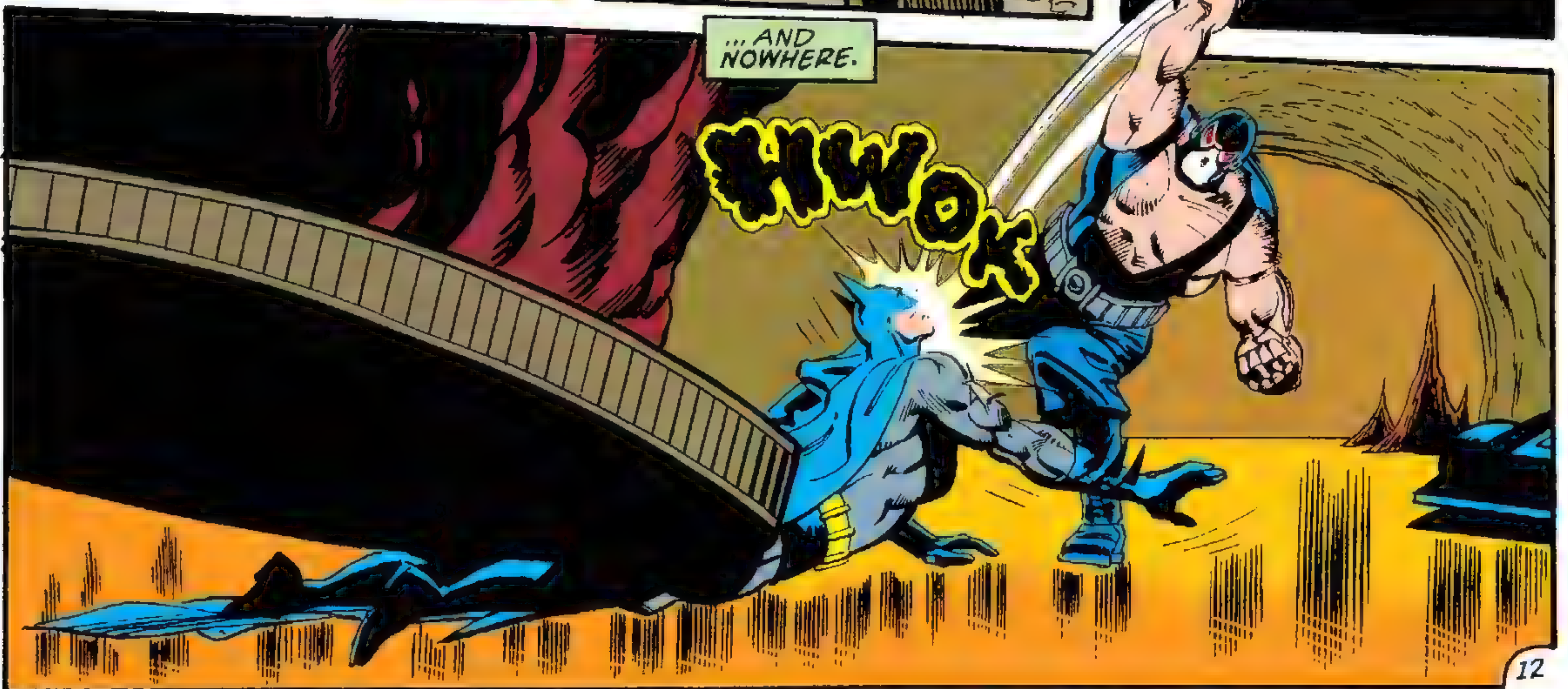
BRING
BRING



STILL
NOT
HOME...

...EVEN
AT
NIGHT.

DR. SHONDRA KINS



...AND
NOWHERE.

WUWOX



VERTIGO... WHIRLING OUT OF CONTROL NOW... TIME DISTORTED... IMAGES FLASHING...

... THEN AND NOW A CONFUSED BLUR...



WHY DON'T YOU FIGHT?!

... EVERY SHOCK AND CONCUSSION THE SAME...

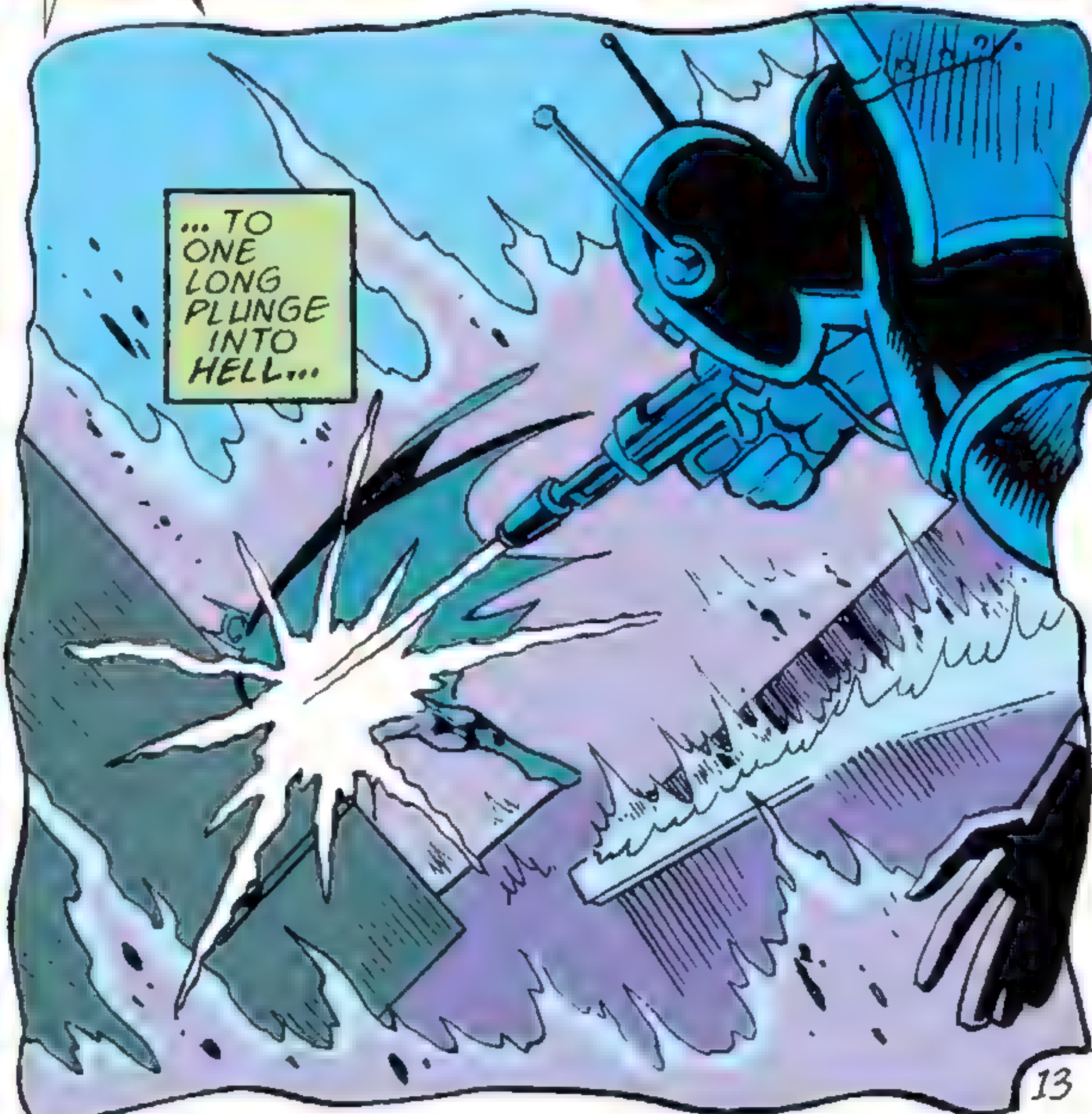


... EACH DEVASTATING...

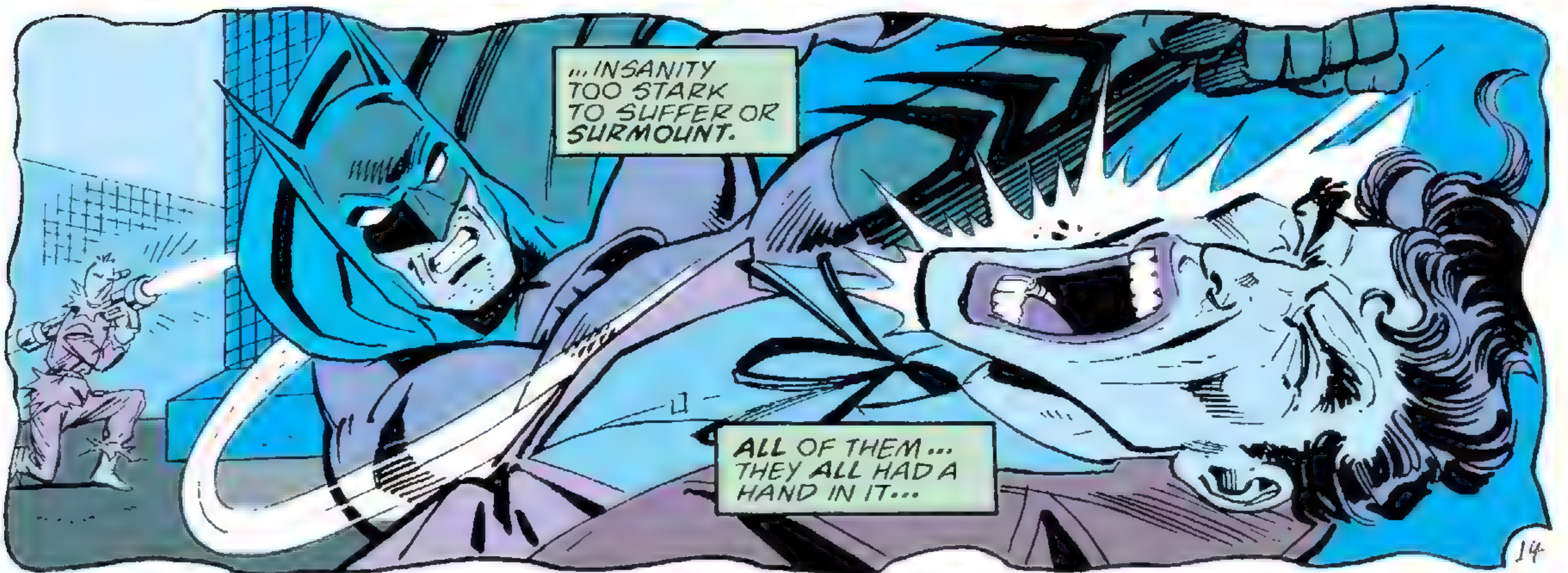
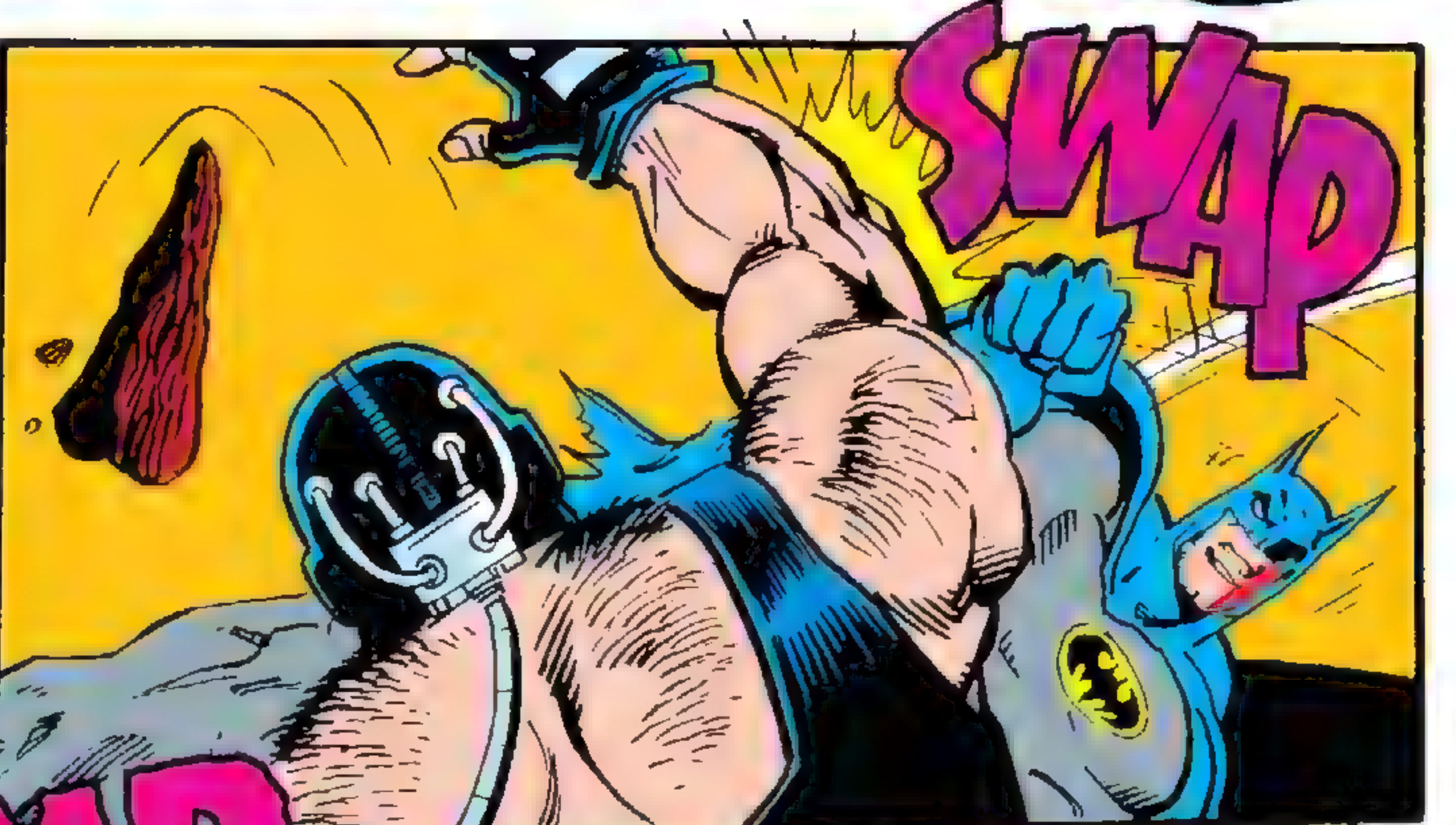
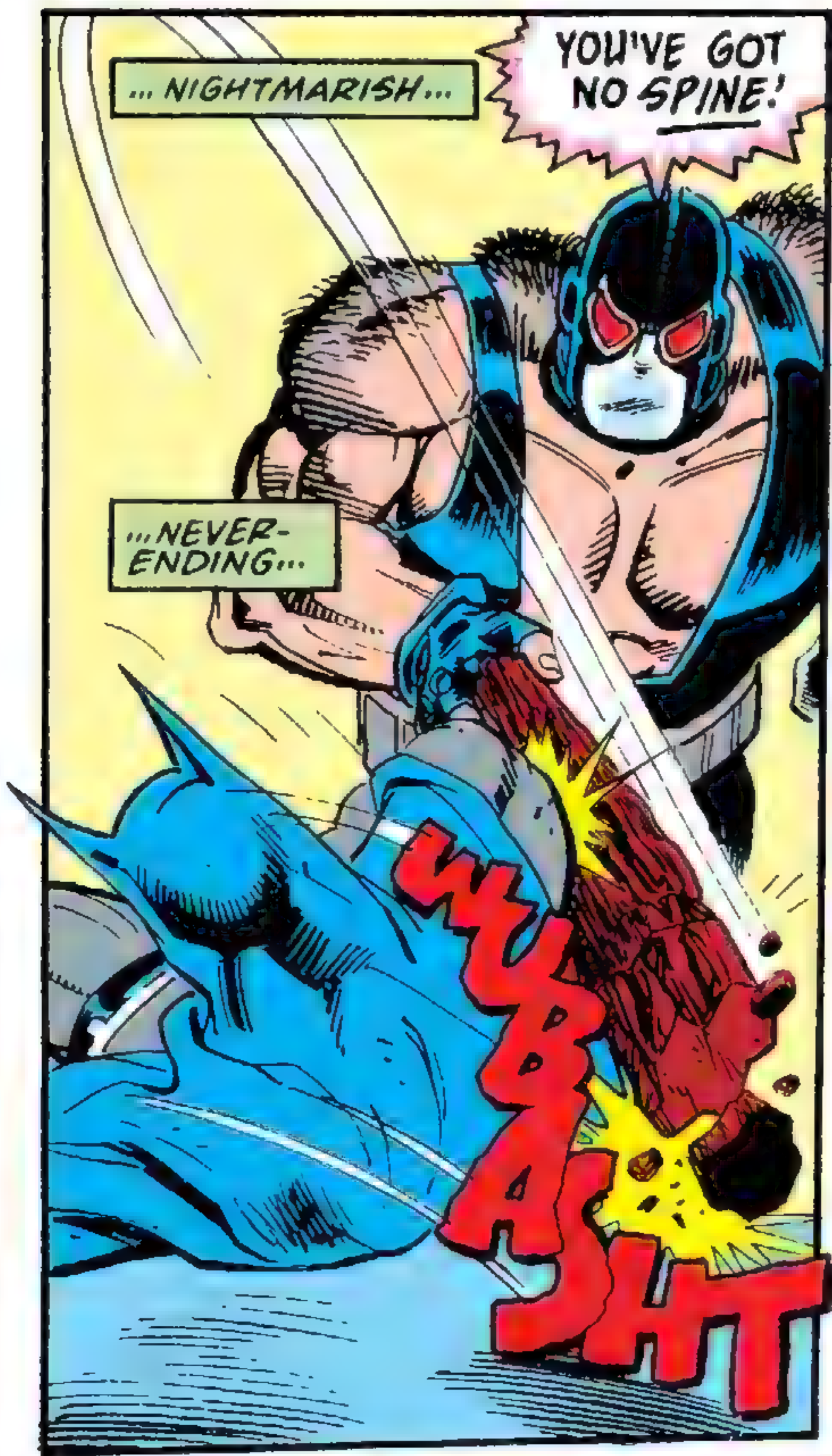


... AND ALL ADDING UP...

PRAK



... TO ONE LONG PLUNGE INTO HELL...



... BUT IT WAS BANE'S
BLOODY HAND BEHIND
THEM, BEHIND IT ALL.

CHOOOF

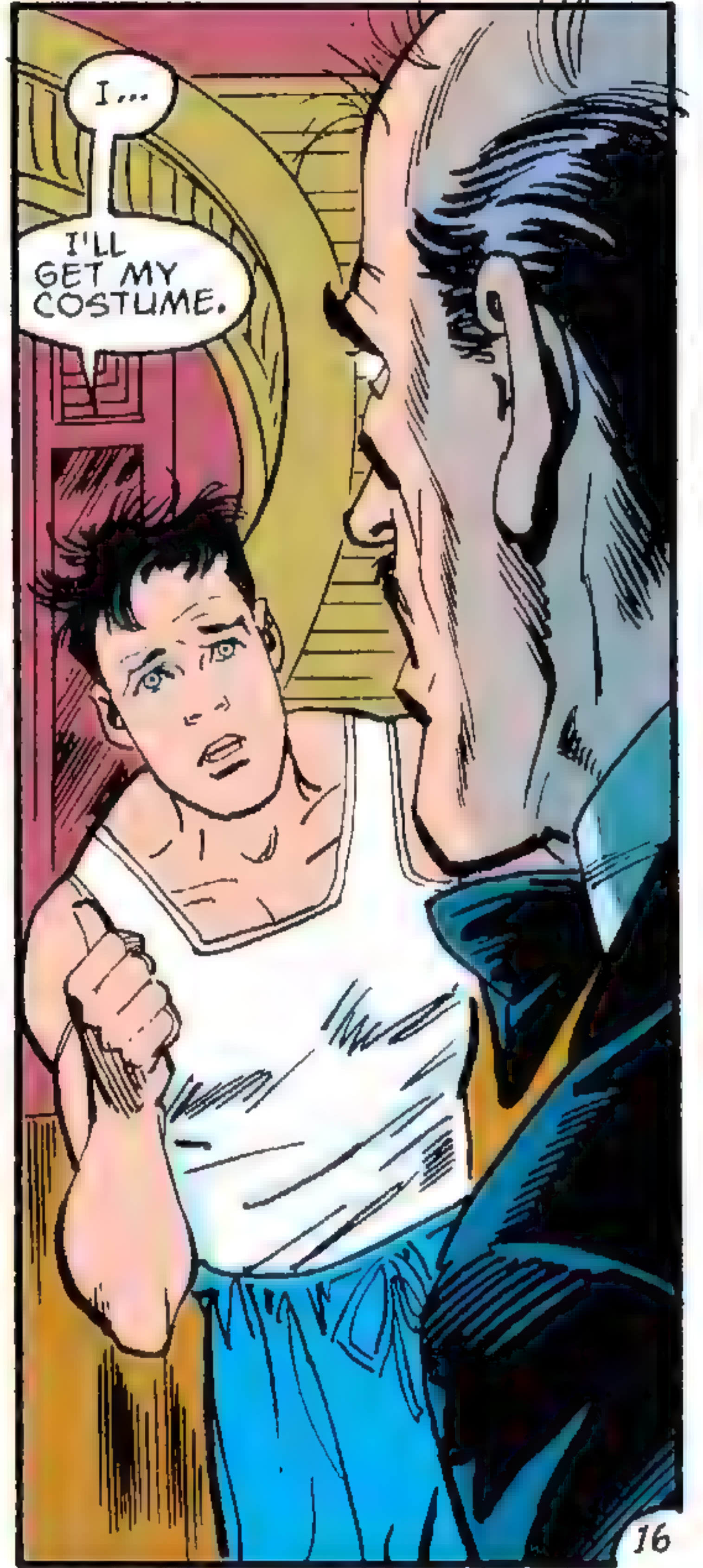
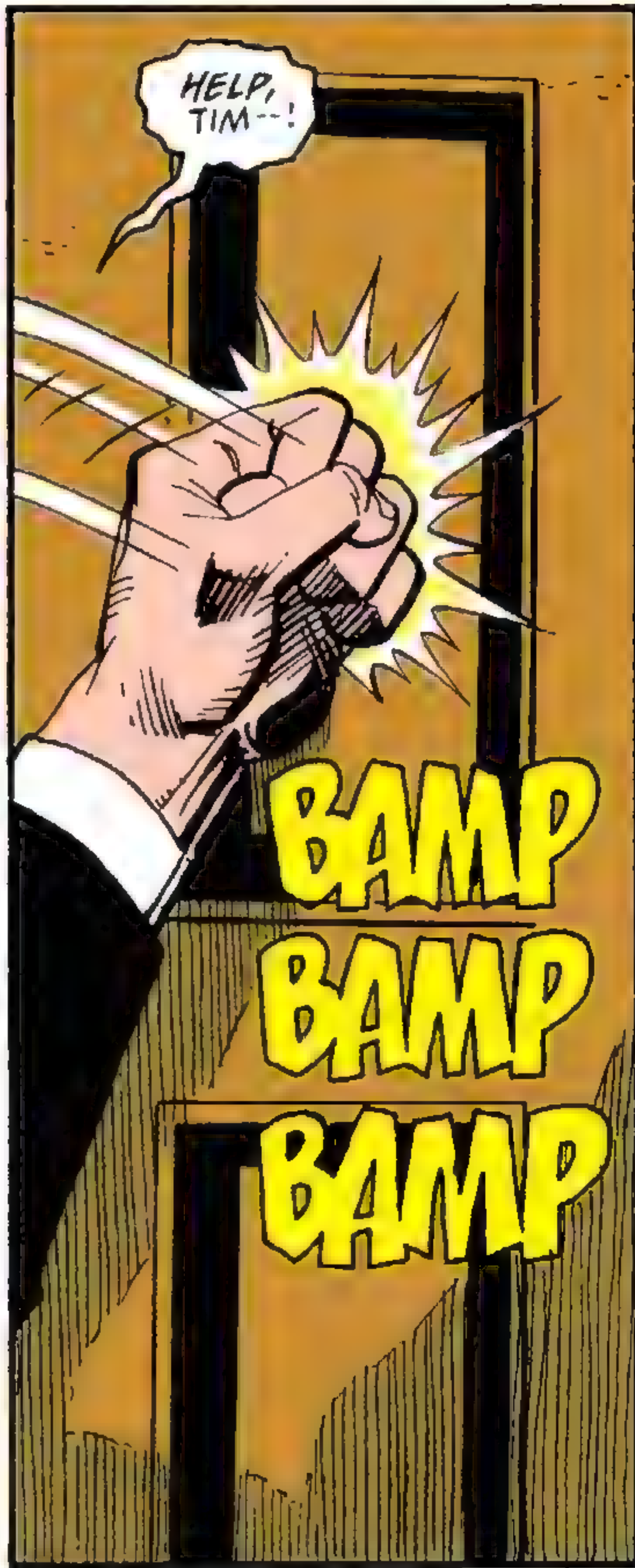
BANE FROM THE BEGINNING --
AND BANE NOW, AT THE END.

KESHH

NO... CAN'T GIVE IN,
NOT NOW, NO MATTER
HOW HURT... CAN'T
LET HIM WIN...

CAN'T SURRENDER
TO THE BLESSED
RELIEF... OF ENDING
IT ALL.

JASON...
ROBIN...



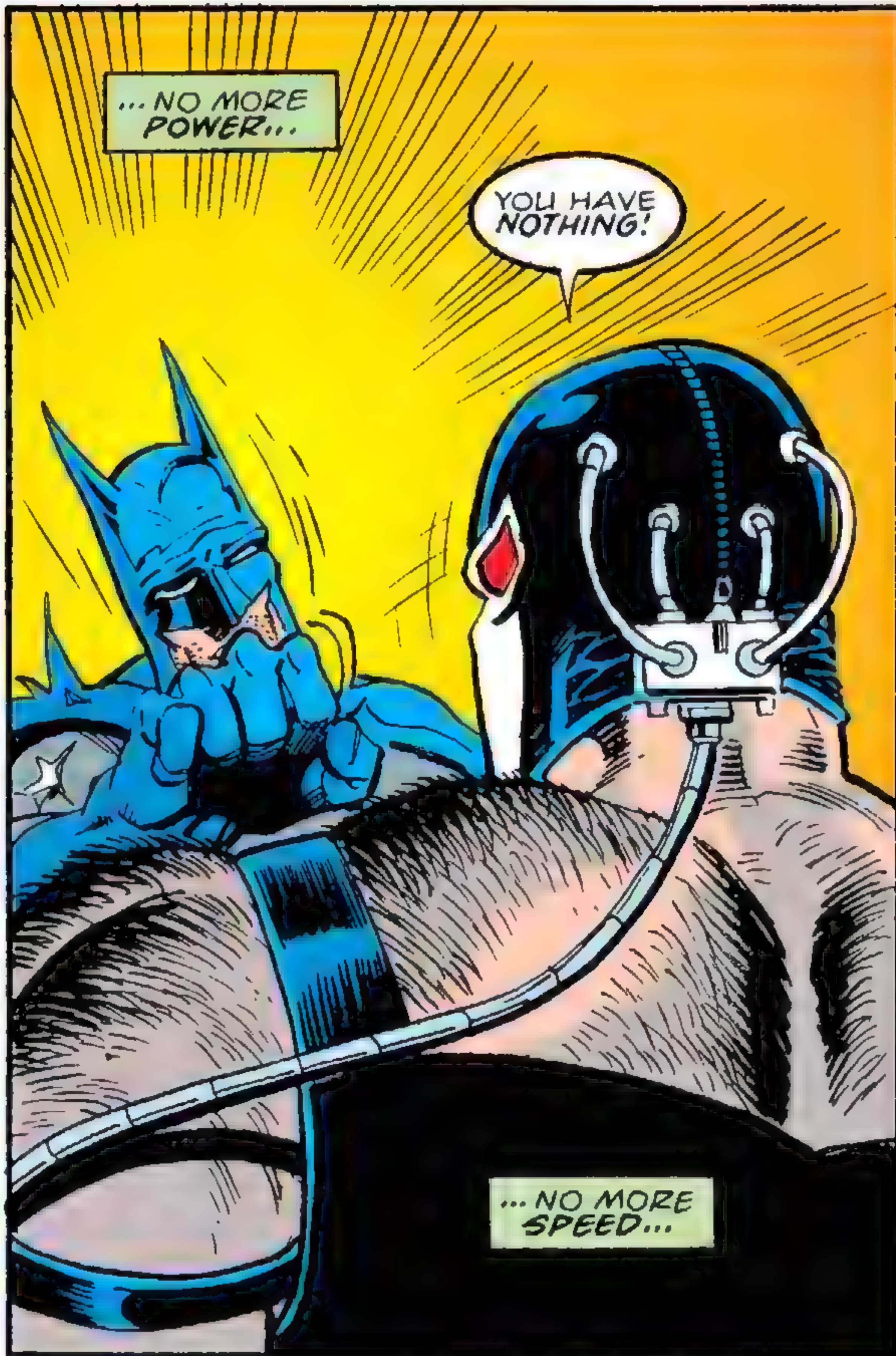
HARSH TANG OF BRIMSTONE
EXPANDING IN MY CHEST...
EVERY BREATH HOT AND
BITTER... BUT I CAN'T GIVE IN...

GOT TO TRY... EVEN WITH
NO MORE SPRING IN MY
STEP, NO BITE OF
BOOT INTO GROUND...

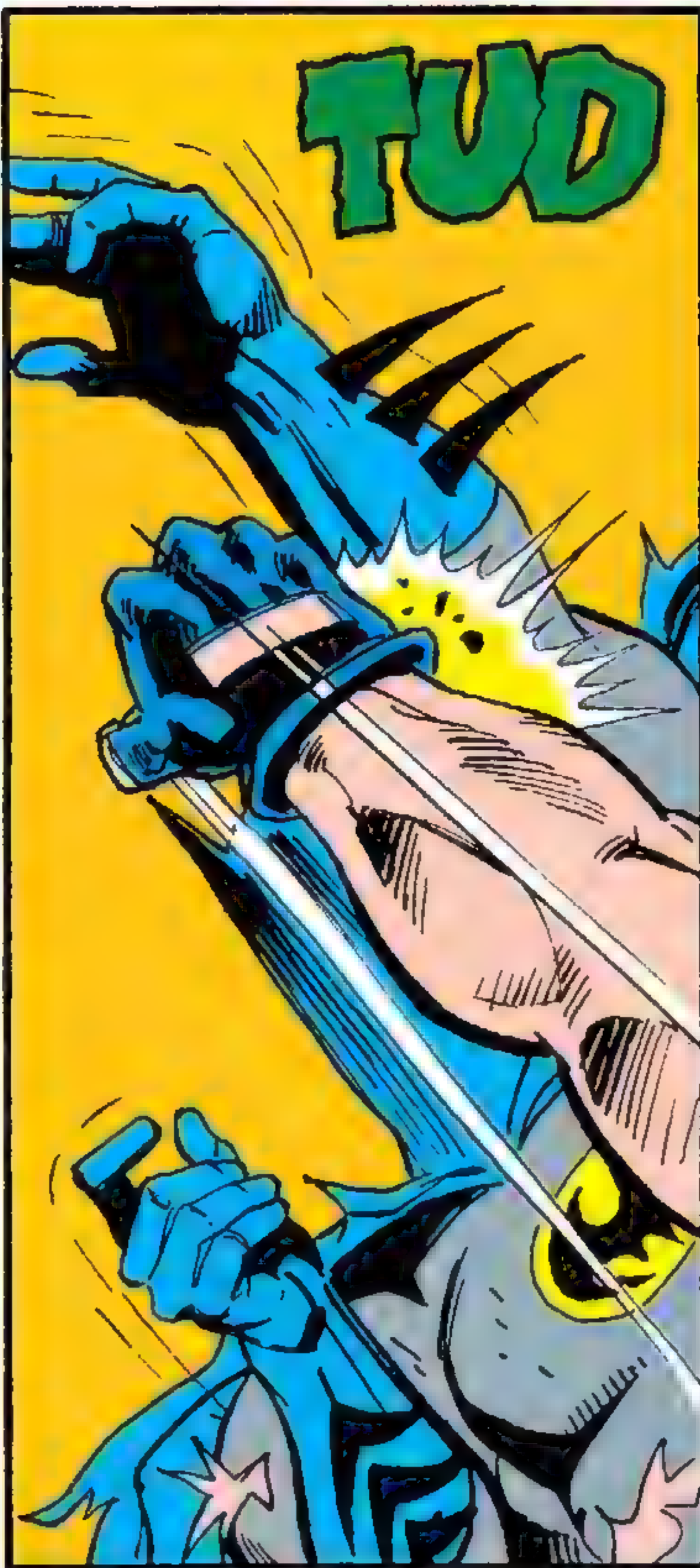
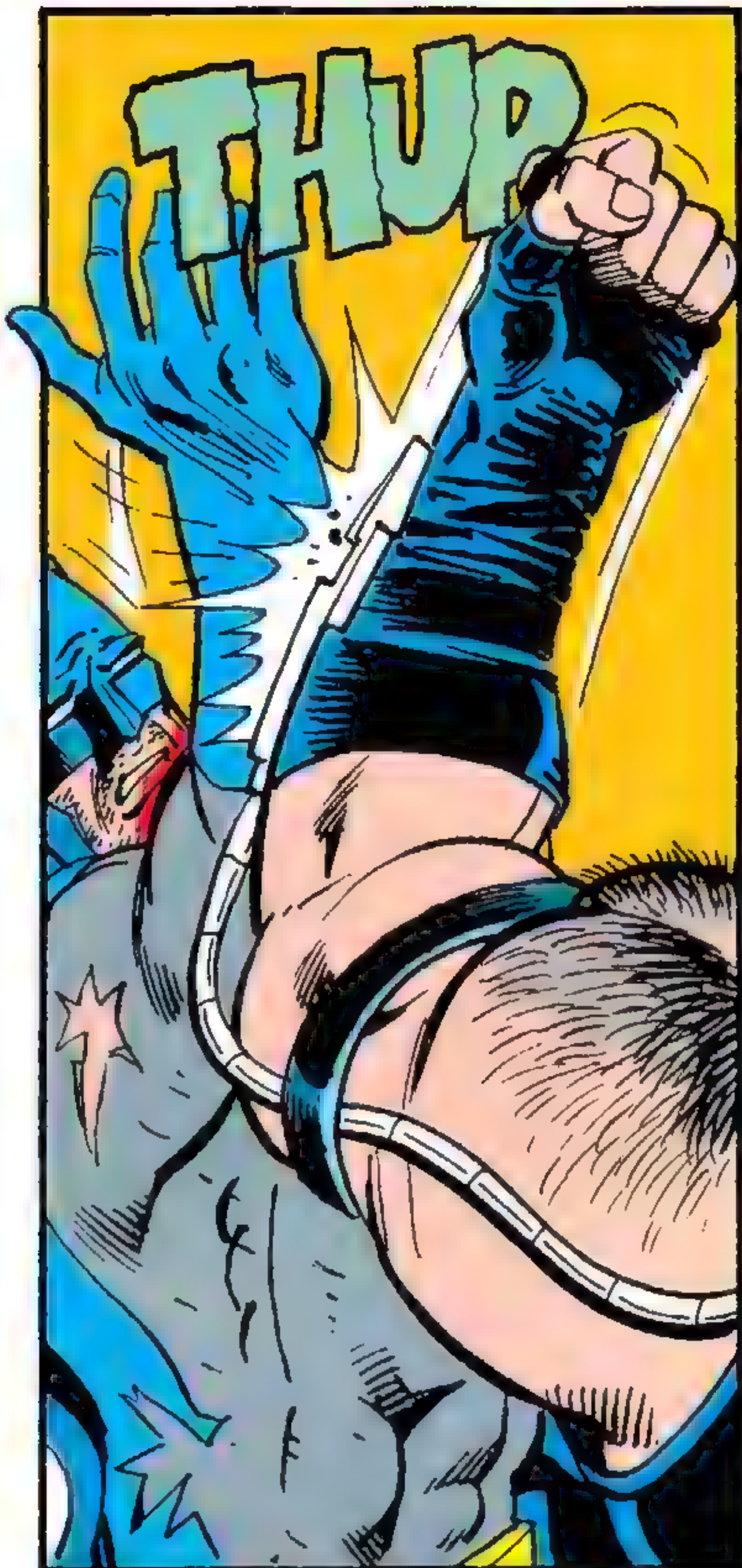


... NO MORE
POWER...

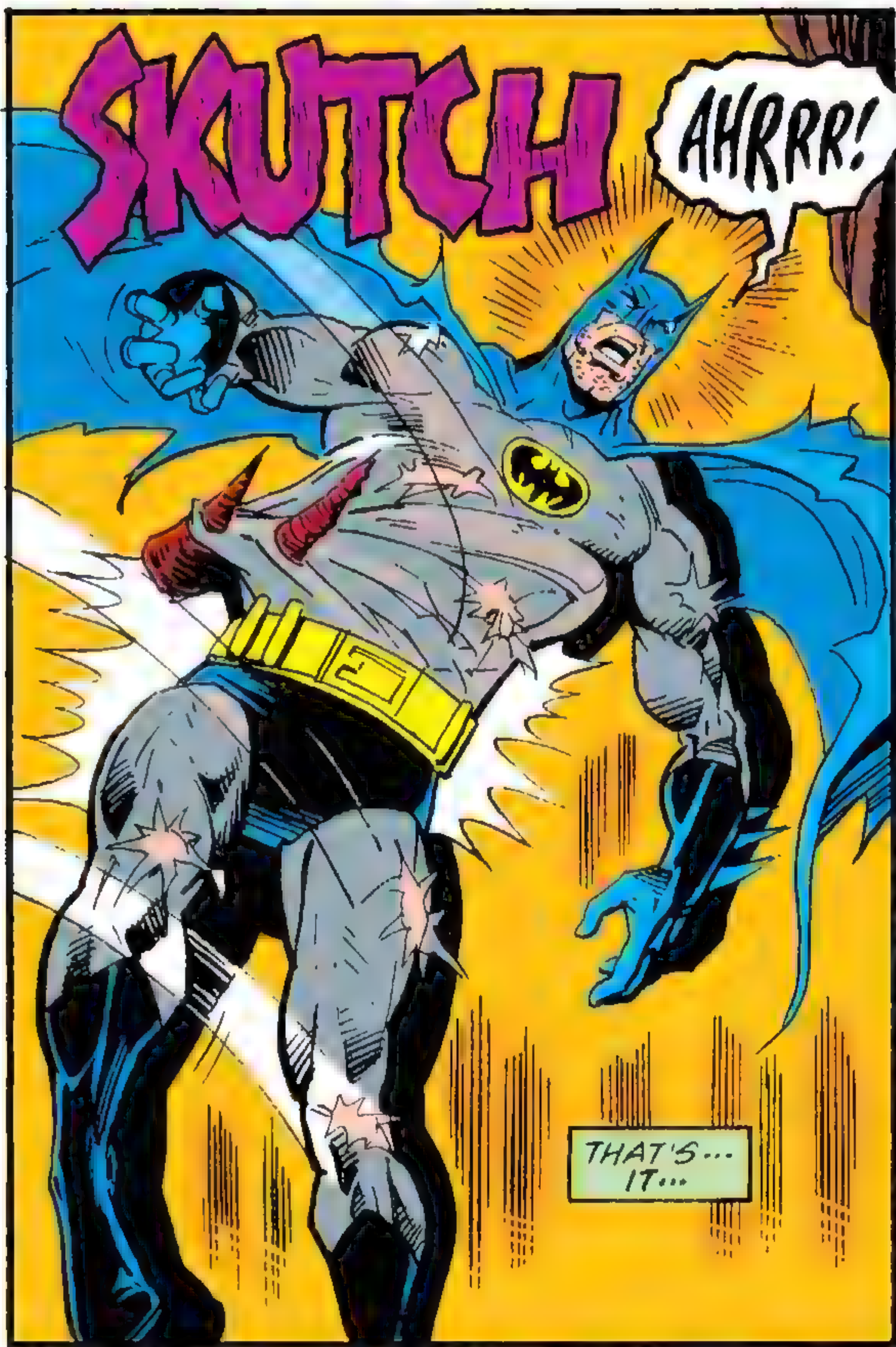
YOU HAVE
NOTHING!

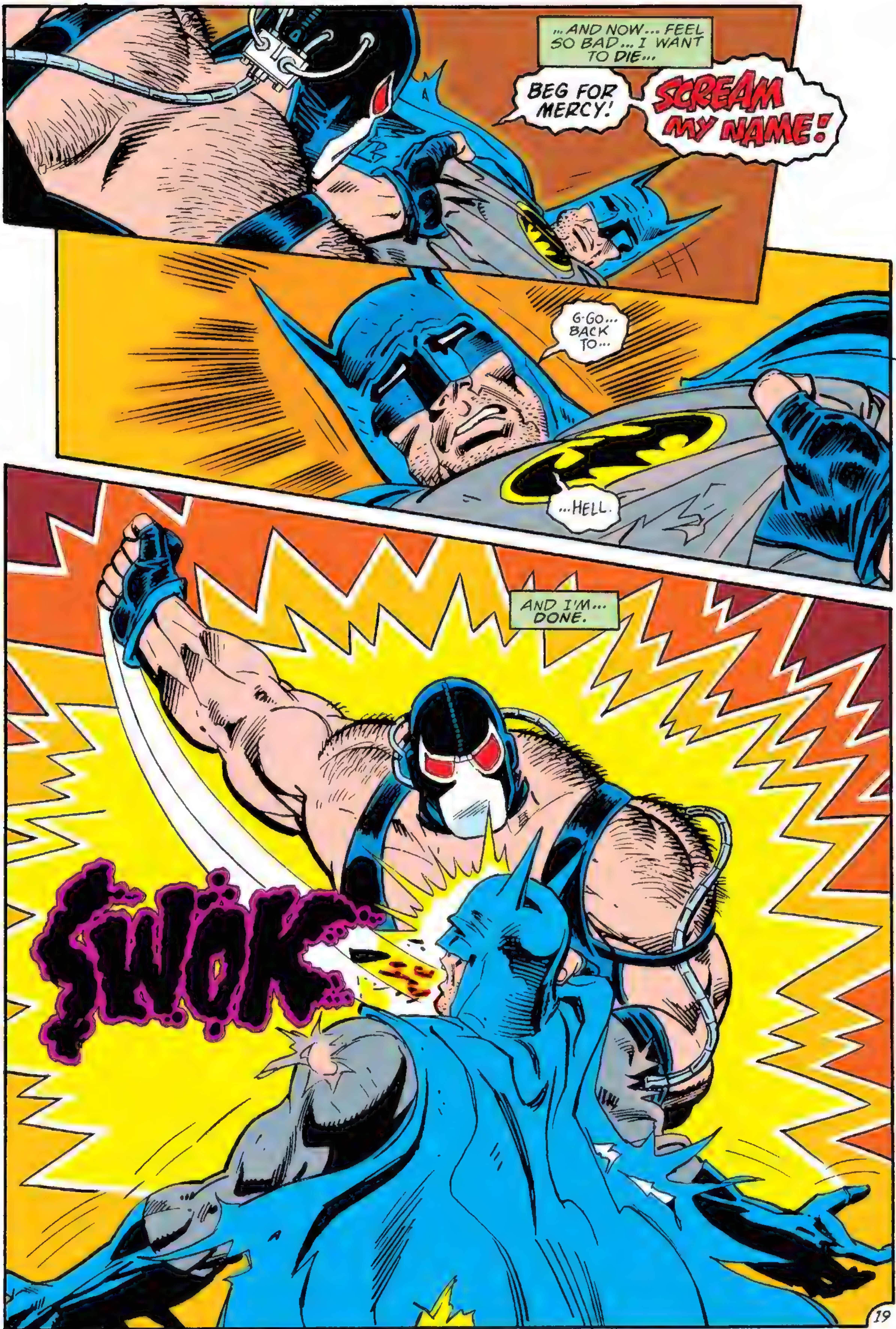


... NO MORE
SPEED...



... NO MORE
REFLEXES.







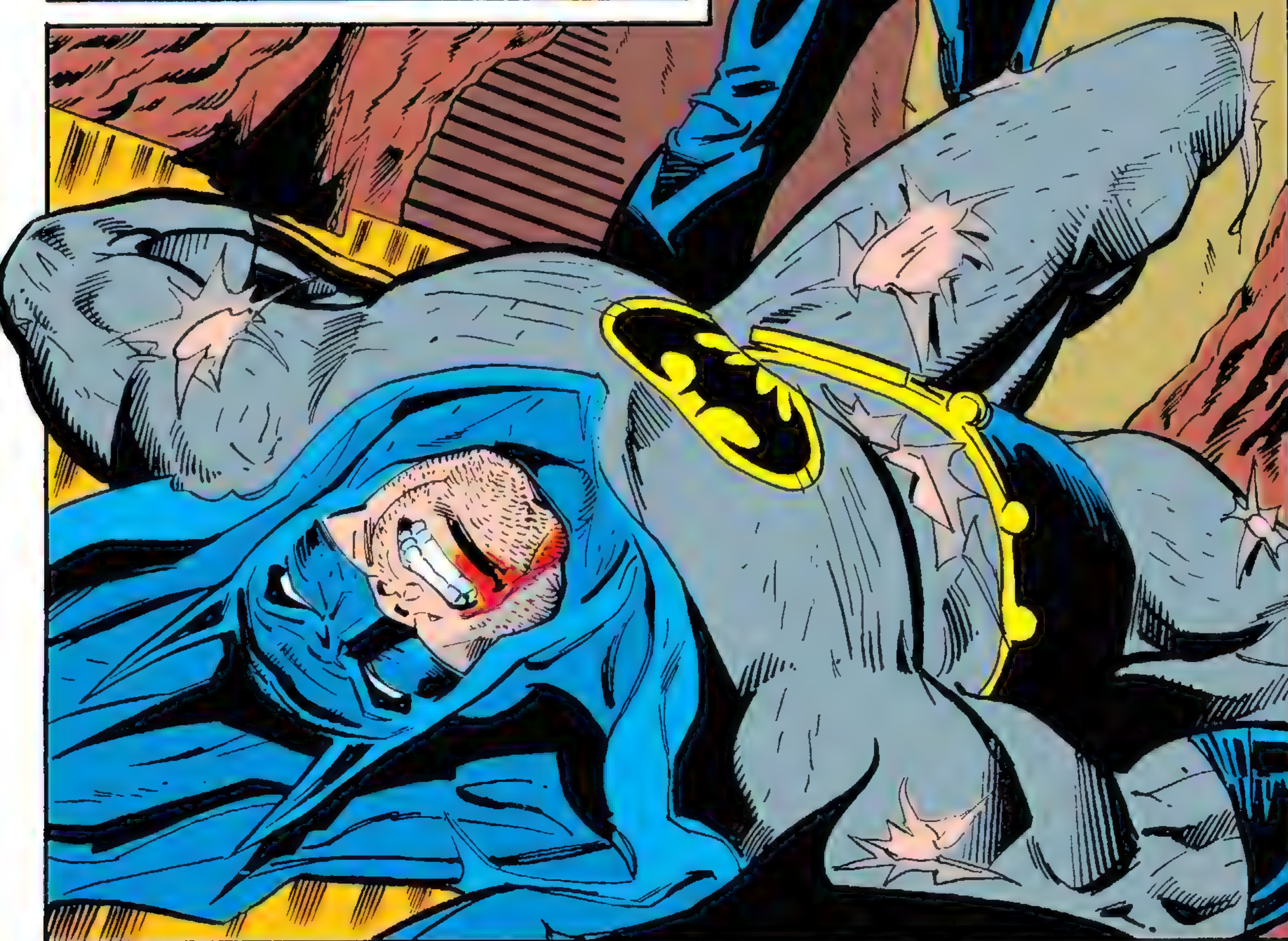
I AM
BANE --
AND I COULD
KILL YOU...

... BUT DEATH
WOULD ONLY
END YOUR
AGONY -- AND
SILENCE
YOUR SHAME.

INSTEAD,
I WILL
SIMPLY...

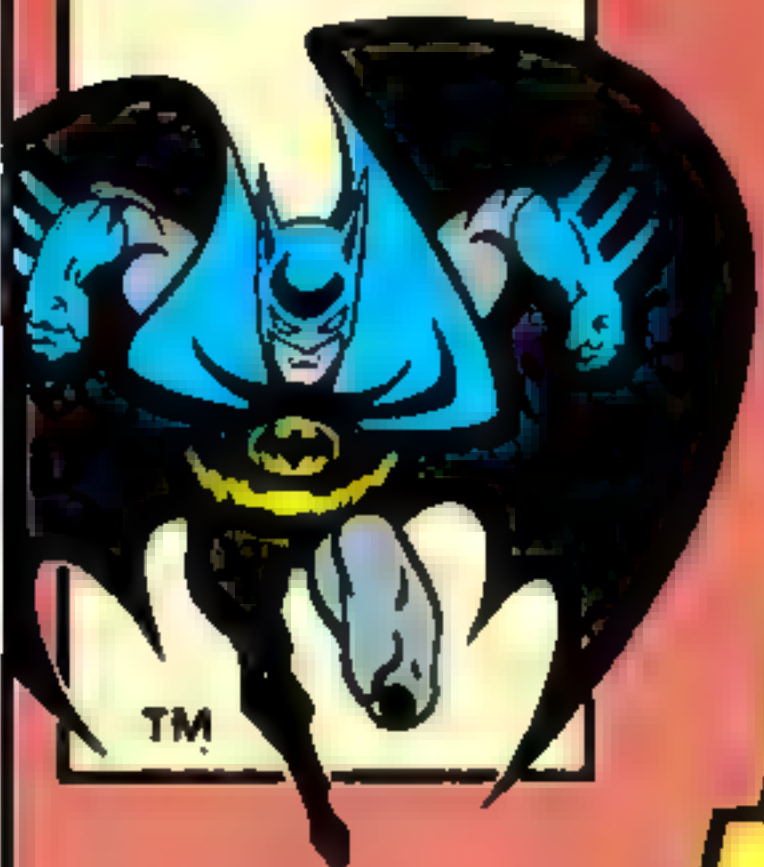
...BREAK YOU!







664
LATE
JULY 99



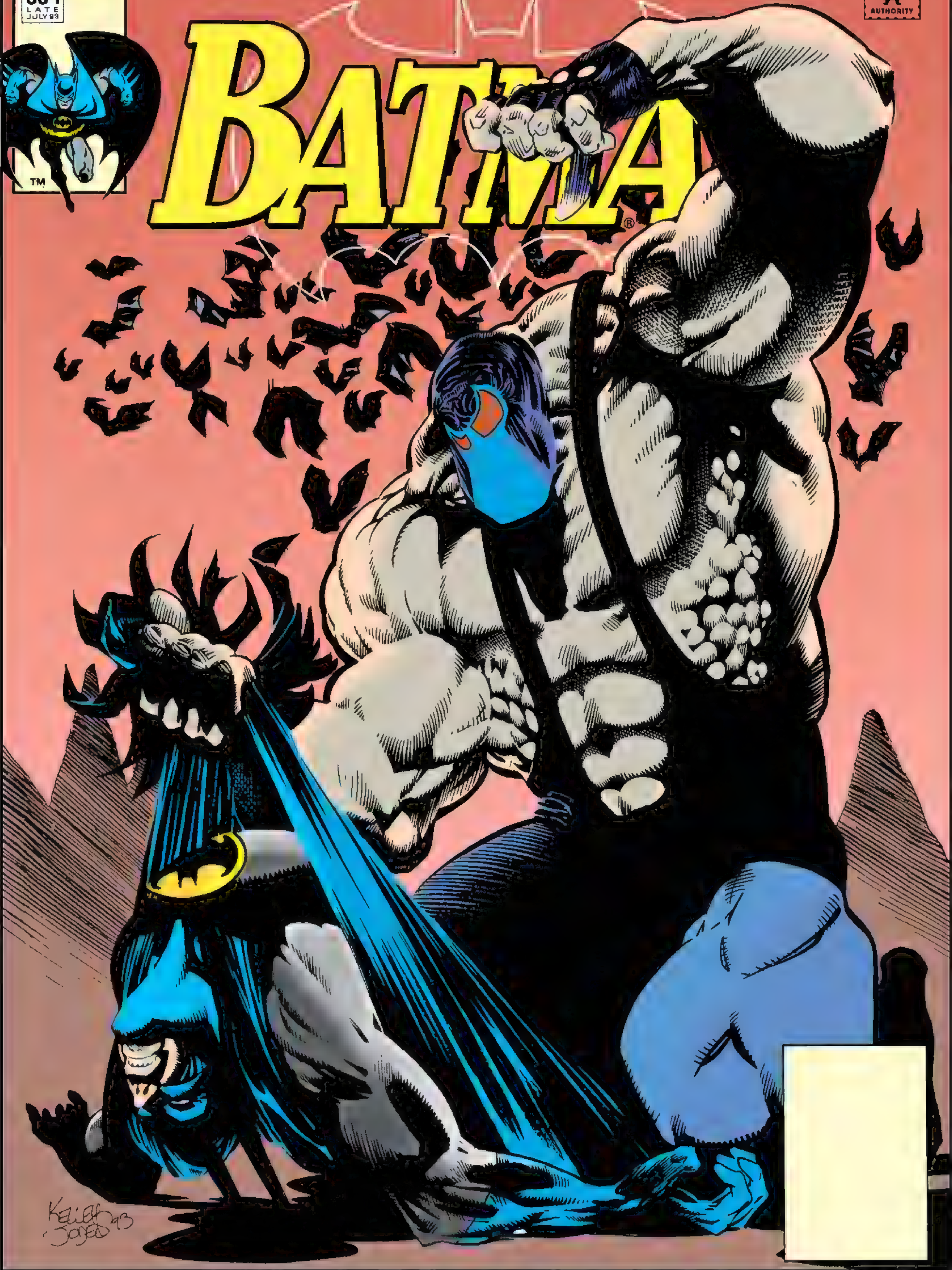
KNIGHTFALL™



APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

DETECTIVE COMICS®

BATMAN





WHO RULES THE NIGHT

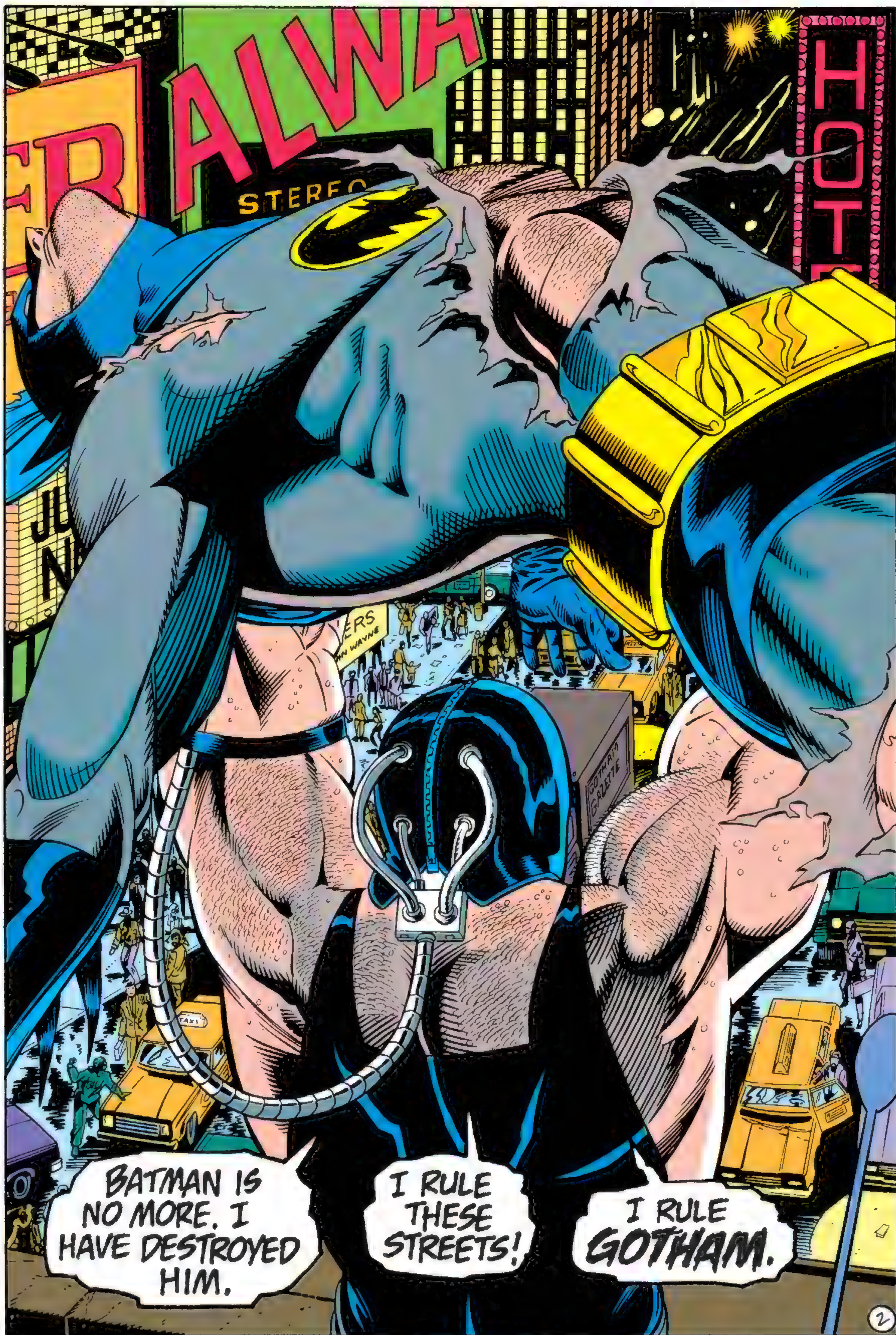
I AM
BANE.

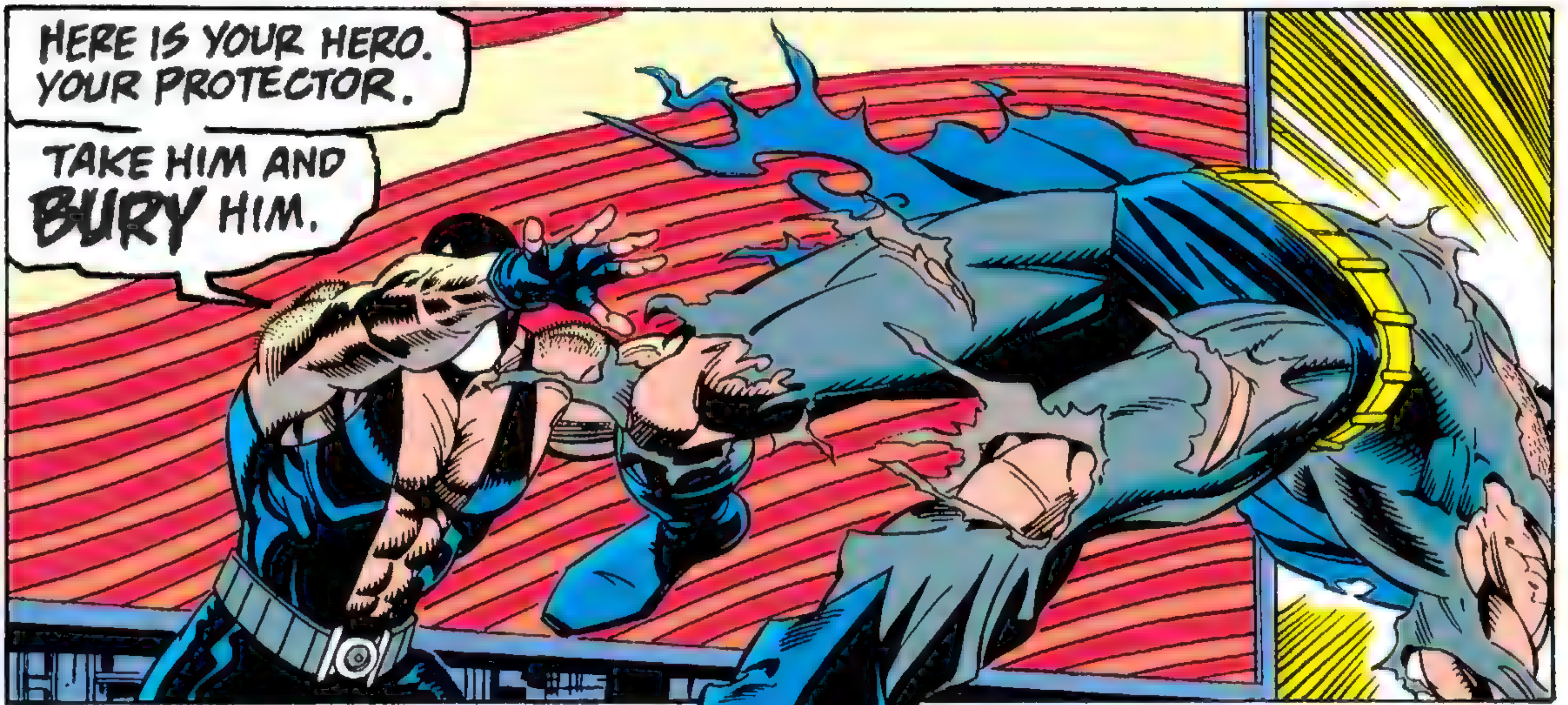
THIS
CITY IS
MINE!

UGO REPORTS DAILY
WHO IS
MYSTERY
MAN?

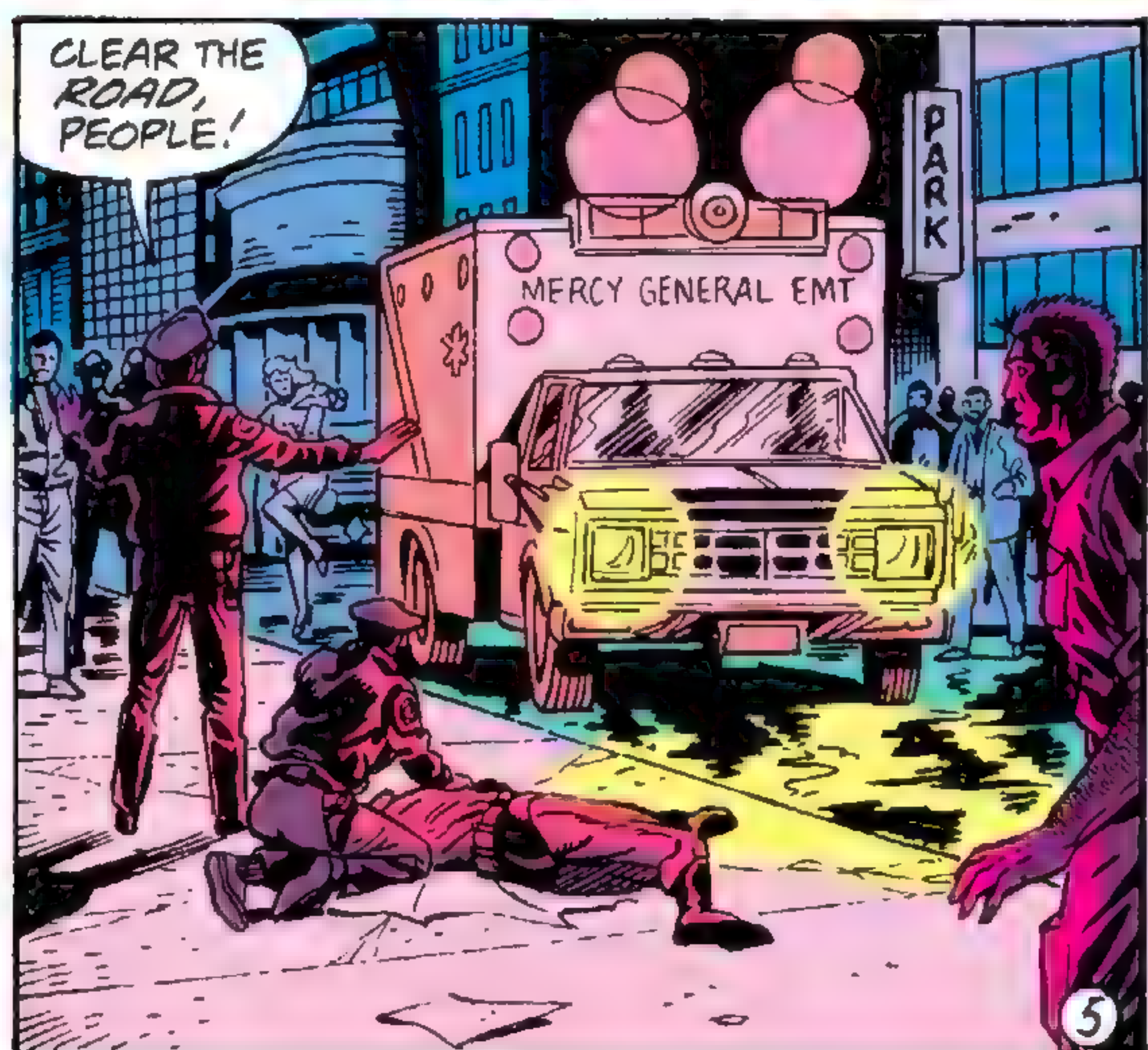
CHUCK DIXON <i>writer</i>	GRAHAM NOLAN <i>penciller</i>	SCOTT HANNA <i>inker</i>
ADRIENNE ROY <i>colorist</i>	JOHN COSTANZA <i>letterer</i>	SCOTT PETERSON <i>editor</i>

BATMAN created by BOB KANE













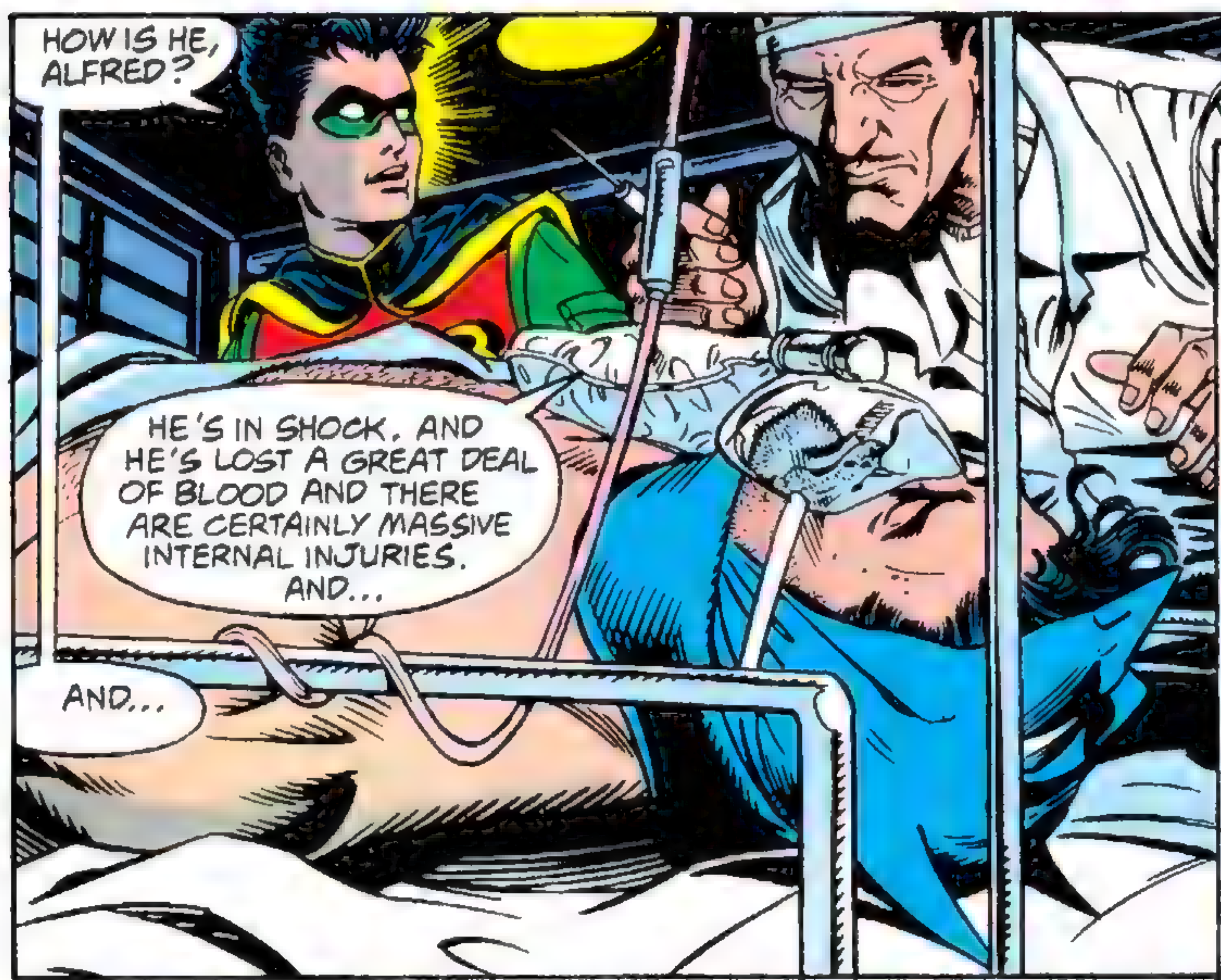
YO, MONTOKA, WE HEARD SOME GEEK WASTED THE BATMAN.

THAT TRUE? OR IS HE GONNA BE OKAY? HOW'D HE LOOK?

HOW'D HE LOOK?



HE LOOKED LIKE THIS IS THE LAST TIME WE'LL SEE HIM.



HOW IS HE, ALFRED?

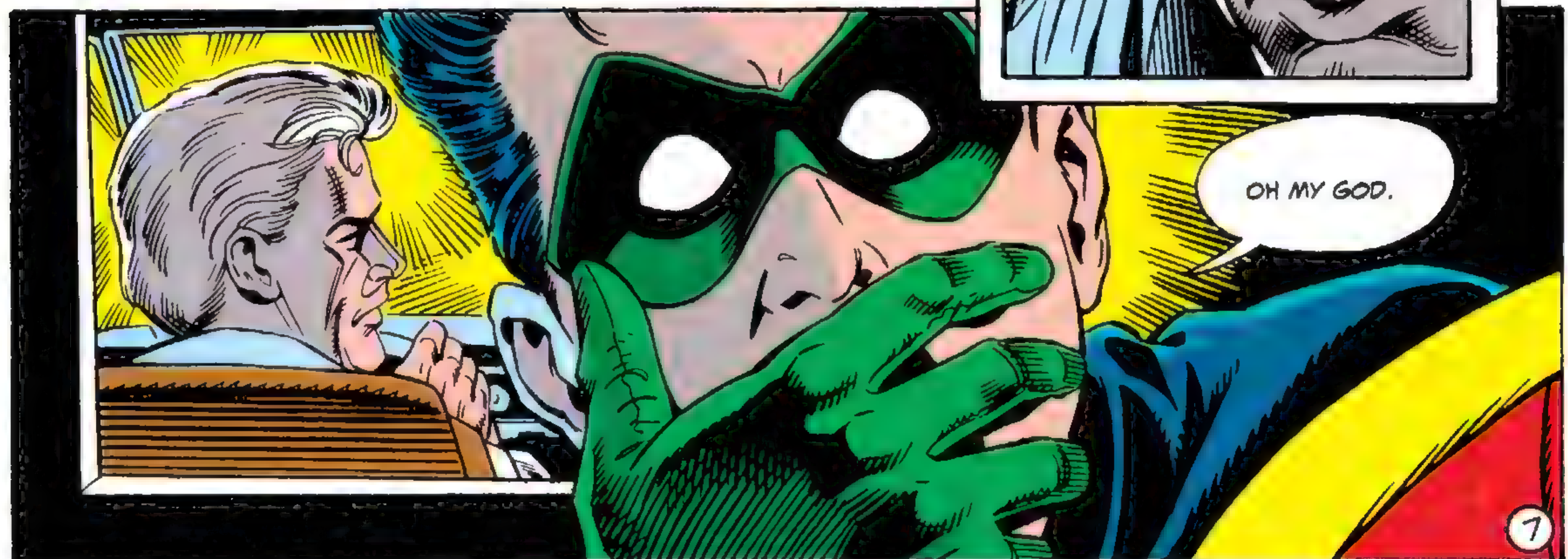
HE'S IN SHOCK. AND HE'S LOST A GREAT DEAL OF BLOOD AND THERE ARE CERTAINLY MASSIVE INTERNAL INJURIES. AND...

AND...



I THINK...

I THINK HIS BACK MAY BE...



OH MY GOD.



WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM TO A HOSPITAL.

WE ARE TAKING HIM BACK TO THE CAVE.

A REAL HOSPITAL, ALFRED.



WE WILL DO THE BEST FOR HIM THAT WE CAN, ROBIN. I'VE REPAIRED HIS BROKEN BODY MANY A--

BUT IT'S NEVER BEEN THIS BAD. HE COULD BE PARALYZED. HE COULD DIE.



WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE, HE AND I.

LISTEN TO ME, ALFRED! WE HAVE GOT TO TAKE HIM TO A HOSPITAL. WE'VE GOT TO SAVE HIS LIFE.



THE ONLY LIFE THAT'S IMPORTANT TO HIM IS HIS LIFE AS BATMAN. TAKE HIM TO A HOSPITAL AND YOU'LL EXPOSE BATMAN TO BE BRUCE WAYNE.

YOU'LL SAVE HIS BODY, CERTAINLY. BUT YOU WILL HAVE KILLED THE MAN.



WE WILL RETURN TO THE CAVE AND STABILIZE HIM UNTIL WE CAN COME UP WITH A PLAUSIBLE STORY TO EXPLAIN HOW BRUCE WAYNE MIGHT HAVE SUFFERED THESE INJURIES.

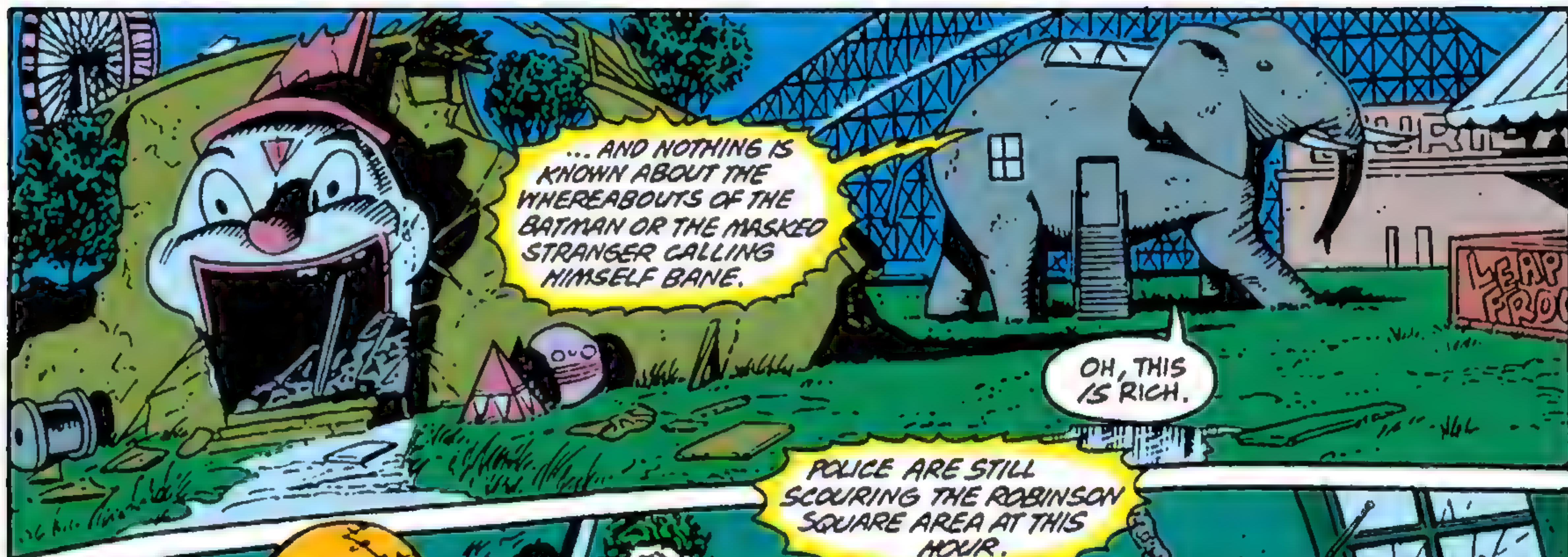
ARE WE CLEAR ON THAT, MISTER TIM?

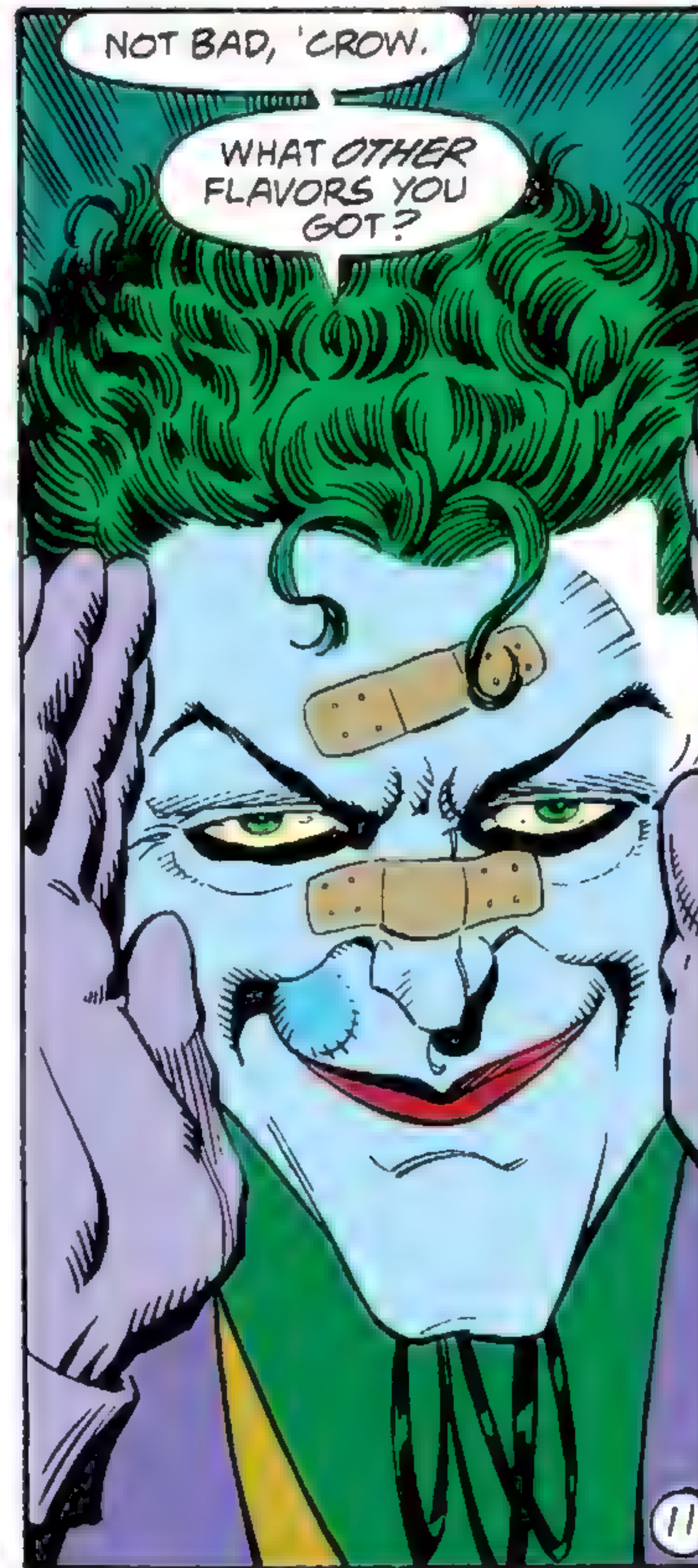
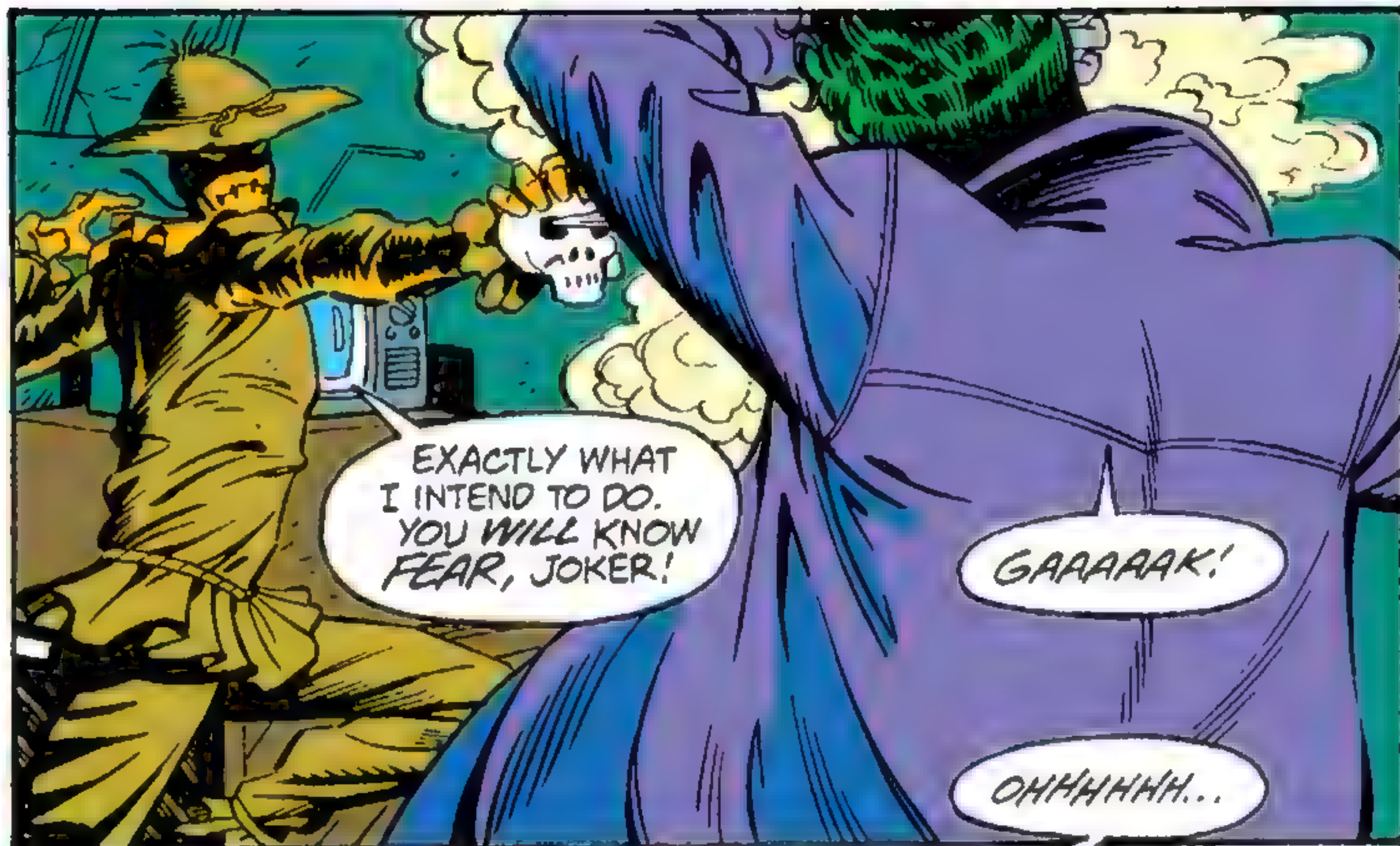


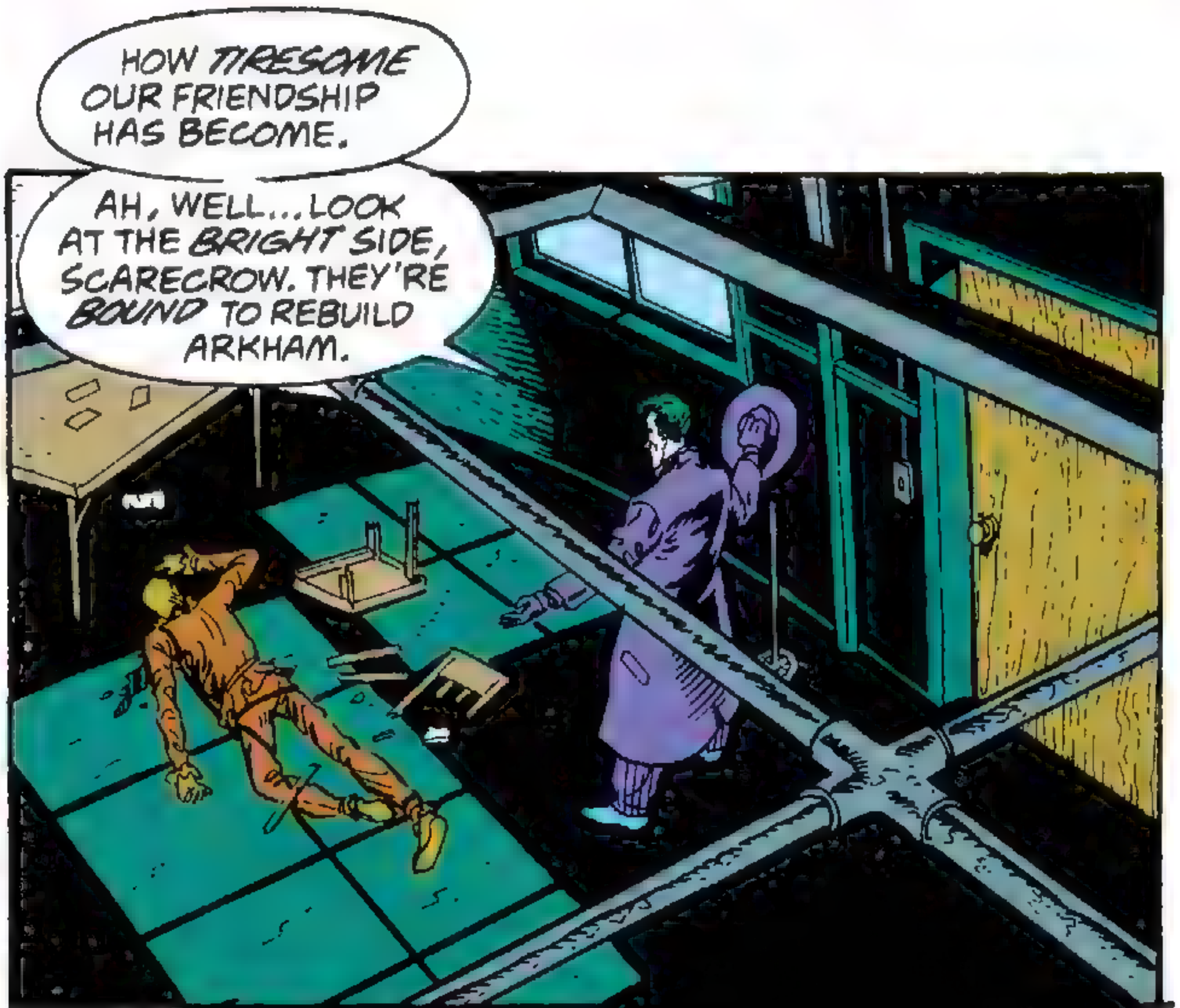
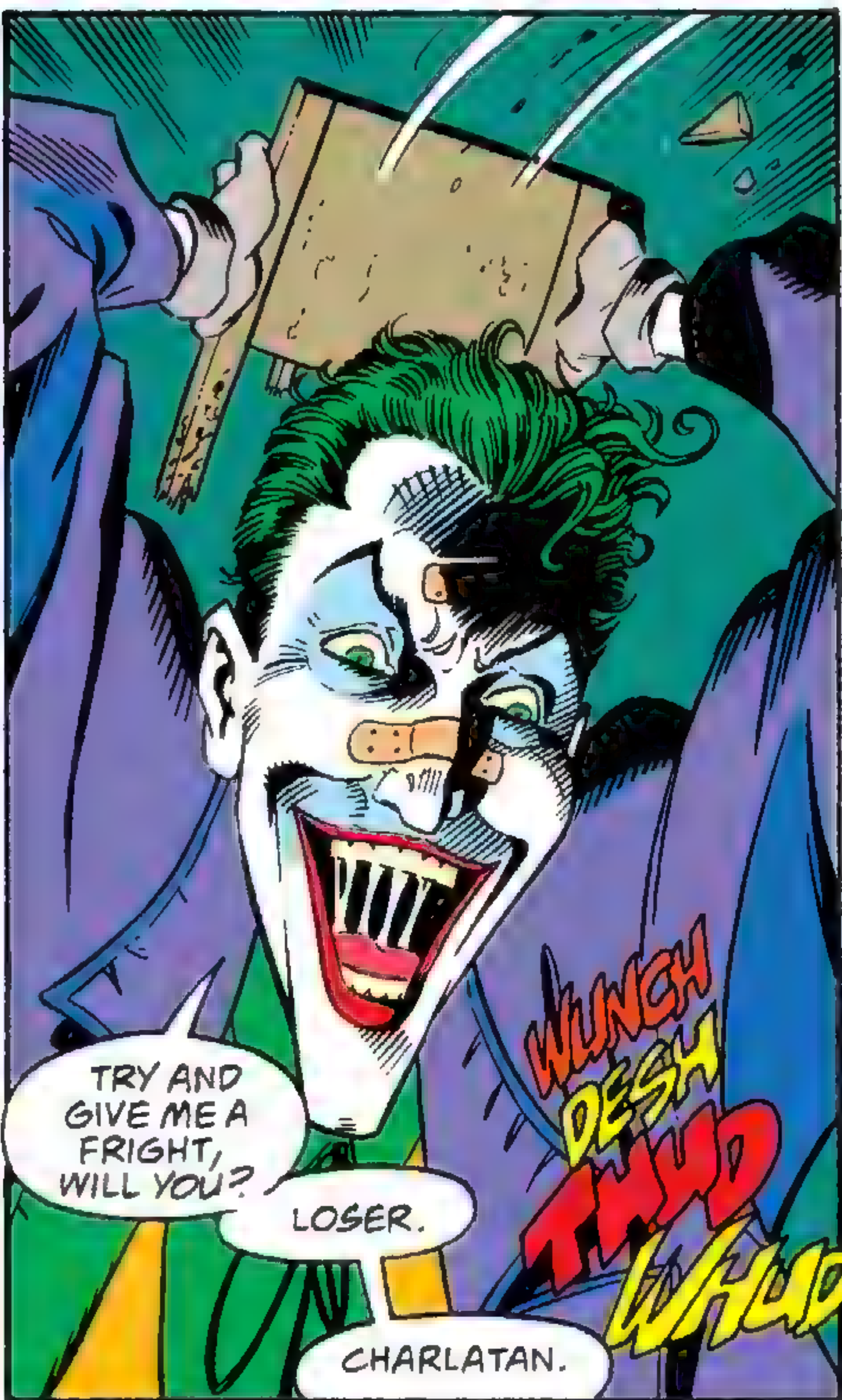
I'M SORRY, ALFRED.

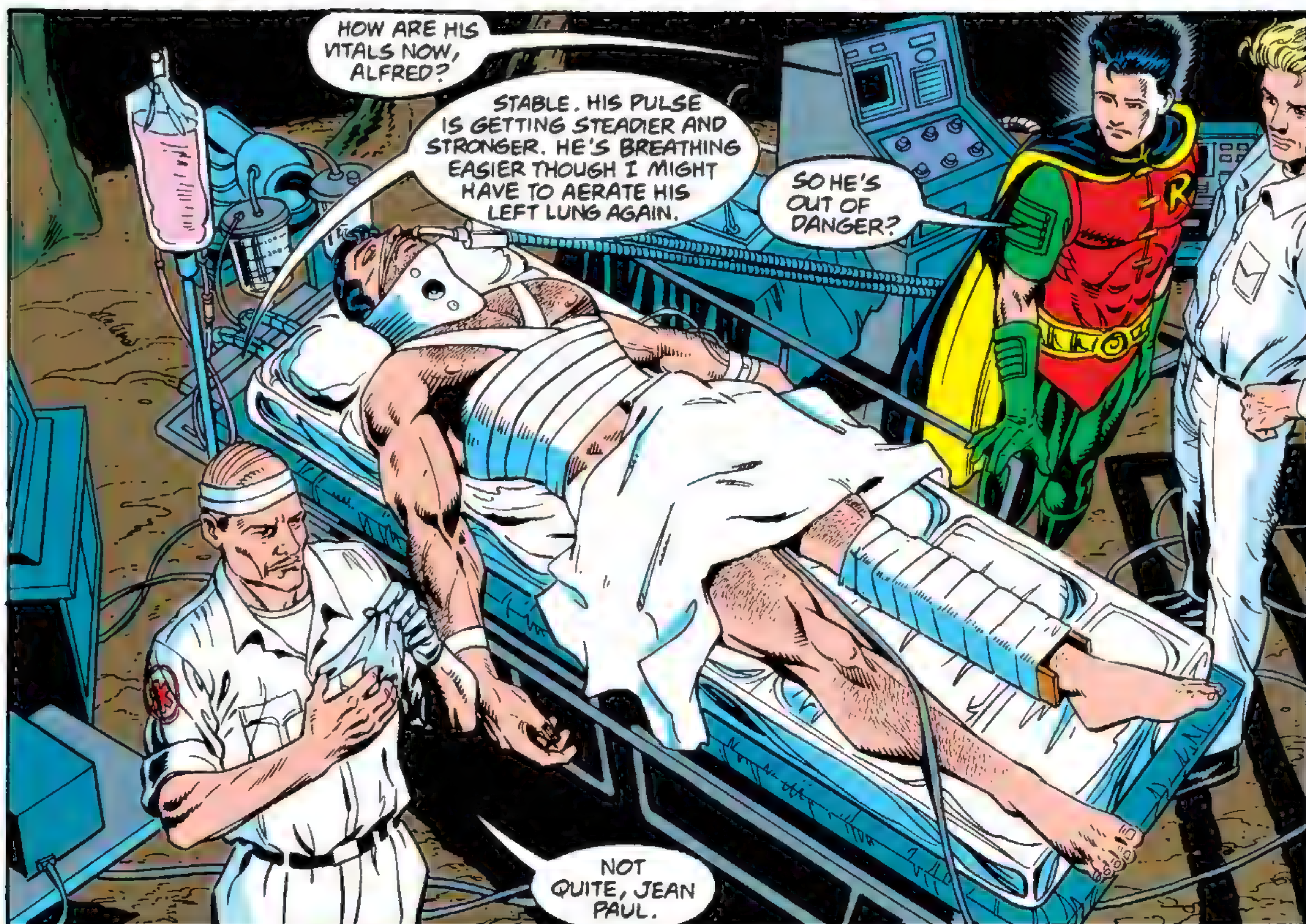
GET US TO THE BATCAVE, PAUL.









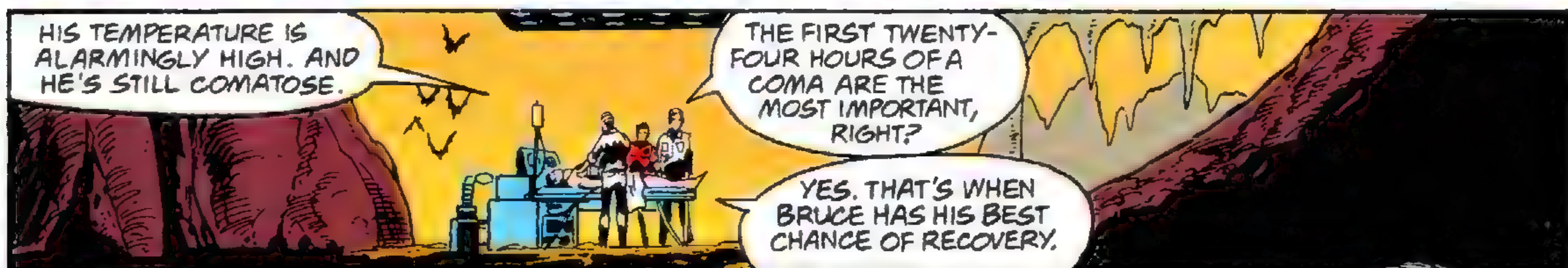


HOW ARE HIS VITALS NOW, ALFRED?

STABLE. HIS PULSE IS GETTING STEADIER AND STRONGER. HE'S BREATHING EASIER THOUGH I MIGHT HAVE TO AERATE HIS LEFT LUNG AGAIN.

SO HE'S OUT OF DANGER?

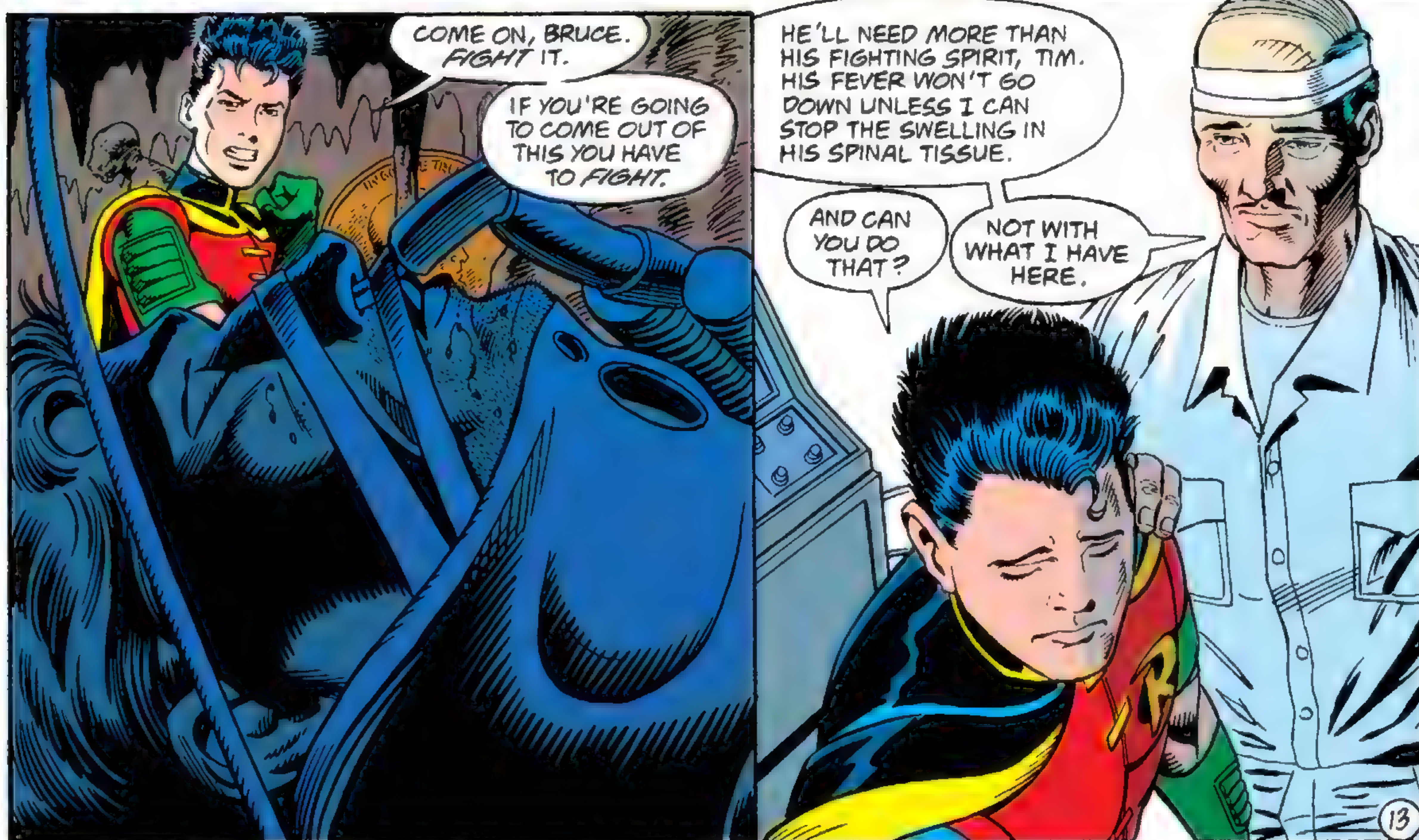
NOT QUITE, JEAN PAUL.



HIS TEMPERATURE IS ALARMINGLY HIGH. AND HE'S STILL COMATOSE.

THE FIRST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF A COMA ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT, RIGHT?

YES. THAT'S WHEN BRUCE HAS HIS BEST CHANCE OF RECOVERY.



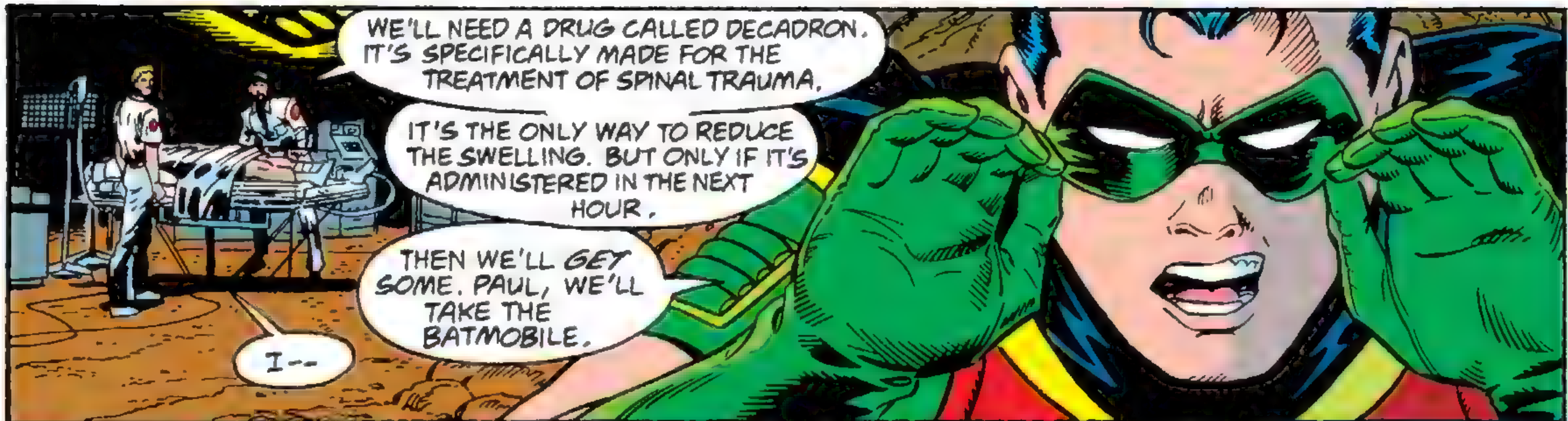
COME ON, BRUCE. FIGHT IT.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO COME OUT OF THIS YOU HAVE TO FIGHT.

HE'LL NEED MORE THAN HIS FIGHTING SPIRIT, TIM. HIS FEVER WON'T GO DOWN UNLESS I CAN STOP THE SWELLING IN HIS SPINAL TISSUE.

AND CAN YOU DO THAT?

NOT WITH WHAT I HAVE HERE.

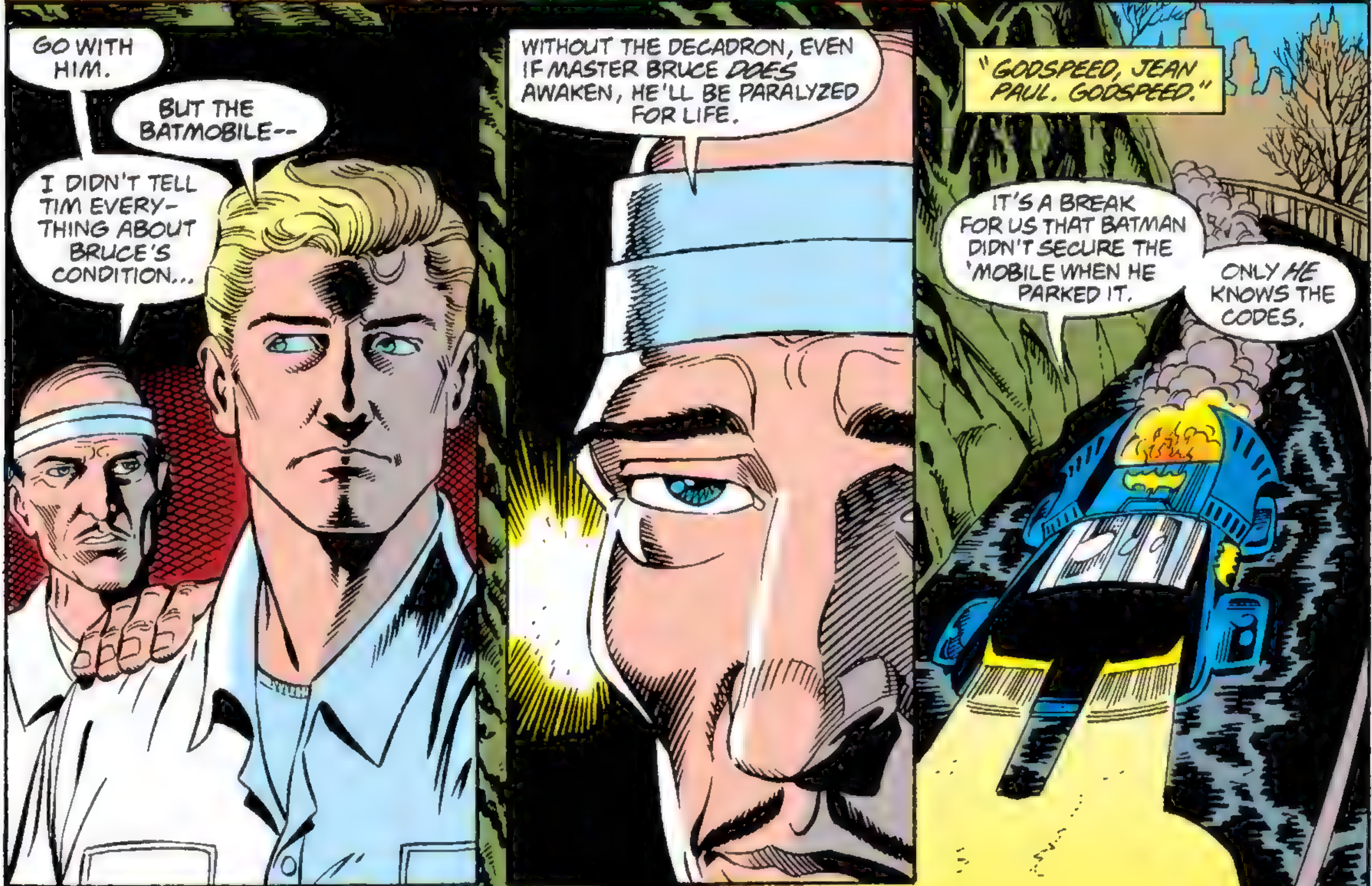


WE'LL NEED A DRUG CALLED DECADRON. IT'S SPECIFICALLY MADE FOR THE TREATMENT OF SPINAL TRAUMA.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO REDUCE THE SWELLING. BUT ONLY IF IT'S ADMINISTERED IN THE NEXT HOUR.

THEN WE'LL GET SOME. PAUL, WE'LL TAKE THE BATMOBILE.

I--



GO WITH HIM.

BUT THE BATMOBILE--

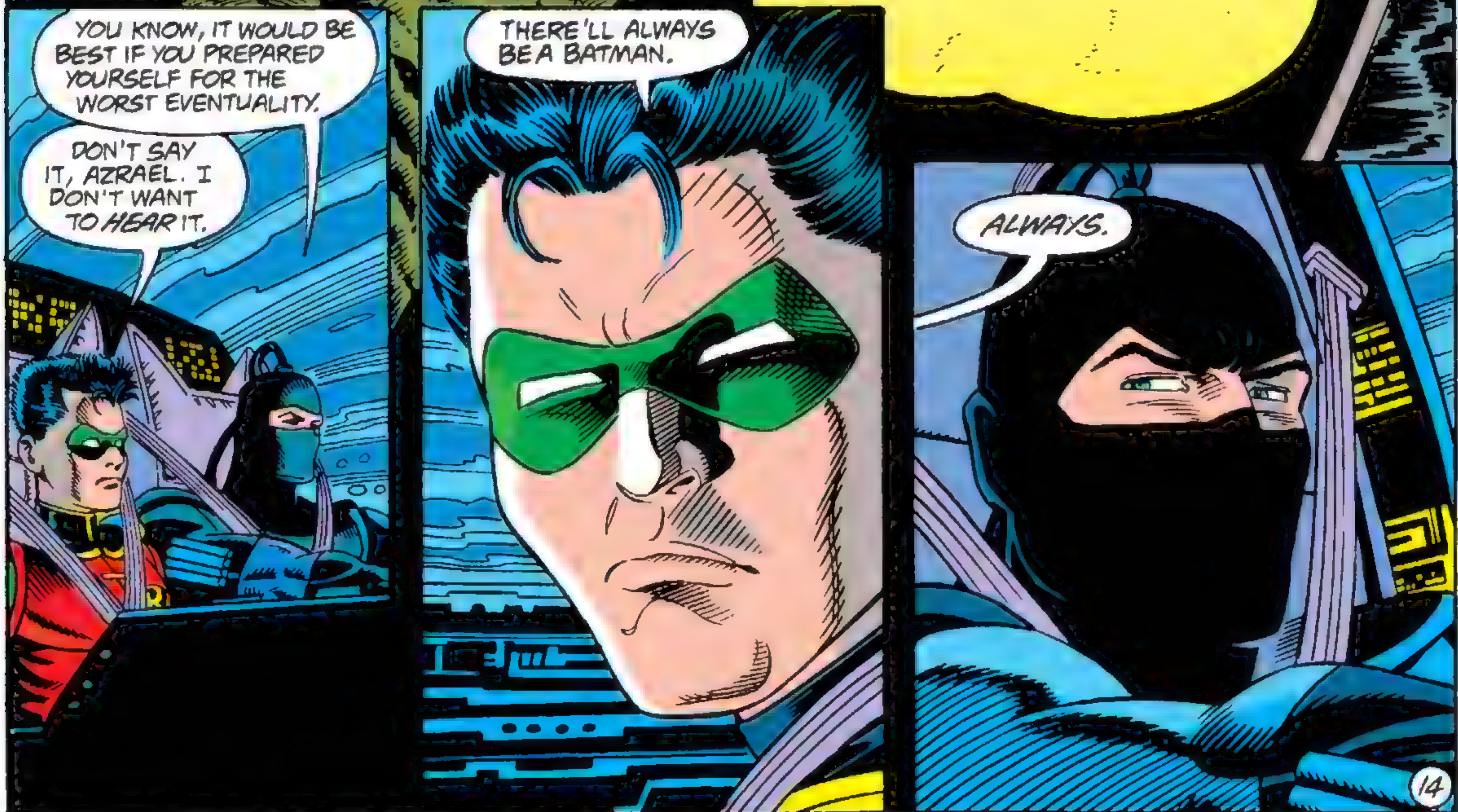
I DIDN'T TELL TIM EVERYTHING ABOUT BRUCE'S CONDITION...

WITHOUT THE DECADRON, EVEN IF MASTER BRUCE DOES AWAKEN, HE'LL BE PARALYZED FOR LIFE.

"GODSPEED, JEAN PAUL. GODSPEED."

IT'S A BREAK FOR US THAT BATMAN DIDN'T SECURE THE MOBILE WHEN HE PARKED IT.

ONLY HE KNOWS THE CODES.

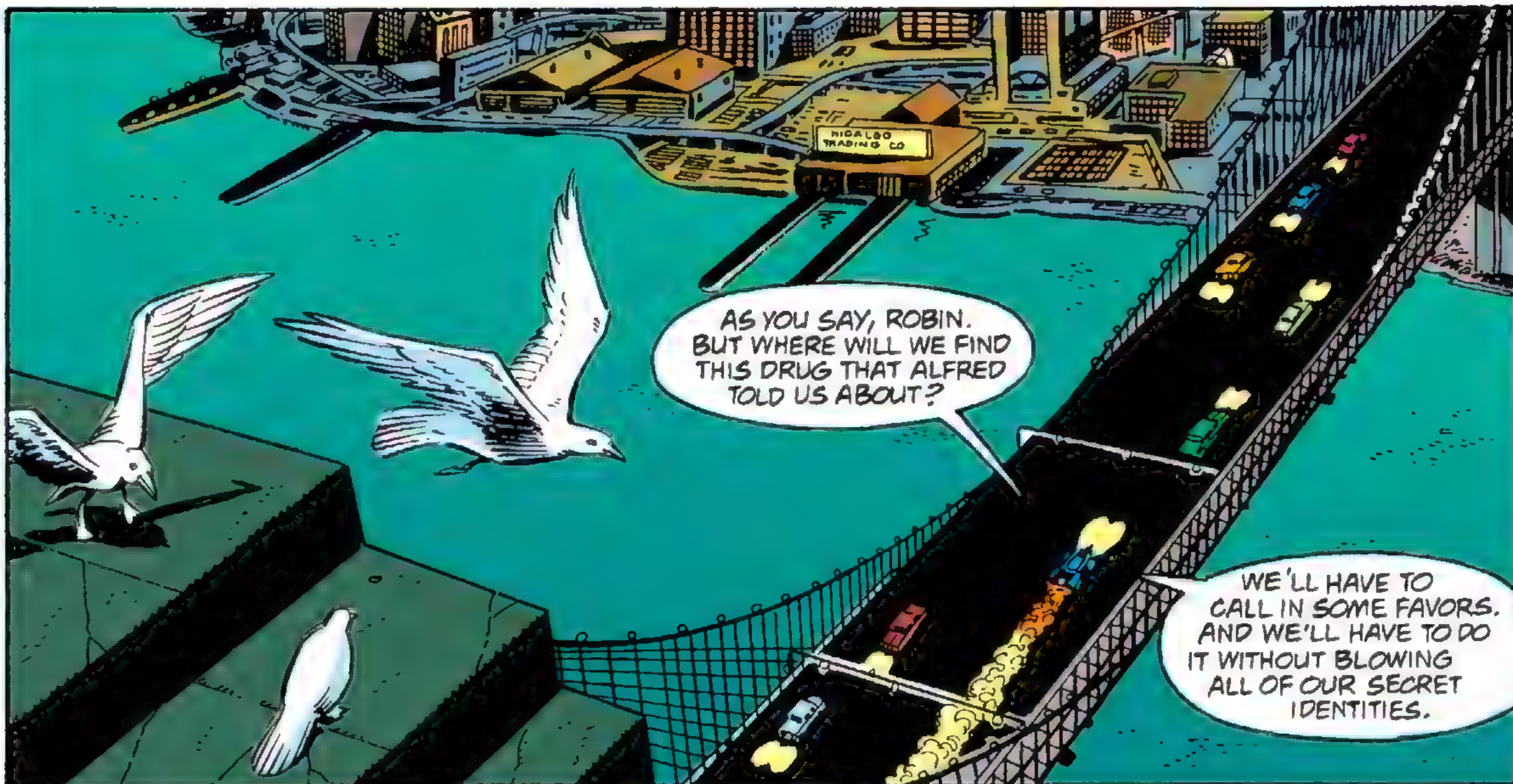


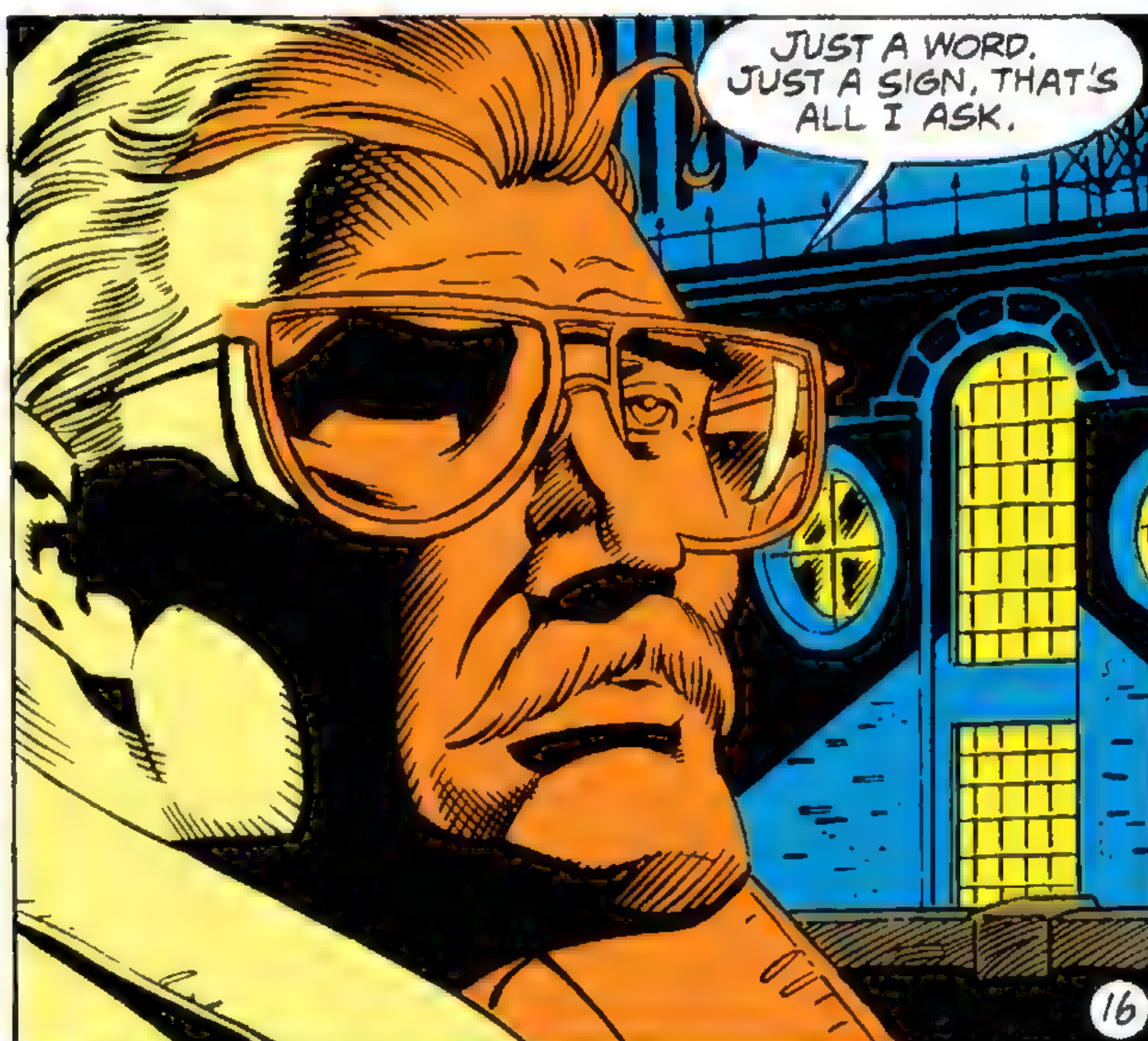
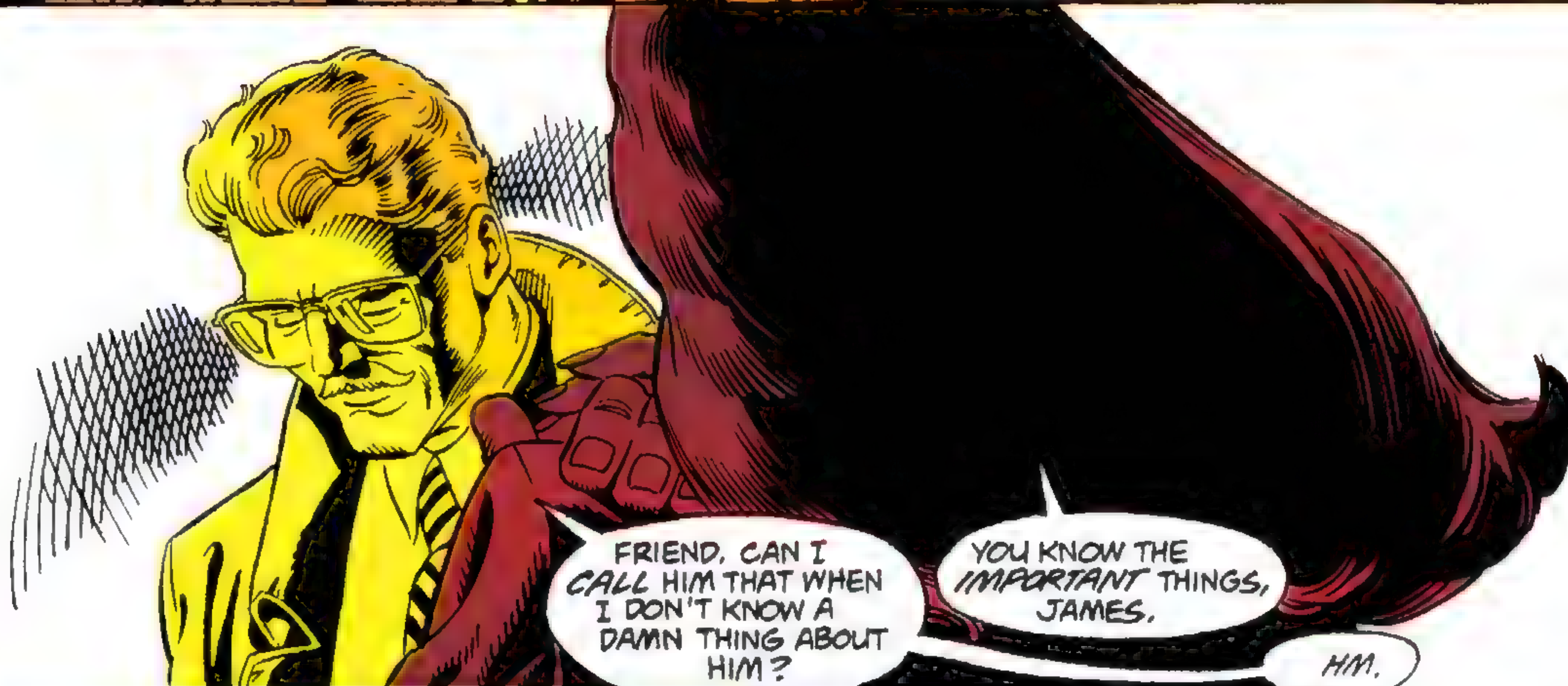
YOU KNOW, IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU PREPARED YOURSELF FOR THE WORST EVENTUALITY.

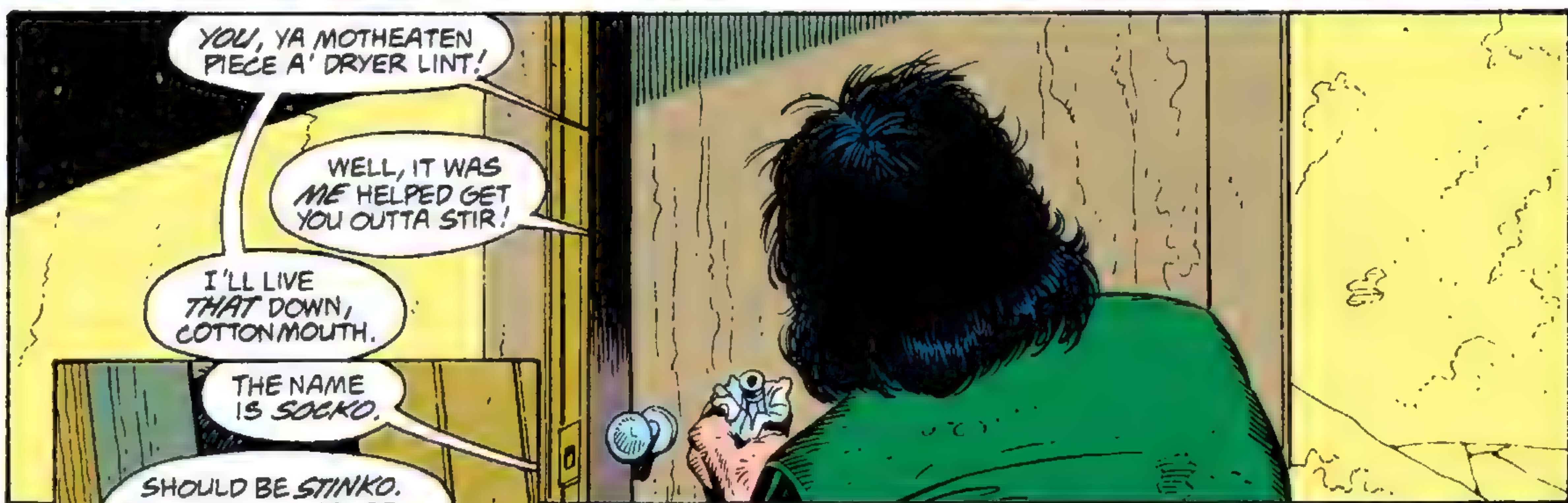
DON'T SAY IT, AZRAEL. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT.

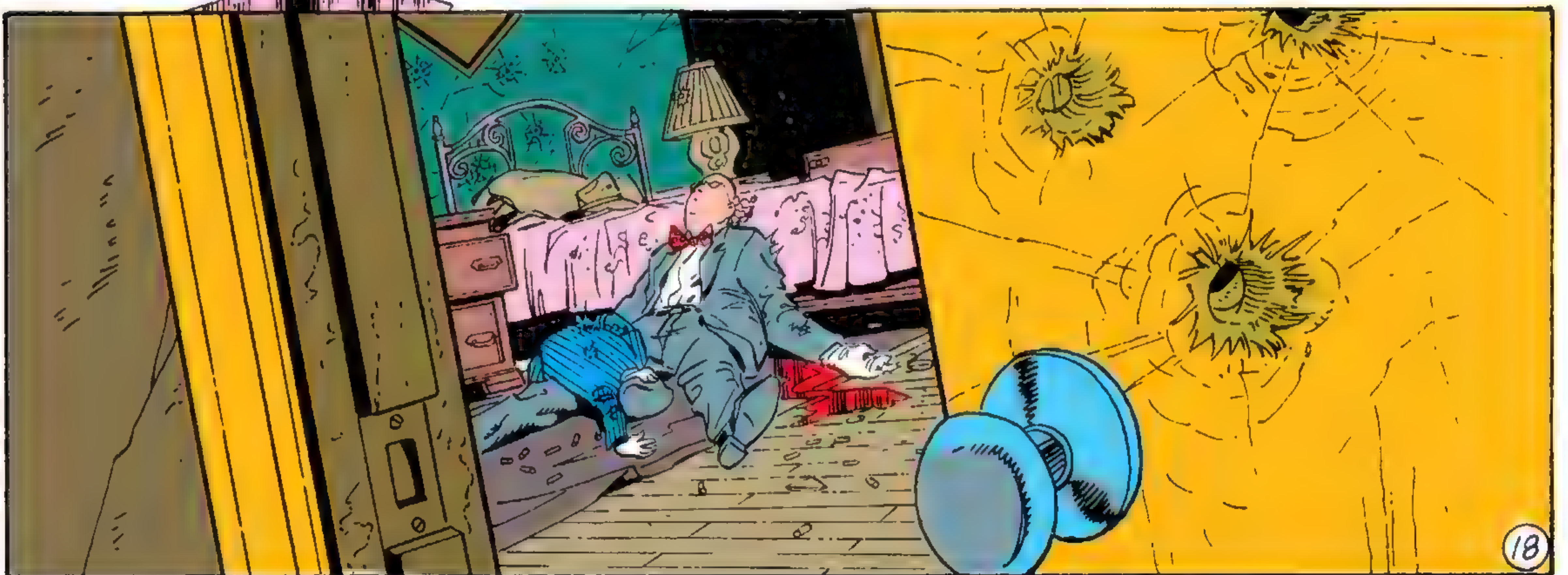
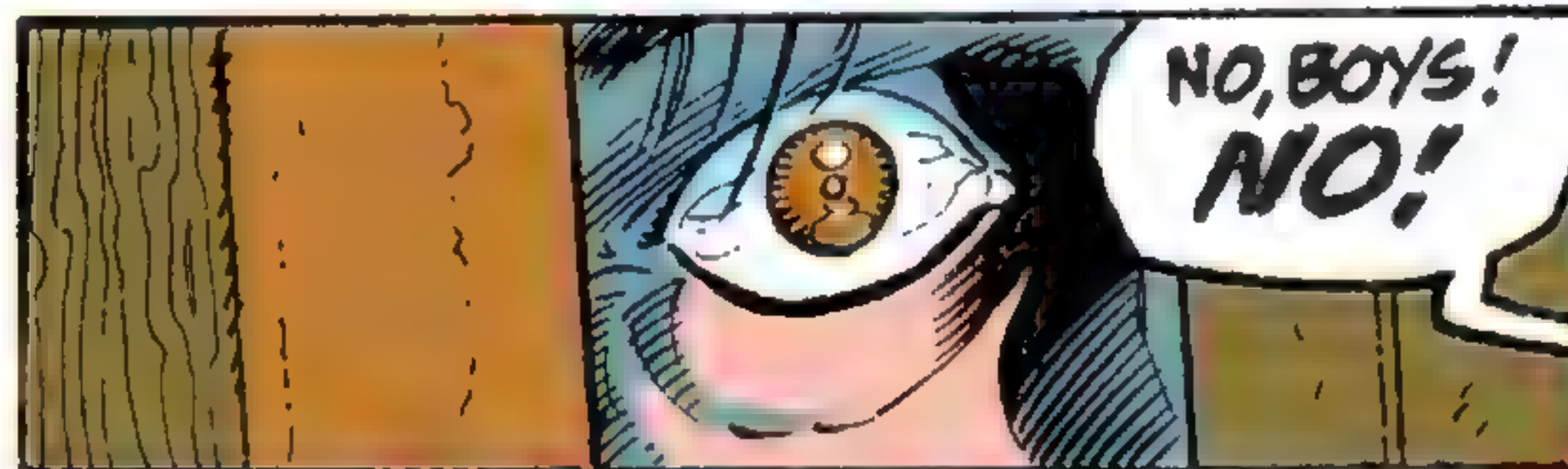
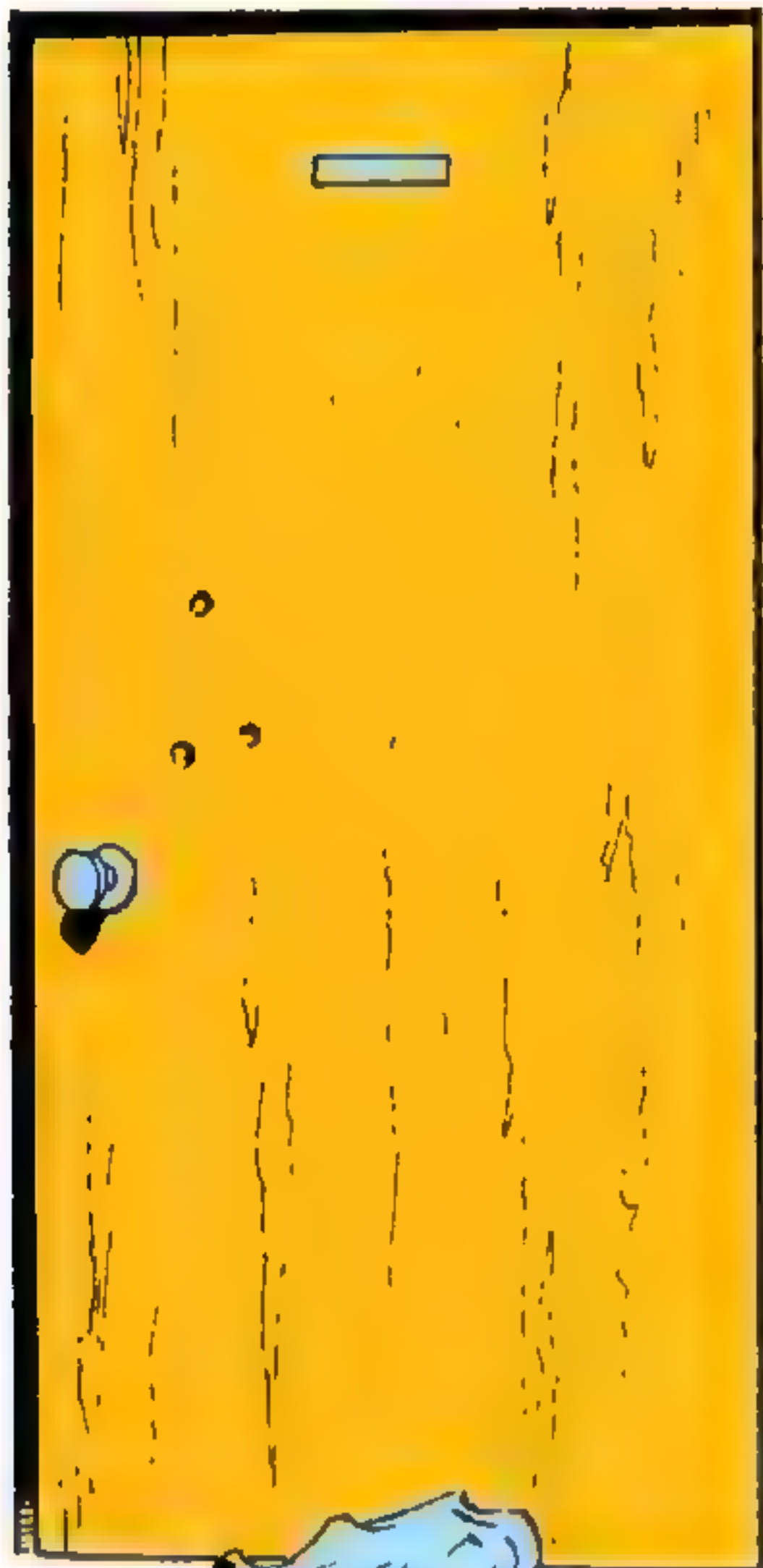
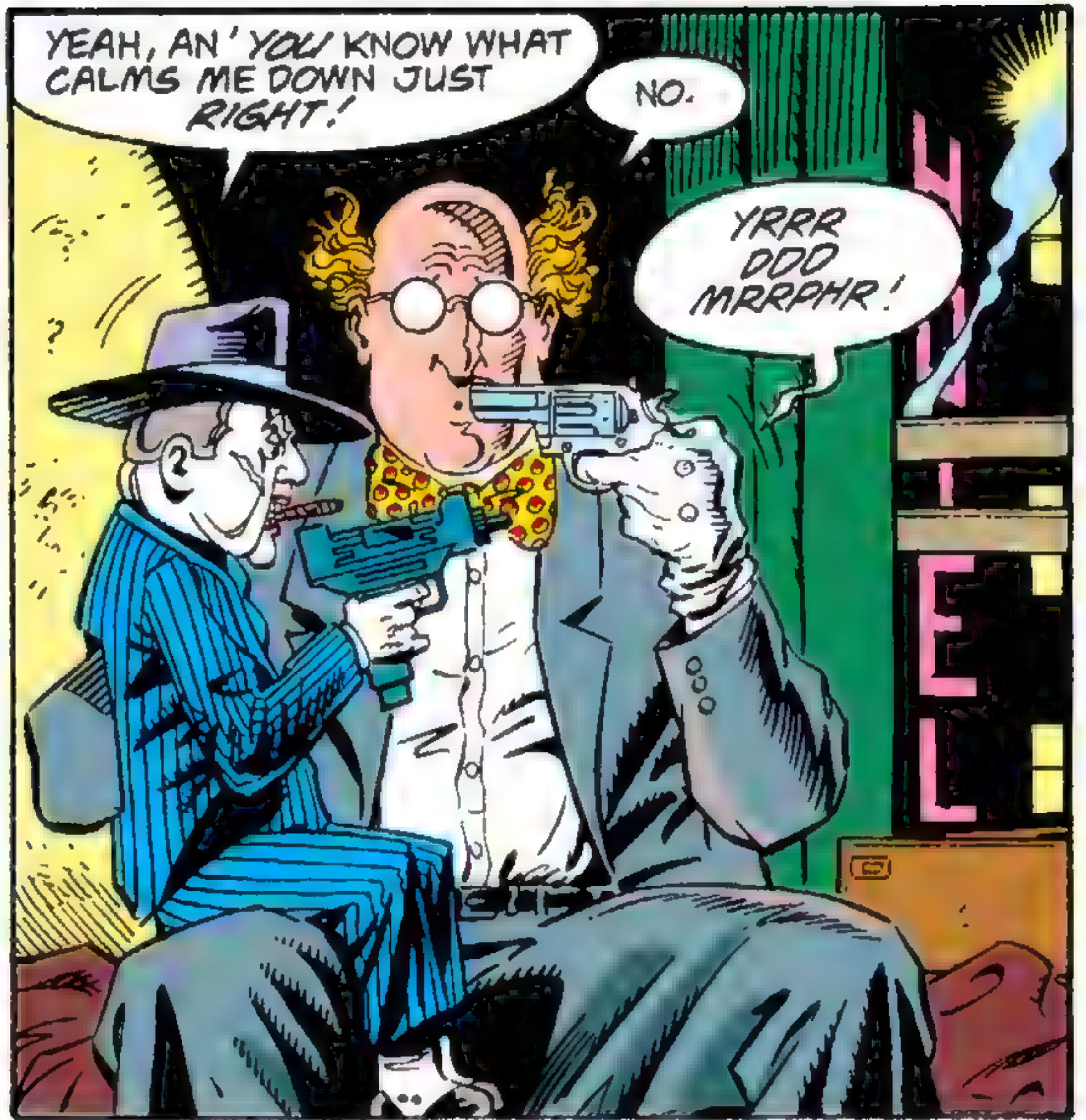
THERE'LL ALWAYS BE A BATMAN.

ALWAYS.











THANKS FOR LEAVING THE WINDOW OPEN.

YOU'RE ALONE.

I NEED YOUR HELP. HE NEEDS YOUR HELP.



ANYTHING.

A DRUG CALLED DECADRON. HE MIGHT DIE WITHOUT IT. WE NEED IT FAST.

WAIT HERE.



PATCH ME THROUGH TO BULLOCK'S UNIT.

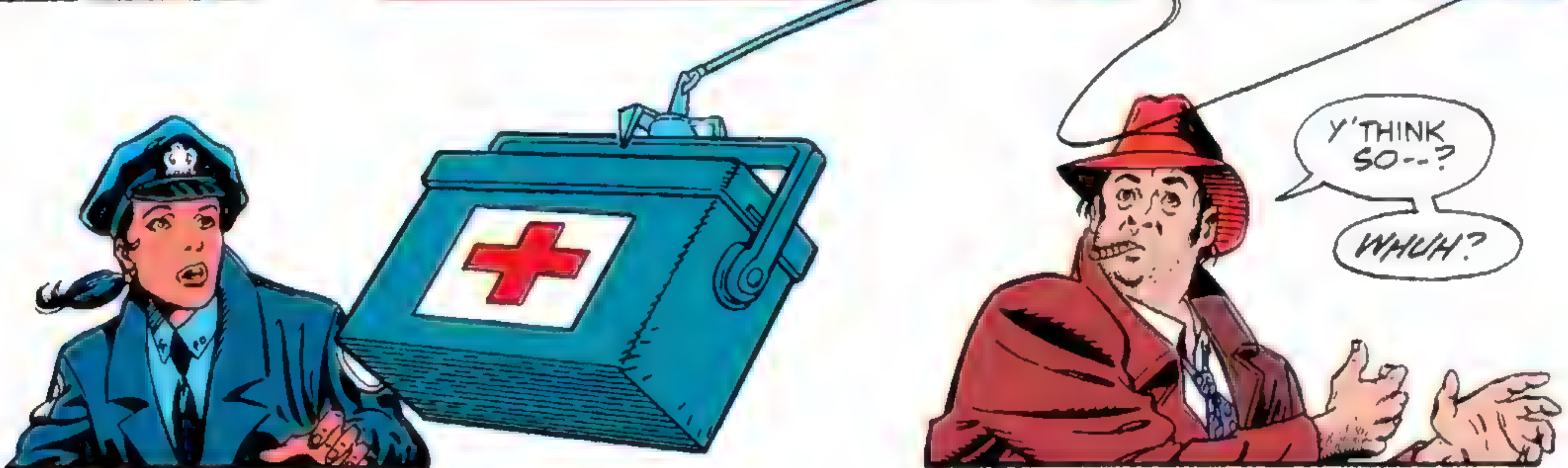
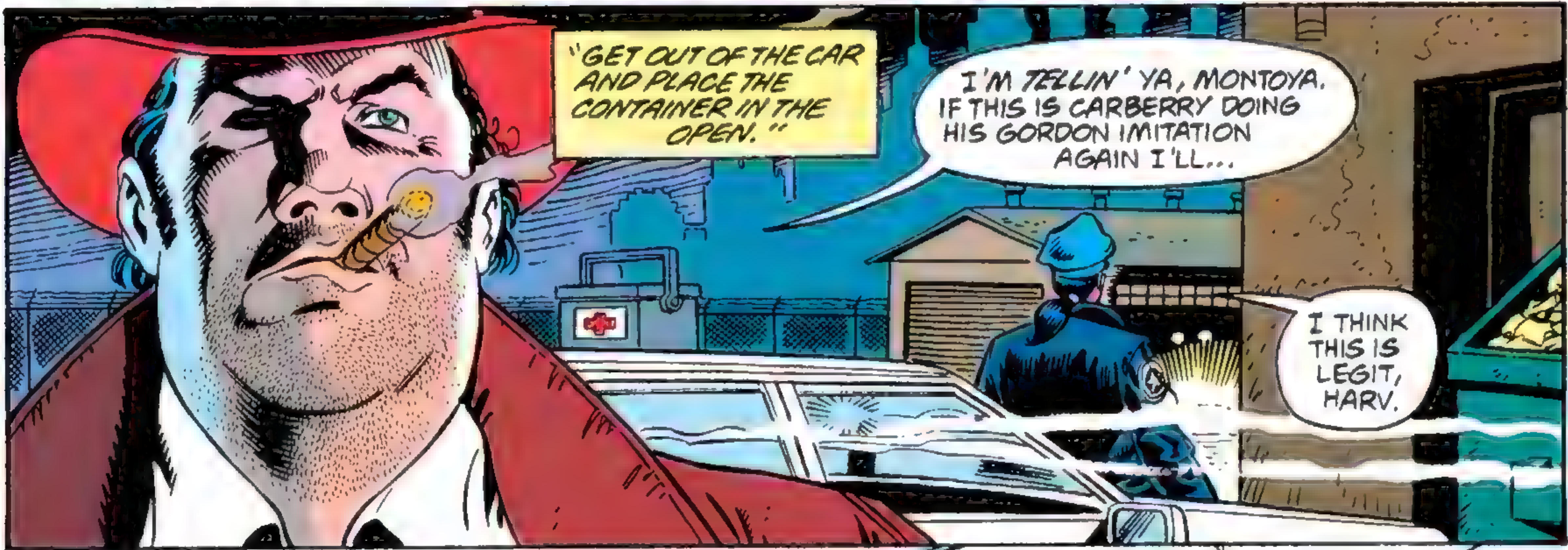
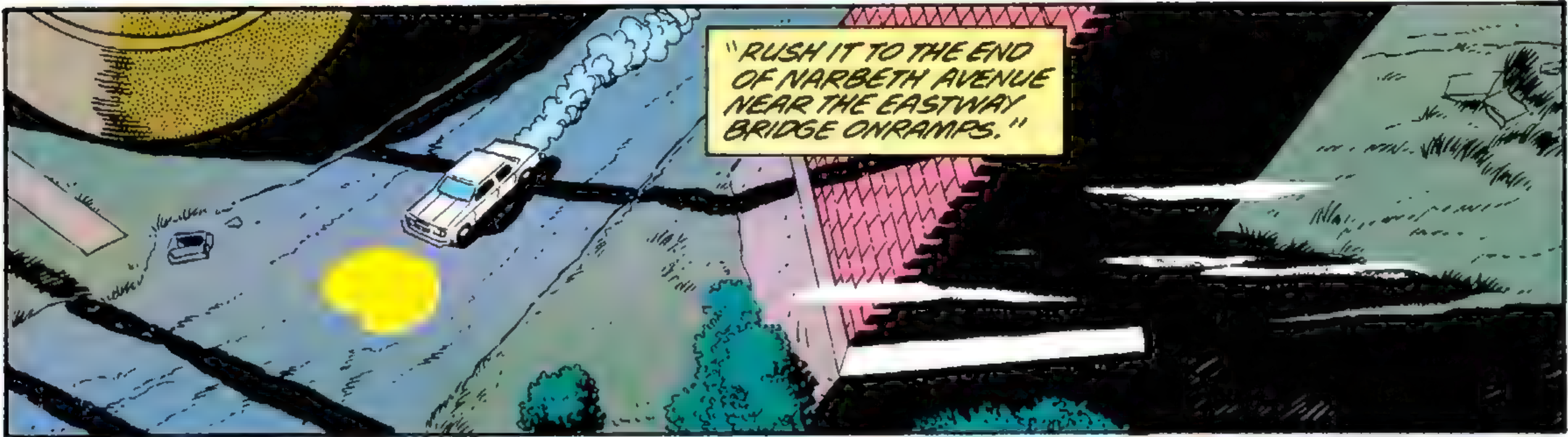
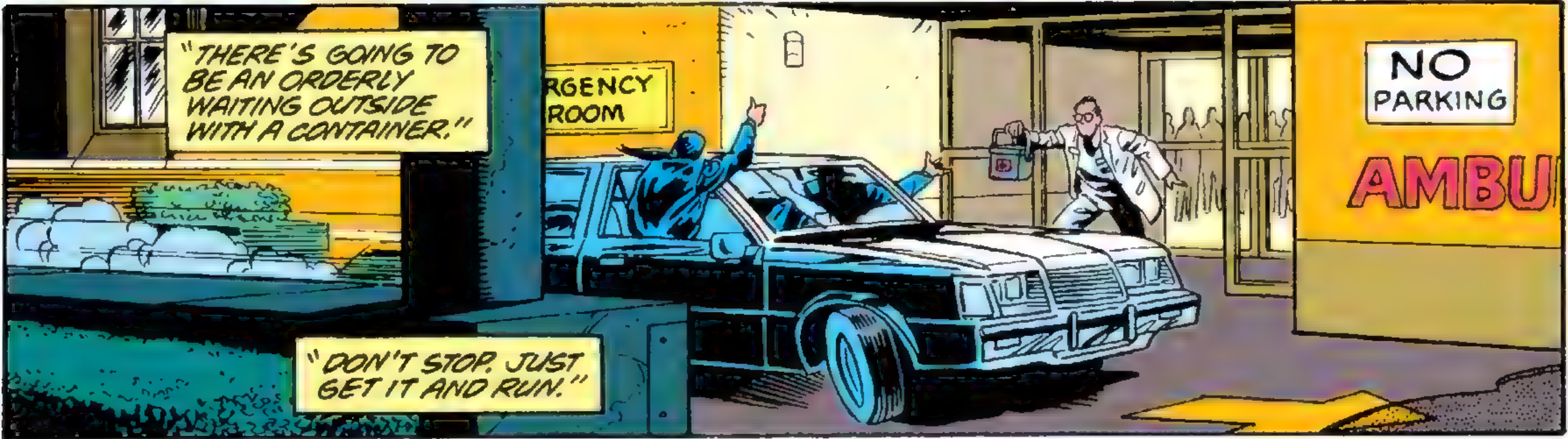
BULLOCK, THIS IS THE COMMISSIONER, COME IN.

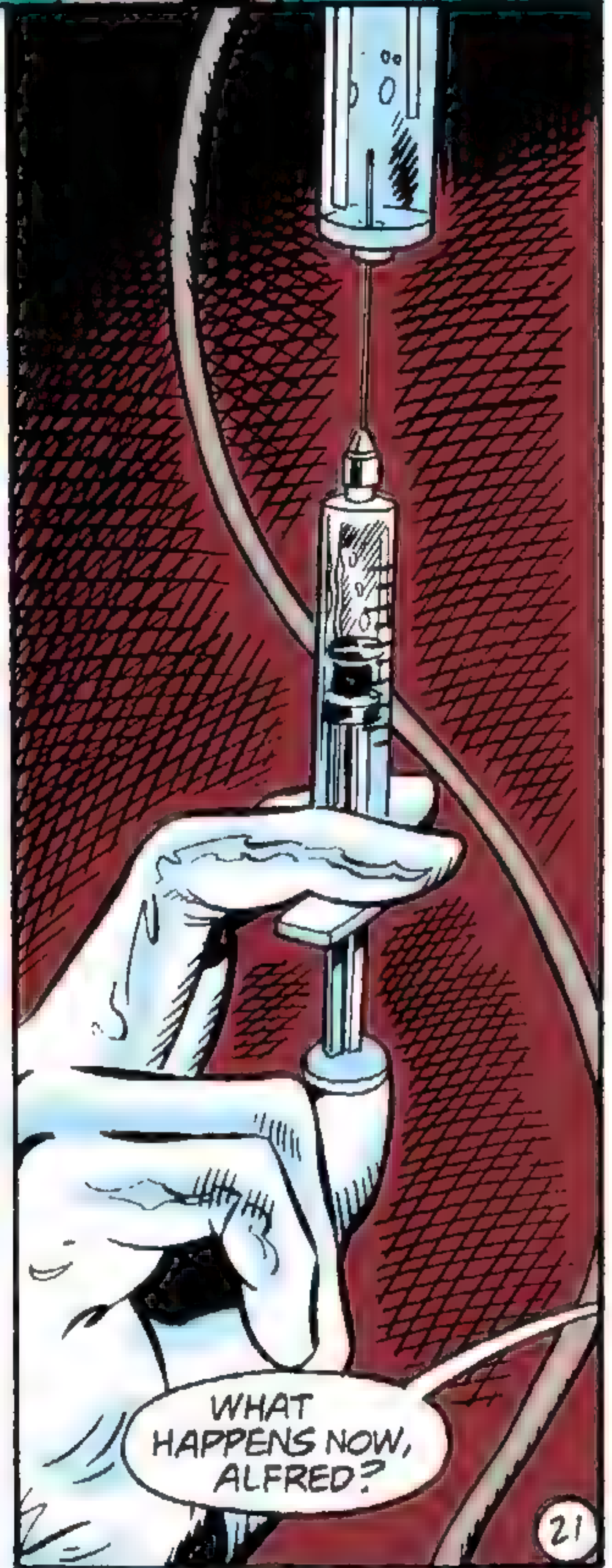
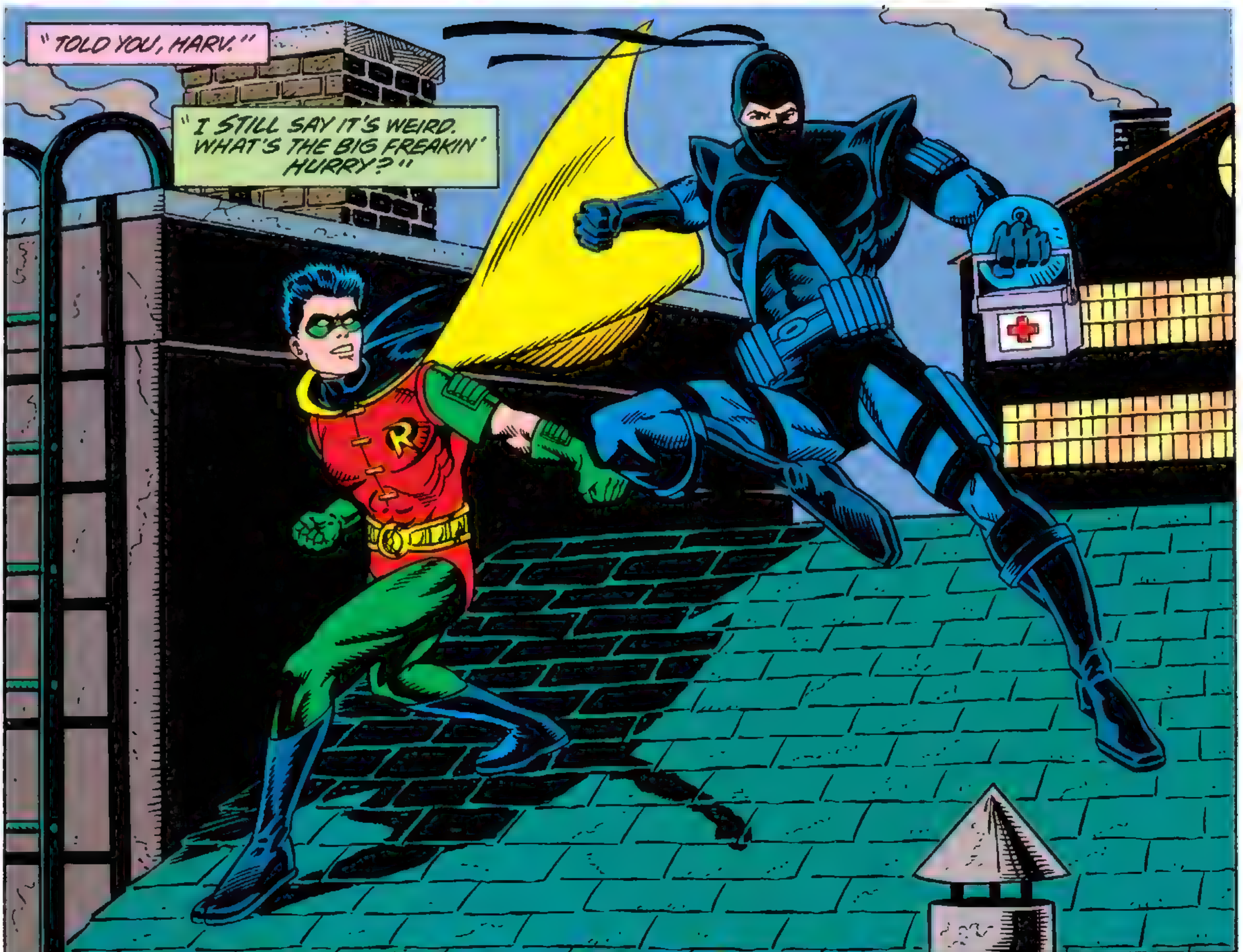


NO SIGN OF THIS BRAIN GUY, COMMISH. BUT HE CAN'T HIDE FOREVER.

IT'S BANE, HARV.

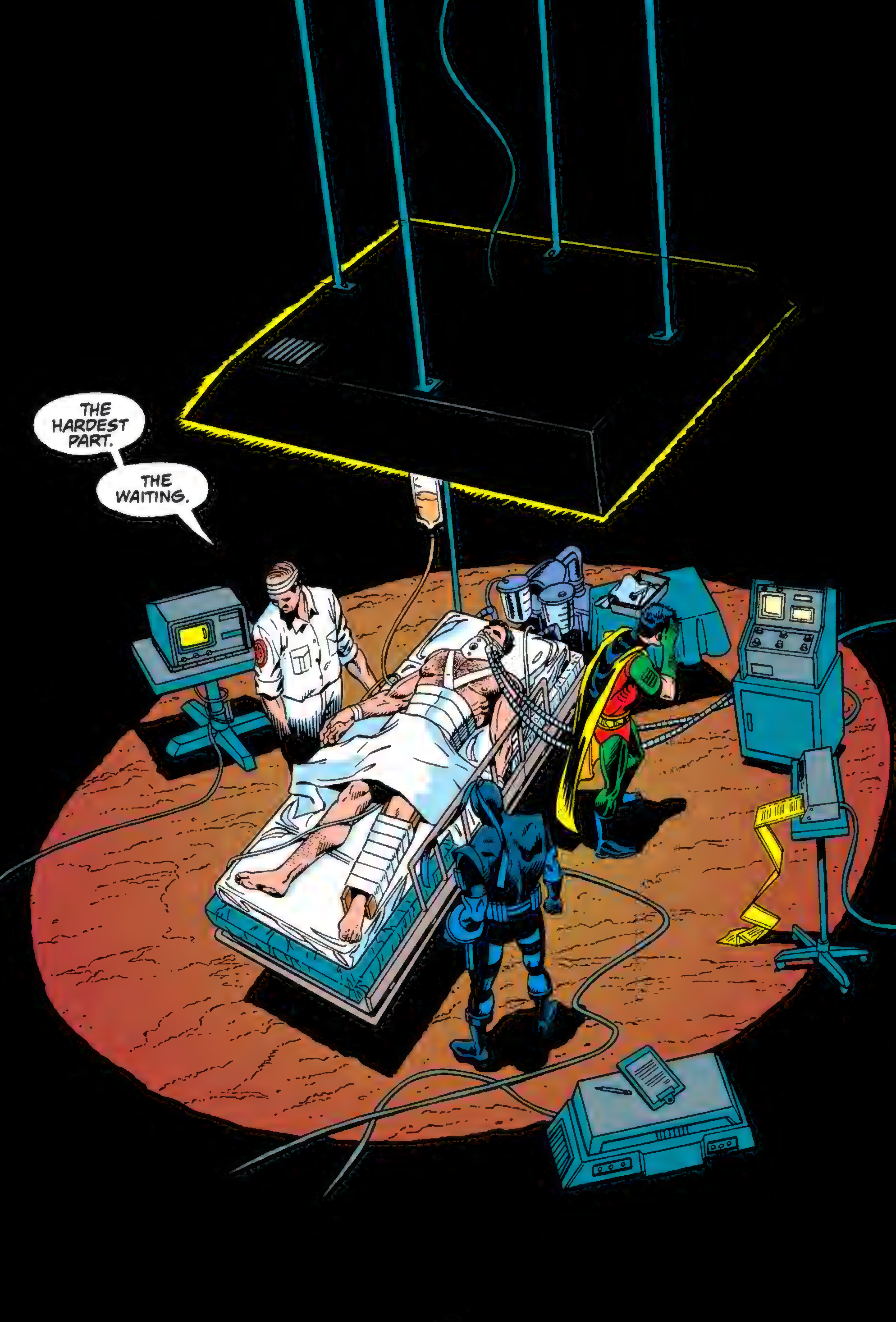
FORGET ABOUT THAT AND LISTEN UP...





THE HARDEST PART.

THE WAITING.





KNIGHTFALL

13

TWO-FACE

TM

7
OF TWELVE
JULY



SHOWCASING

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

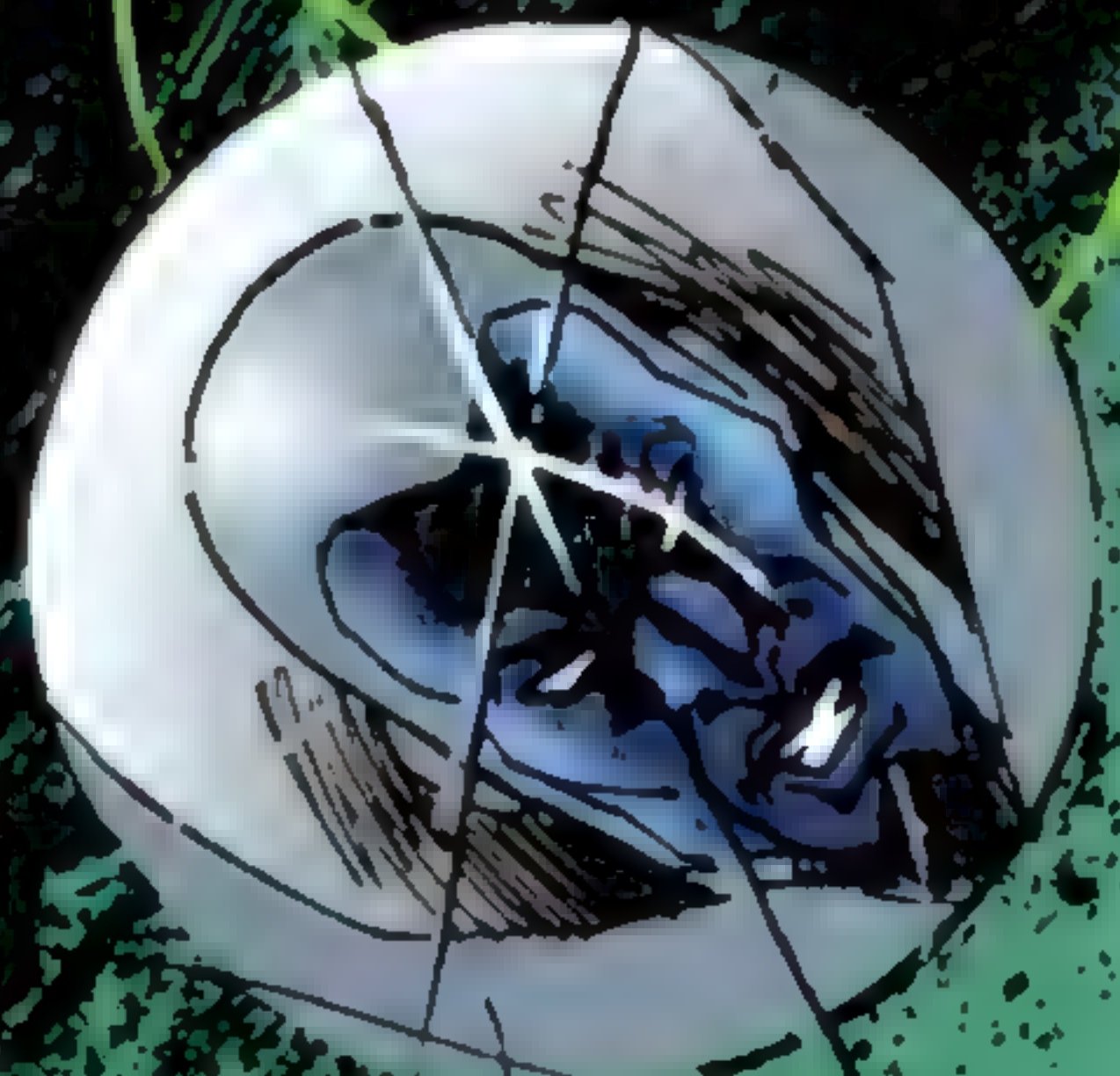
DEATHSTROKE

THE TERMINATOR

PEACEMAKER

JADE AND

OBSIDIAN



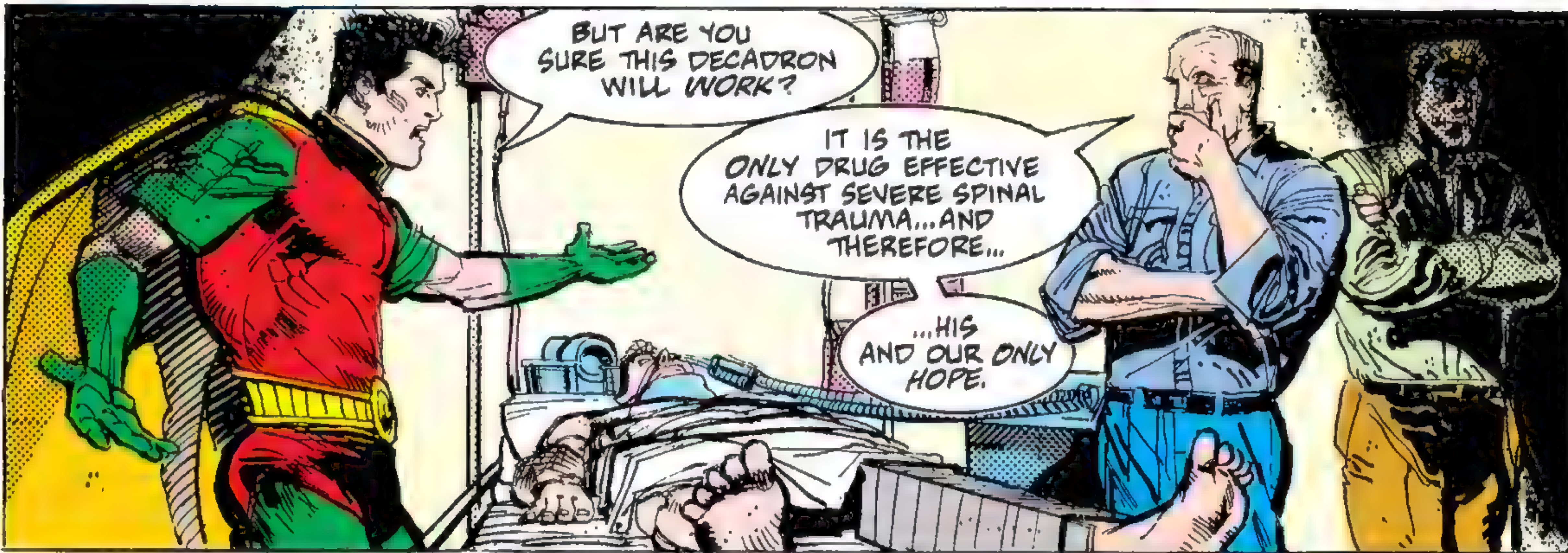
3/Sienkiewicz
1.7 8 2



THE CAVE, IN WHICH THE DARK KNIGHT HAS FALLEN...

WHAT HAPPENS NOW, ALFRED?

THE HARDEST PART.
THE WAITING.



BUT ARE YOU SURE THIS DECADRON WILL WORK?

IT IS THE ONLY DRUG EFFECTIVE AGAINST SEVERE SPINAL TRAUMA...AND THEREFORE...

...HIS AND OUR ONLY HOPE.



IT'S ALL MY FAULT! EVEN BEFORE BANE BROKE HIS BACK...WHEN WE WERE TAKING DOWN THE LAST OF THE ARKHAM ESCAPEES...

...I KNEW HE WAS ALREADY ON THE VERGE OF TOTAL COLLAPSE, AND I SHOULD HAVE--

DON'T, TIM...



DON'T BLAME YOURSELF... NOT NOW, LAD. I KNOW MASTER BRUCE REPRIMANDED YOU FOR ACTING WITH POOR JUDGMENT...

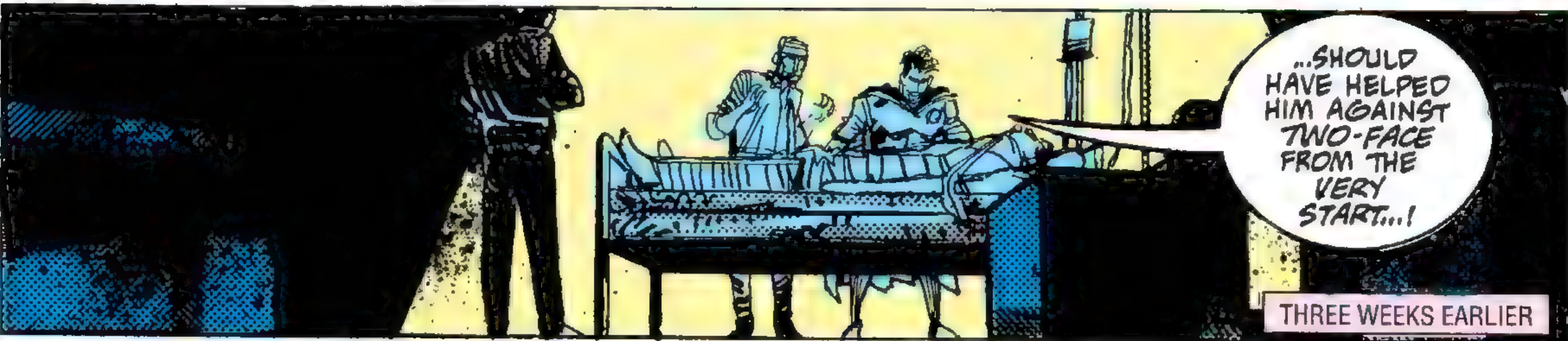
...BUT AS YOU SAY, HE WASN'T HIMSELF, AND YOU WERE NOT WRONG TO TRY TO SAVE HIM FROM--

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, ALFRED--!



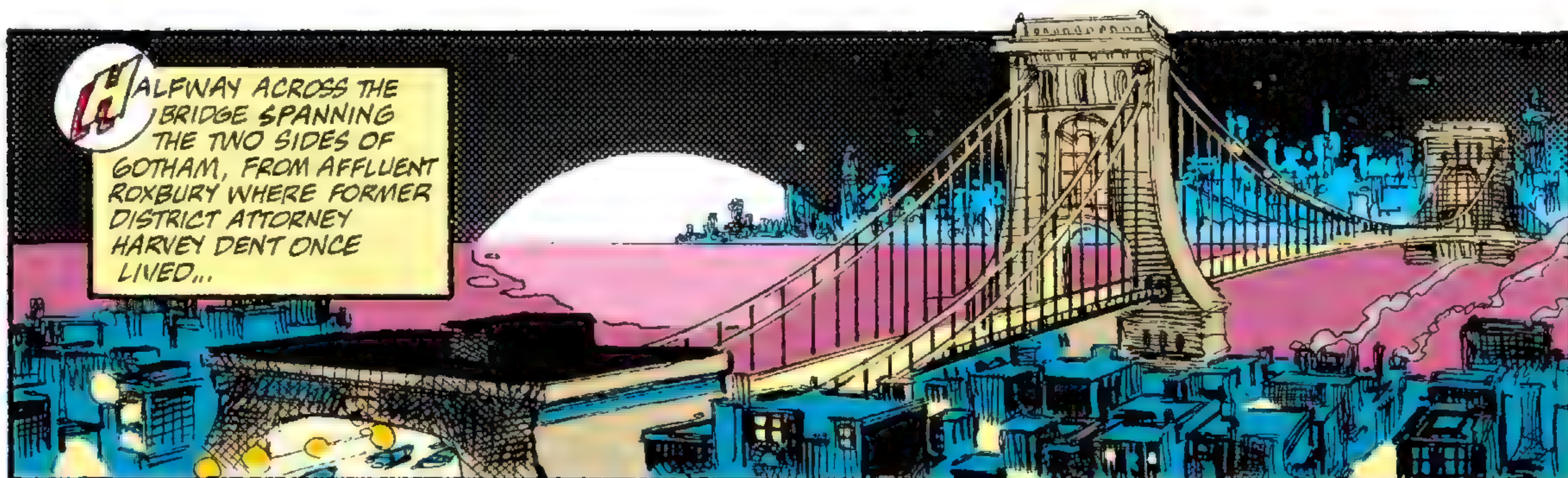
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M SAYING AT ALL!

IT'S MY FAULT BECAUSE I SHOULD HAVE ACTED A LOT SOONER...

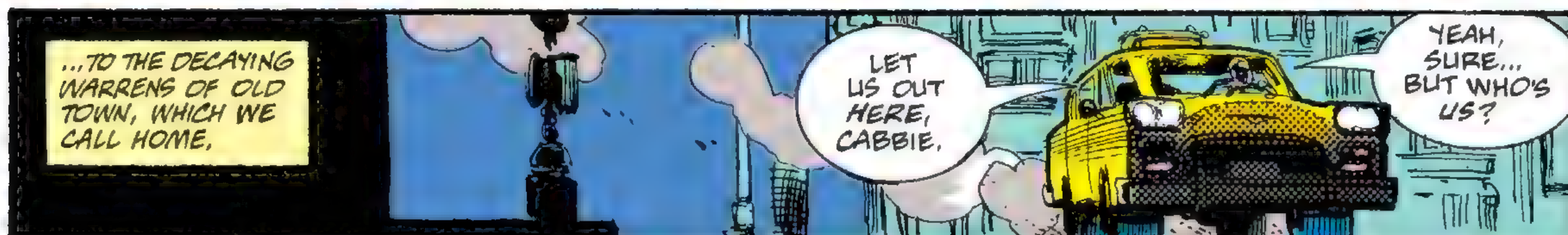


...SHOULD HAVE HELPED HIM AGAINST TWO-FACE FROM THE VERY START...!

THREE WEEKS EARLIER



HALFWAY ACROSS THE BRIDGE SPANNING THE TWO SIDES OF GOTHAM, FROM AFFLUENT ROXBURY WHERE FORMER DISTRICT ATTORNEY HARVEY DENT ONCE LIVED...



...TO THE DECAYING WARRENS OF OLD TOWN, WHICH WE CALL HOME.

LET US OUT HERE, CABBIE.

YEAH, SURE... BUT WHO'S US?



YOUR PASSENGER-- US.
KEEP THE COINS.



ON THE FACE OF IT, THINGS HAVE CHANGED.

BEEN CONDEMNED.



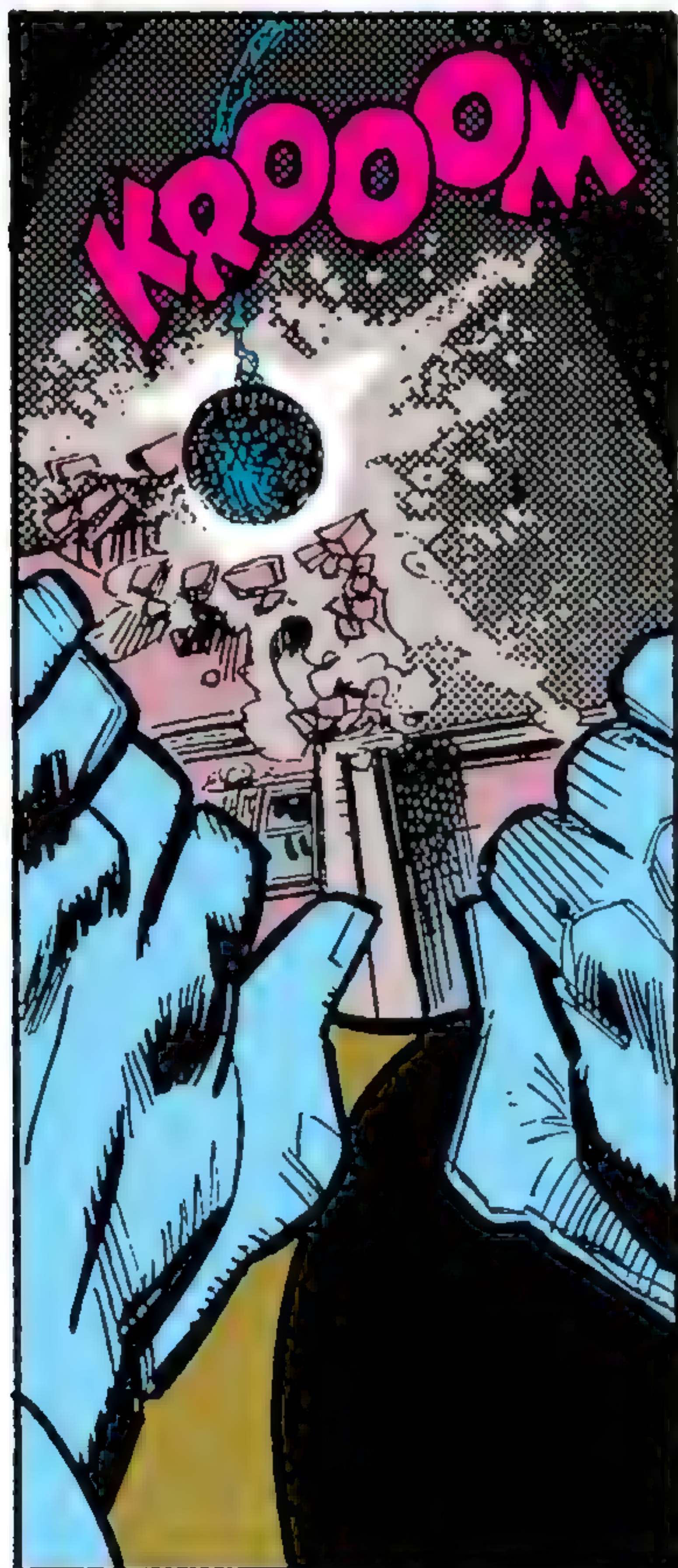
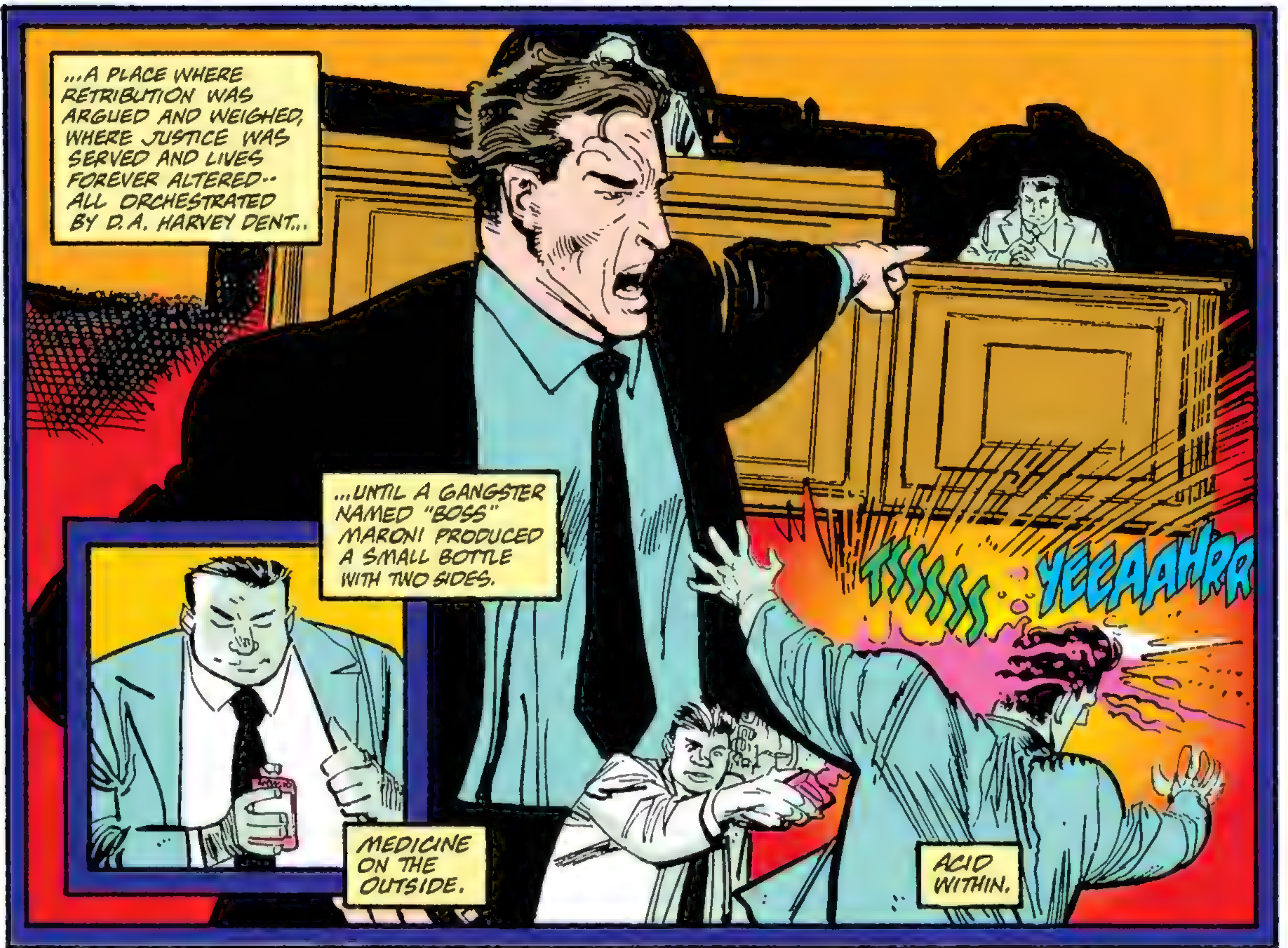
CRUMBLING WITHIN.



AND SOON, UNDER THE WRECKING BALL, CRUMBLING WITHOUT.



BUT IT WAS ONCE AN EDIFICE OF REVERENCE, RESPECT, EVEN FEAR...





...A CRYIN' PITY TO LOSE SUCH A LANDMARK.

BUT ON THE OTHER HAND...THE OLD ALWAYS GIVES WAY...



...TO THE NEW.

FACE DOUBLE CROSS

DOUG MOENCH
writer
KLAUS JANSON
artist/colorist
KEN BRUZENAK
letterer
DENNIS O'NEIL
consulting
editor
NEAL POZNER
editor

OH...MY...
GOD...



IN WE LEAVE,
WEIGHING
OUR CHOICES.

“AUG-K
A HUK!”



WE HAVE LAIN LOW, WATCHING ALL THE OTHERS FALL, ONE BY ONE, LOSING THEIR NEW FREEDOM BEFORE EVEN TASTING IT...

...RETURNED AND RESTORED TO THE MADNESS OF ARKHAM.*

*SEE RECENT ISSUES OF BATMAN AND DETECTIVE -NEAL.



BUT NOW WE MUST ACT--AND SUCCEED WHERE OTHERS HAVE FAILED.

JUSTICE MUST BE SERVED.

IT IS TIME TO LET THEM SEE US.

AGAIN.

AND ANYONE CAN SEE US NOW, BUT ONCE WE WERE TWO... WHEN NO ONE KNEW... BEFORE MARONI...

... BACK WHEN WE WERE DENT...



... AND WE HAD AN ALLY...

WHENEVER YOU GET CLOSE TO A COLLAR, CALL ME AND TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT. IF THE EVIDENCE IS ENOUGH, YOU GET TO DO YOUR THING--

-AND MY INDICTMENTS WILL STICK.

I'LL BE IN TOUCH, DENT.

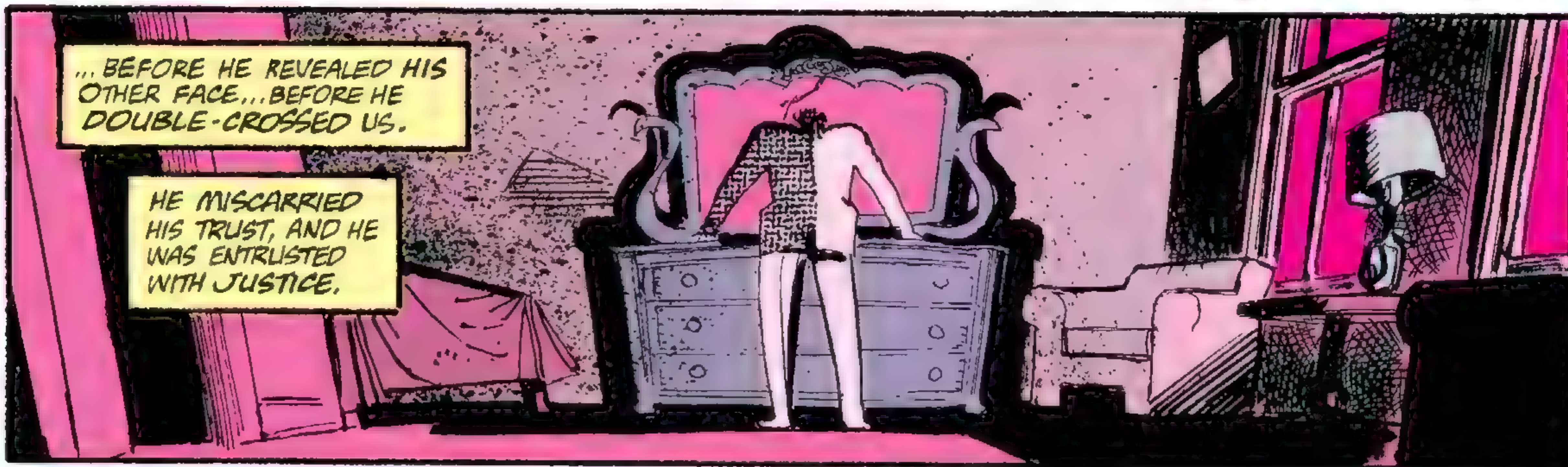


... BEFORE THE ALLY BETRAYED US...

HARVEY, YOU'RE PUSHING YOURSELF TOO HARD, TOO CLOSE TO THE EDGE--LOSING BALANCE-- AND I HAVE TO DRAW THE LINE.

BUT--

OUR AGREEMENT IS TERMINATED, HARVEY-- EFFECTIVE NOW.



... BEFORE HE REVEALED HIS OTHER FACE... BEFORE HE DOUBLE-CROSSED US.

HE MISCARRIED HIS TRUST, AND HE WAS ENTRUSTED WITH JUSTICE.



NOW HE MUST BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE... OUR JUSTICE...

NO--GOOD BOYS DON'T DO BAD THINGS!

WHEN WE'RE DIVIDED AGAIN, DEADLOCKED, AND WE NEED OUR IMPARTIAL ARBITER TO BREAK THE STALE-MATE... TO DECIDE THE OUTCOME.



HEADS WE WIN...

...AND HEADS WE WIN.

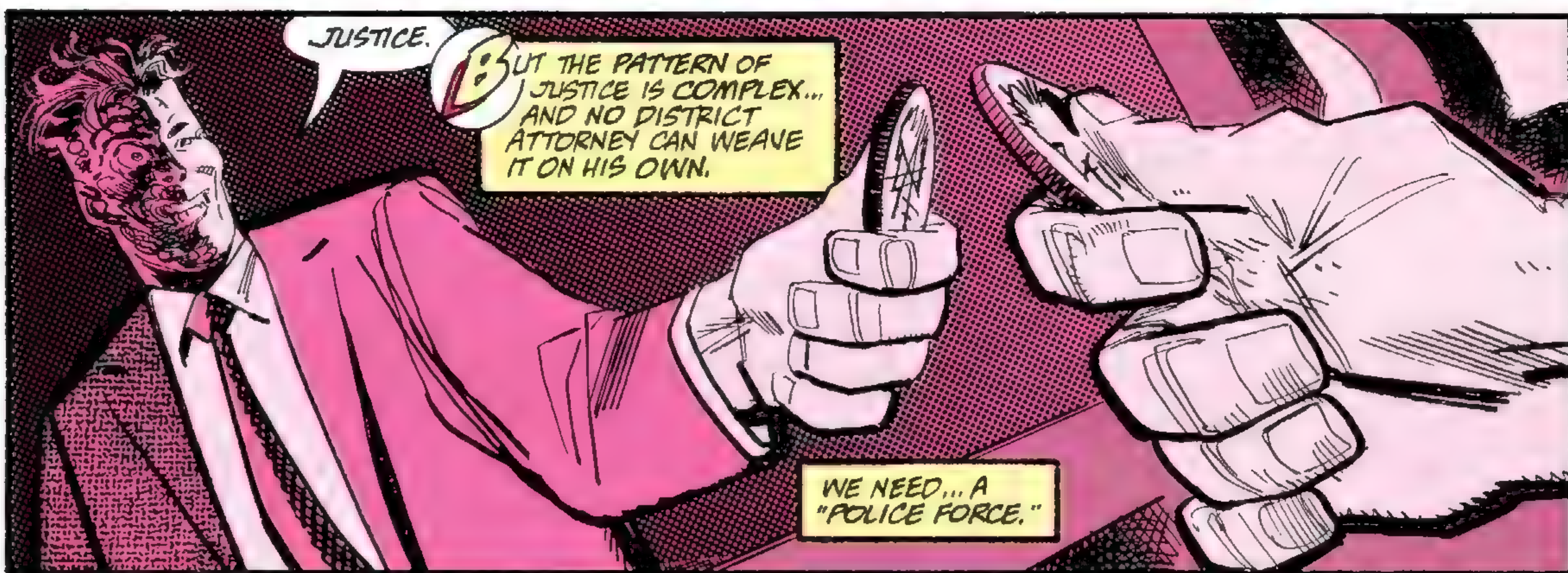
FLIP

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

STOP

WE WIN.

HE LOSES.



JUSTICE.

BUT THE PATTERN OF JUSTICE IS COMPLEX... AND NO DISTRICT ATTORNEY CAN WEAVE IT ON HIS OWN.

WE NEED... A "POLICE FORCE."



WE GO STRAIGHT TO THE BANK- FOR THE GOODS STORED UNDER A FALSE NAME.

HERE YOU GO, MR. HARVEY- JUST GIVE A CALL WHEN YOU'RE DONE.

THANK YOU.

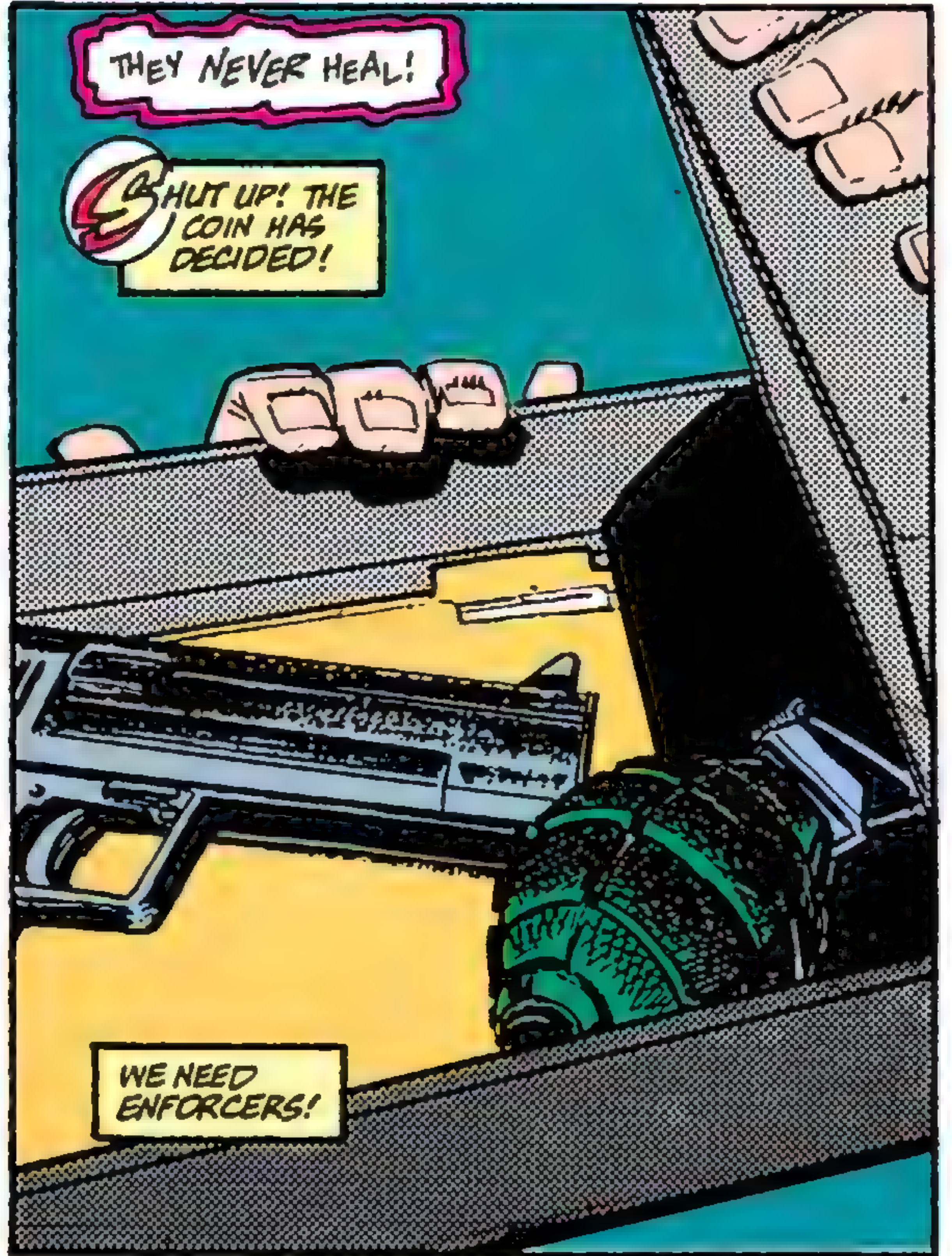


AND ONCE AGAIN, I'M SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR ACCIDENT--BUT I'M SURE YOU'LL HEAL JUST FINE.

YES.

NO!

BAD BOYS DON'T DO GOOD THINGS!



THEY NEVER HEAL!

SHUT UP! THE COIN HAS DECIDED!

WE NEED ENFORCERS!



YEAH, THIS IS LYMAN--WHADYA WANT?

A DISCUSSION ABOUT SOME PAST DEEDS, MR. LYMAN...

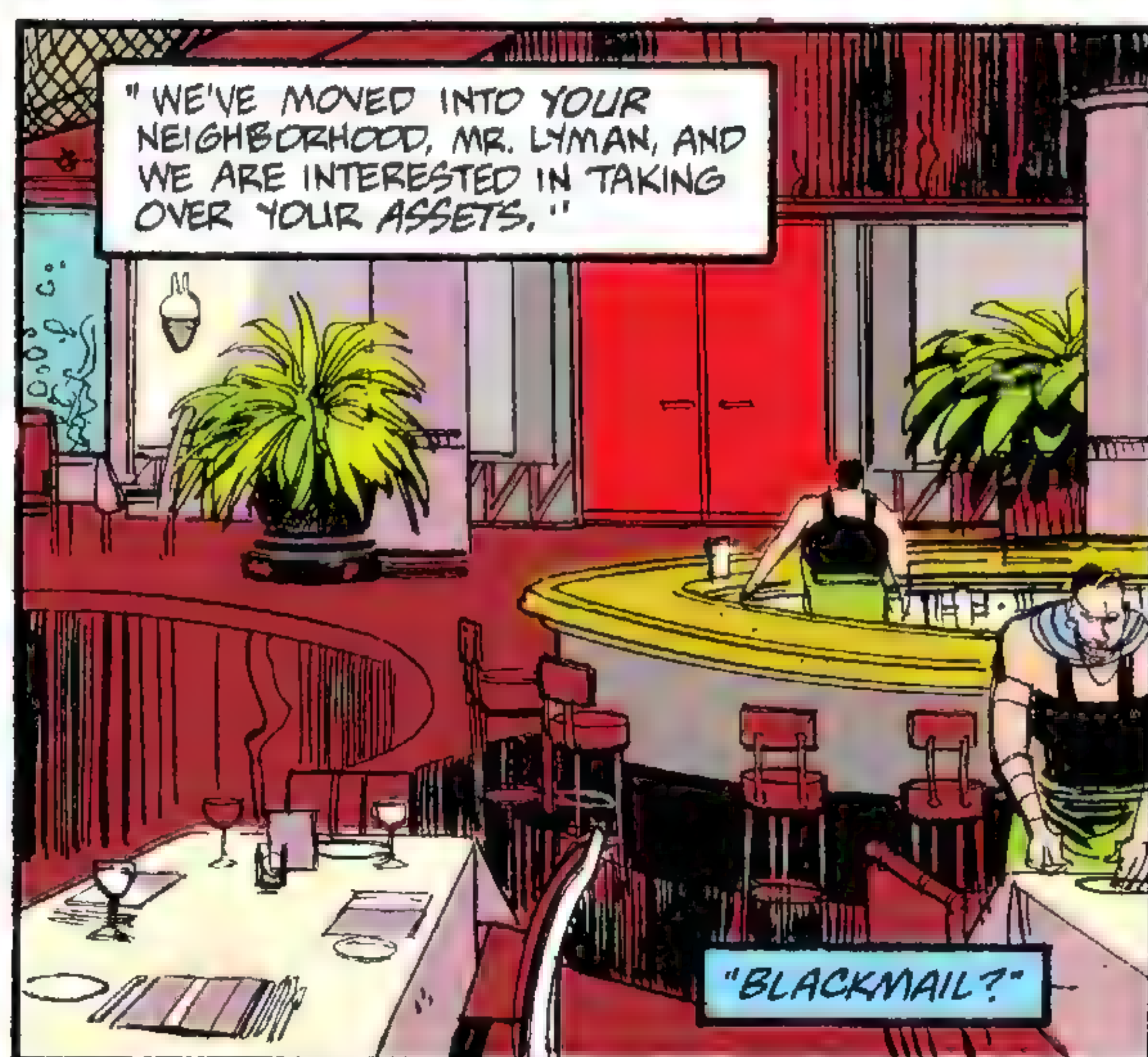
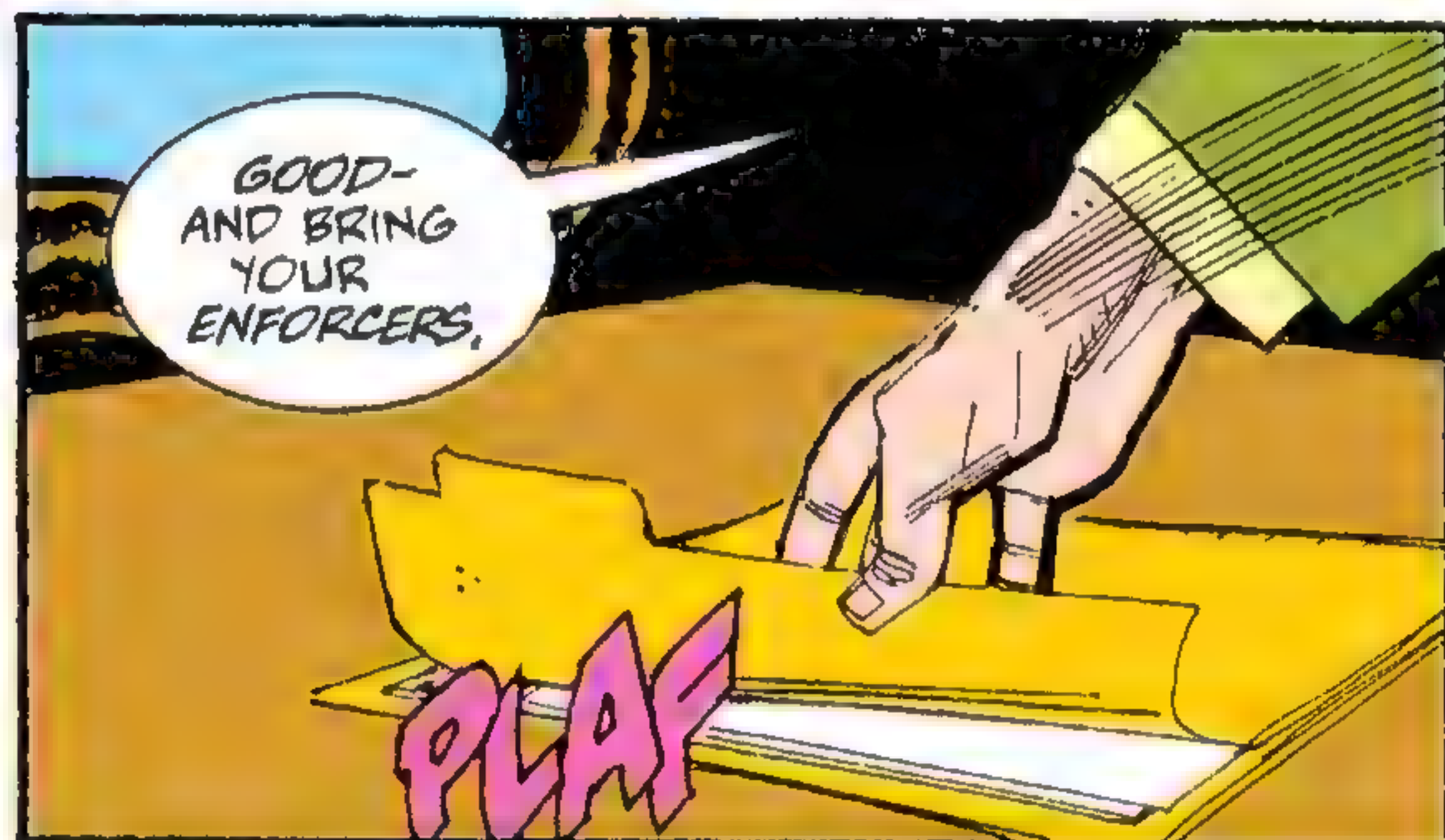
...AND HOW THEY SHOULD NOW IMPACT THE FUTURE.

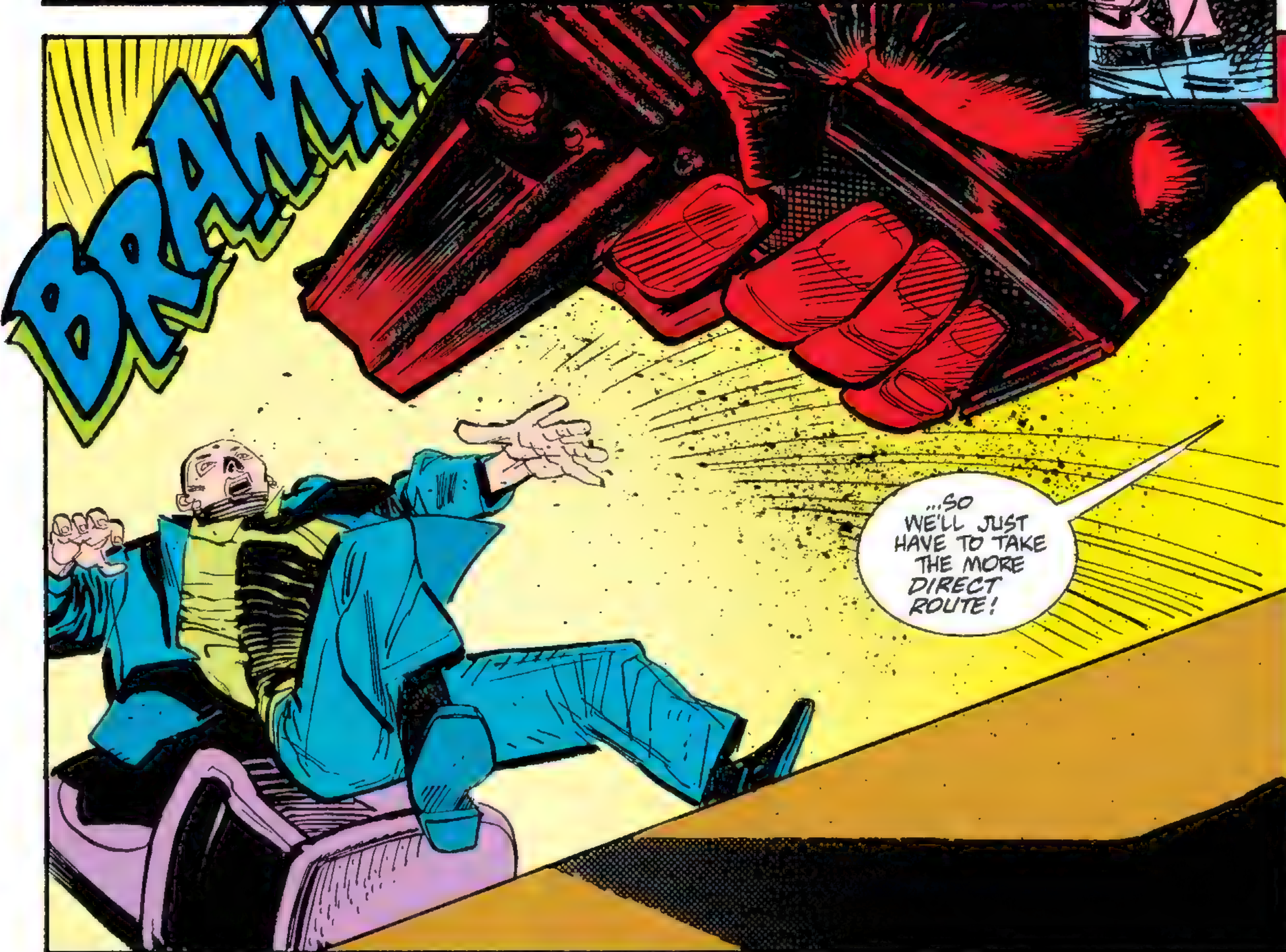
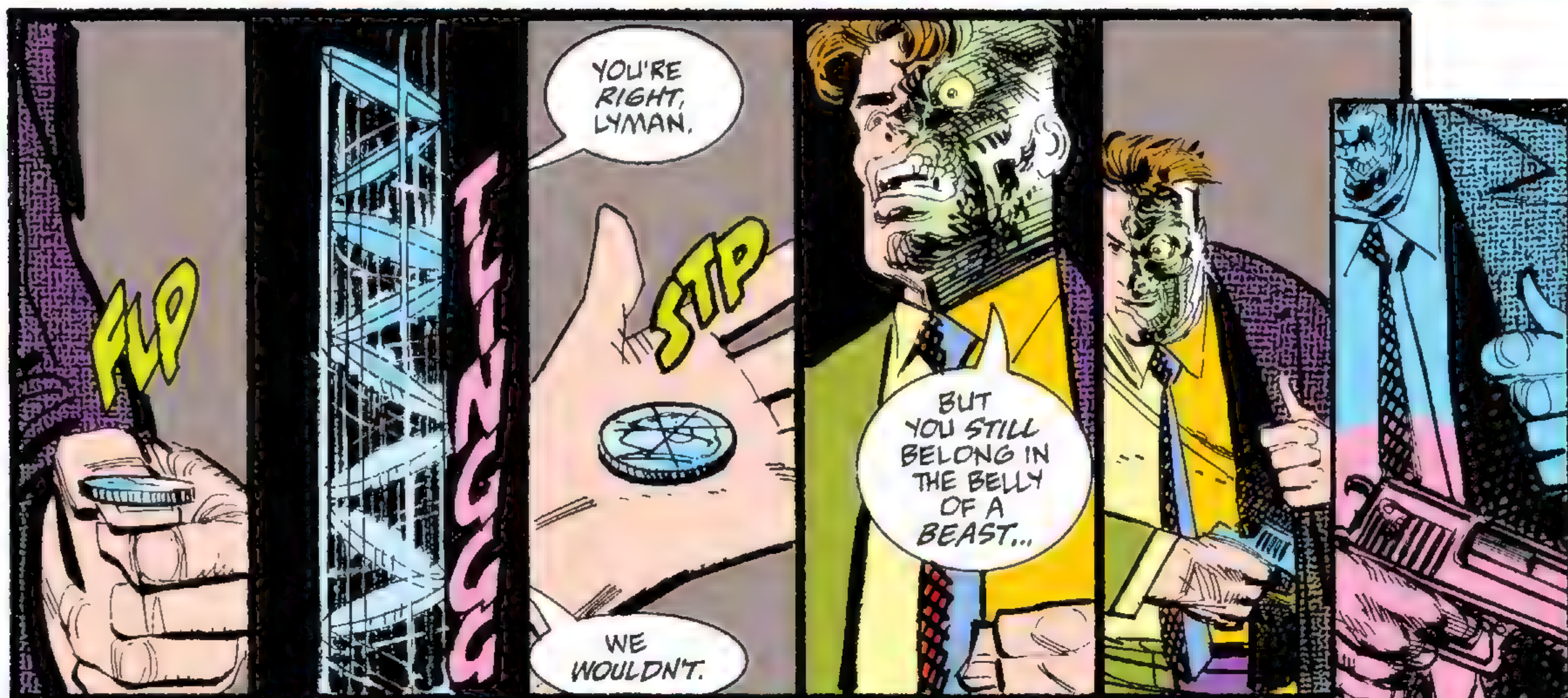
WHO IS THIS? WHAT PAST DEEDS?

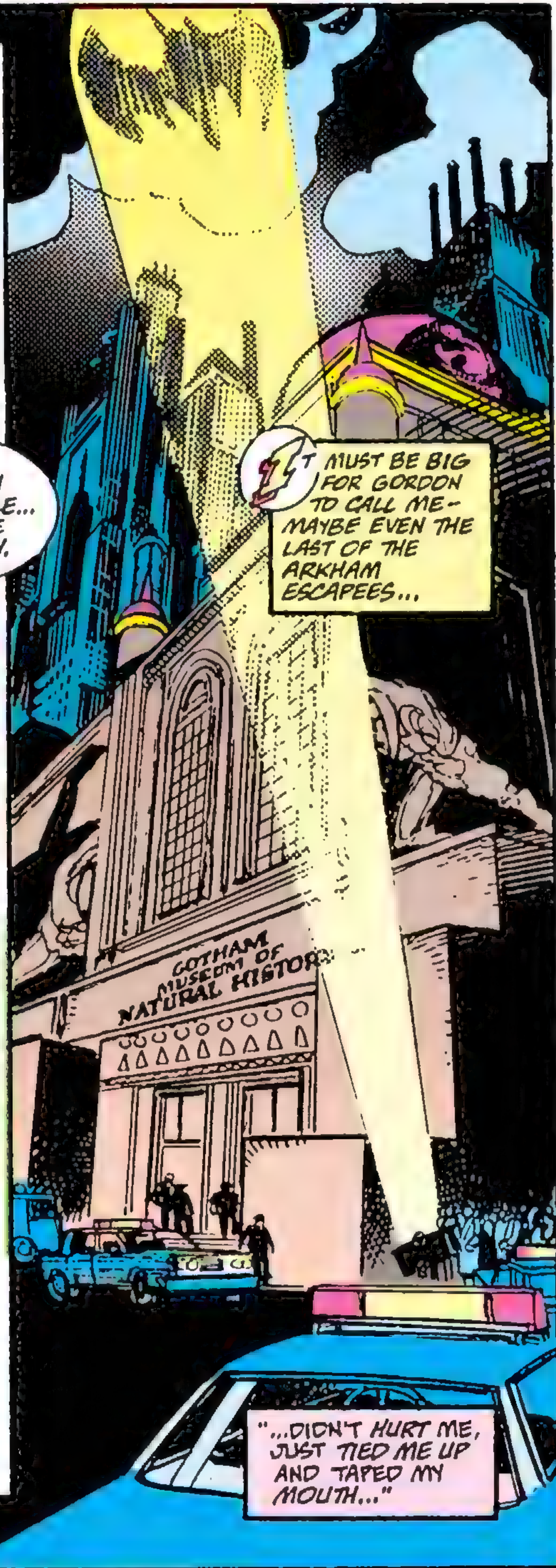
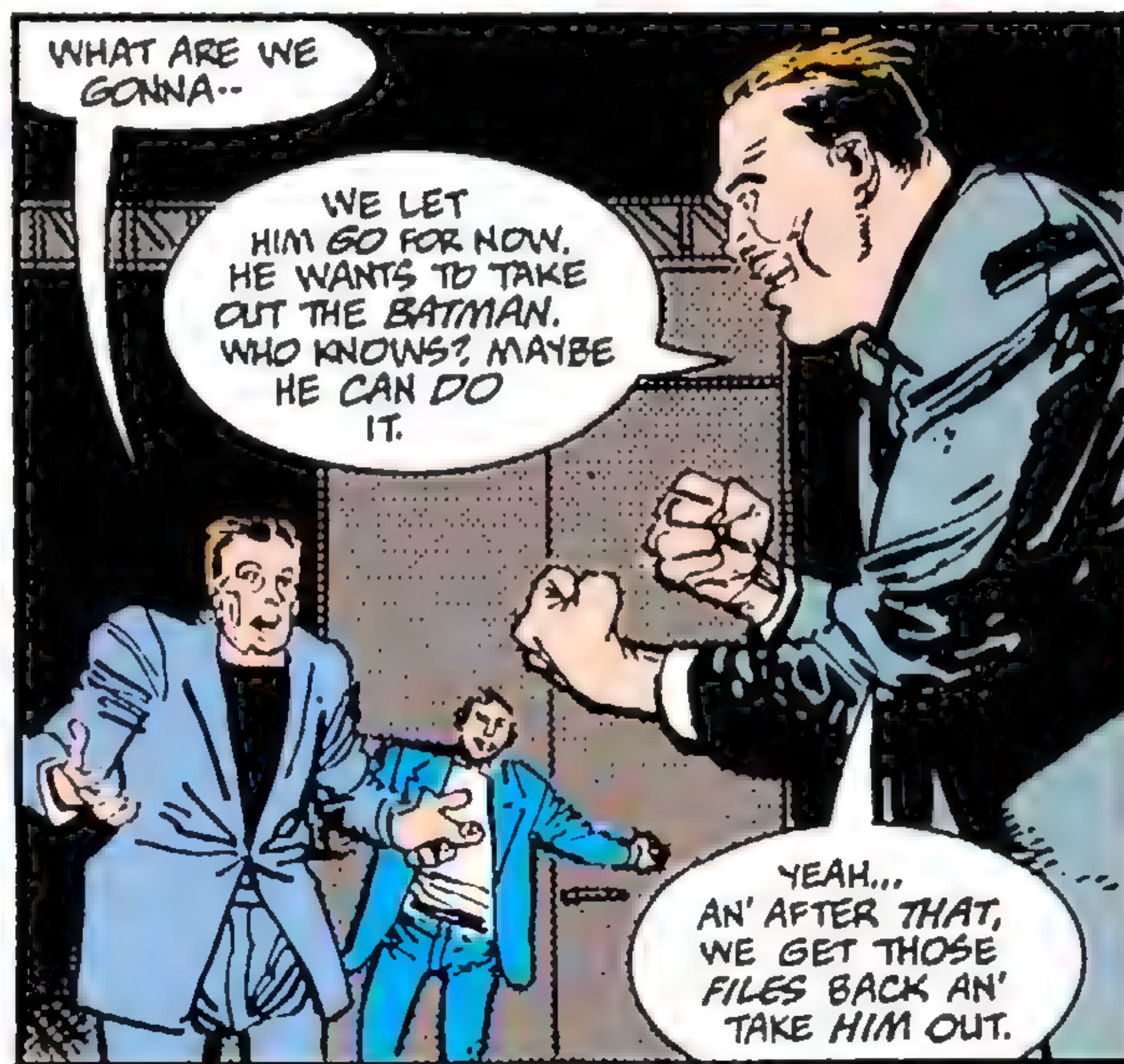
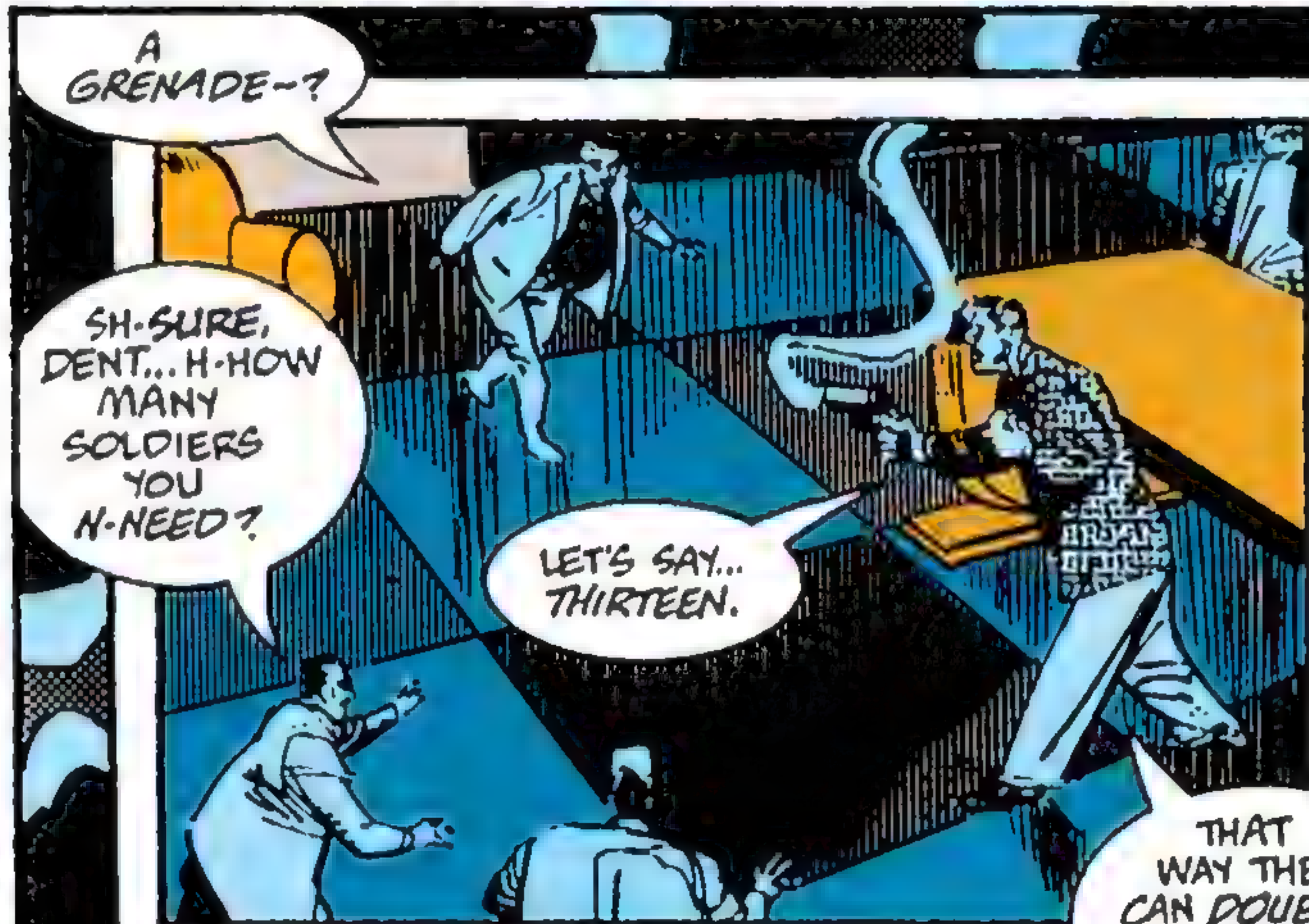
THE BALABAN EXTORTION SCHEME... NUMBERS RUNNING IN THE HUB... SECURITIES FRAUD... THE MURDER OF JAKE ROTHMAN...

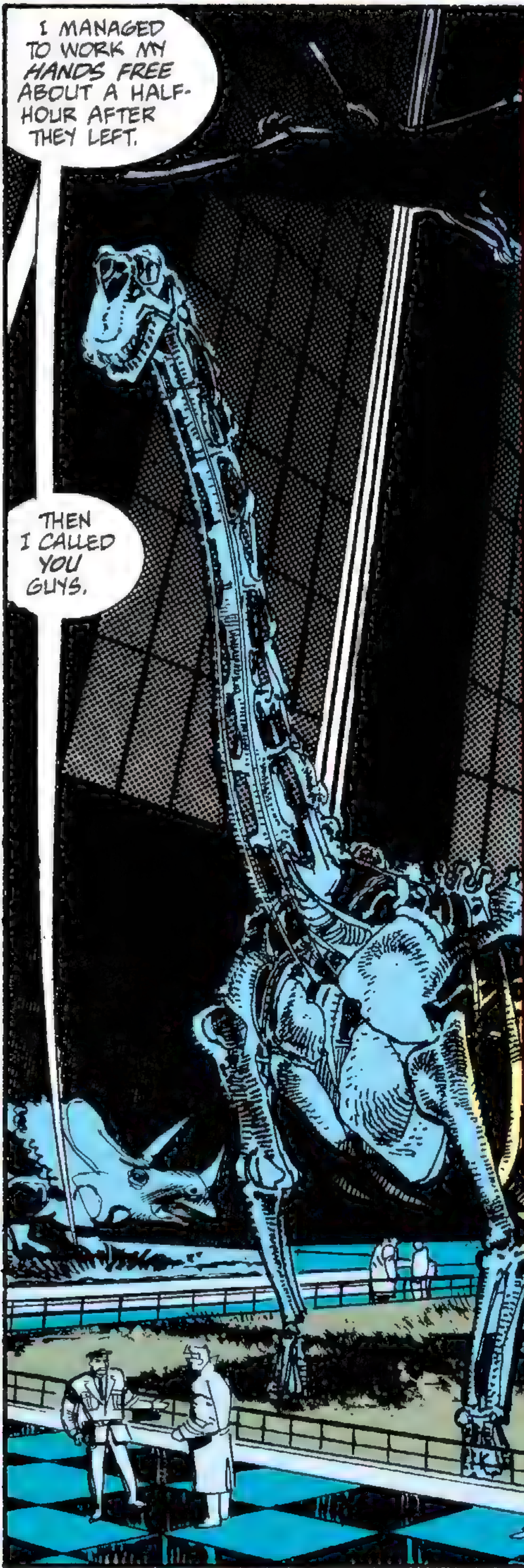
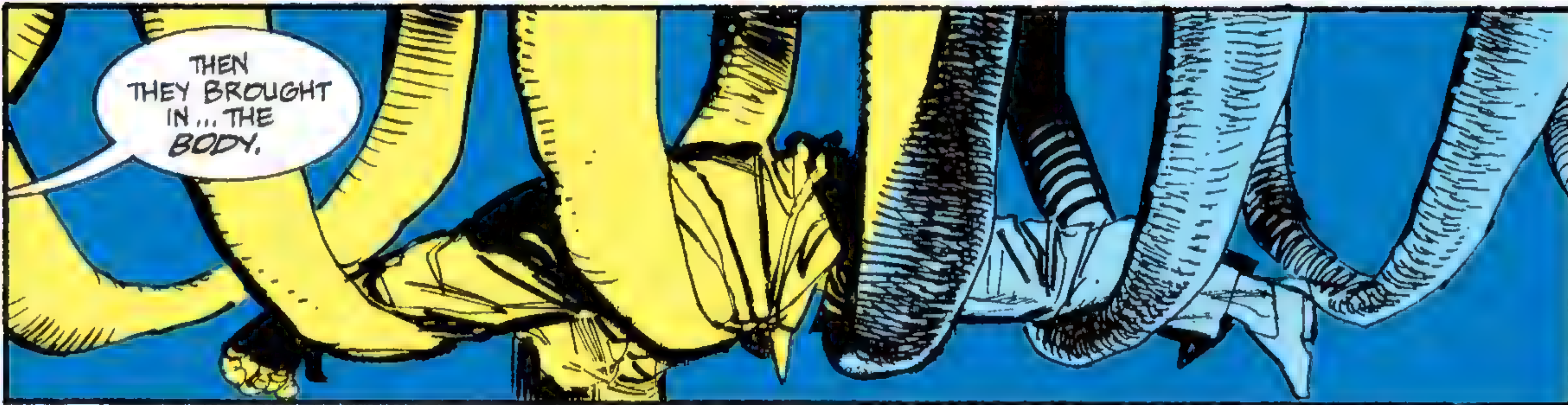
NEED I GO ON?

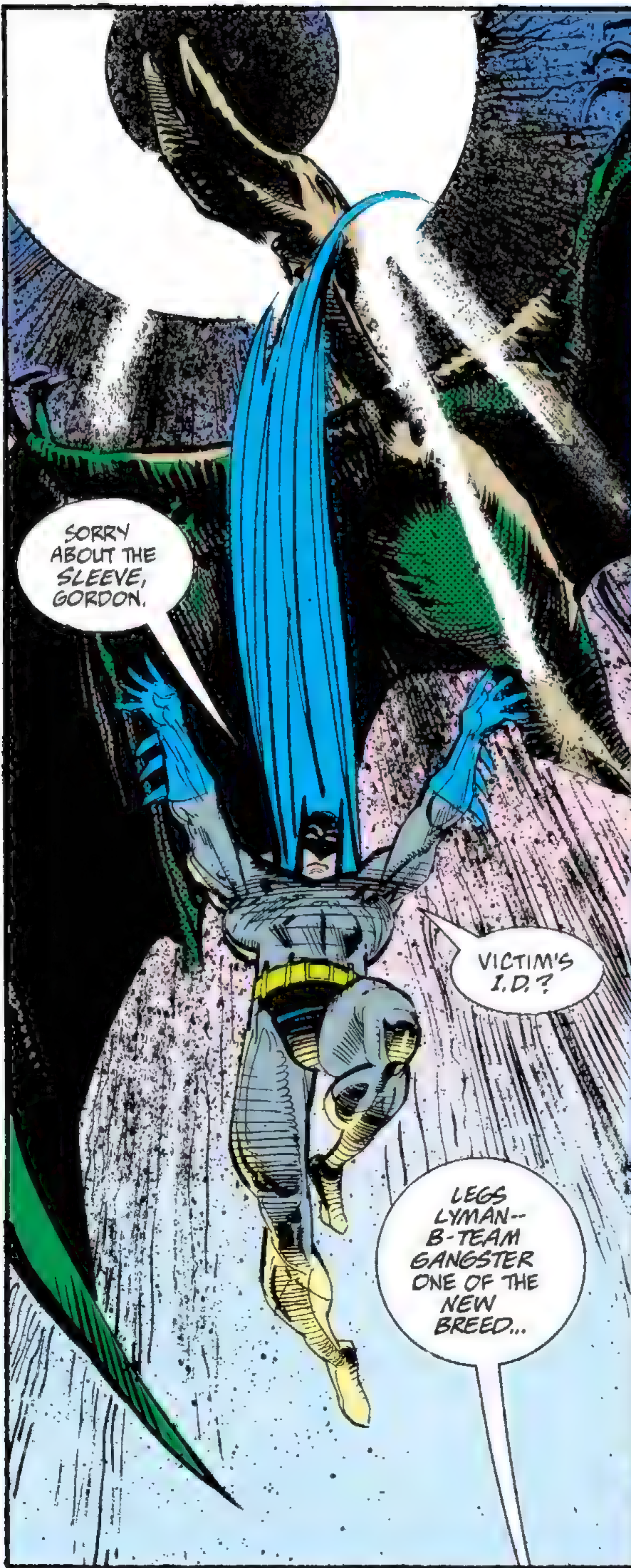
WHAT DO YOU WANT?











SORRY ABOUT THE SLEEVE, GORDON.

VICTIM'S I.D.?

LEGS LYMAN-- B-TEAM GANGSTER ONE OF THE NEW BREED...



I BELIEVE YOU'VE HAD A RUN-IN OR TWO WITH HIM...

YES.

NO IDEA WHY HE WAS PUT INSIDE THE BELLY OF A BRONTOSAURUS?

APATOSAURUS.



WHAT?

IT'S UH, ACTUALLY AN APATOSAURUS NOW-- USED TO BE CALLED BRONTOSAURUS...UNTIL ALL THE MUSEUMS FINALLY CHANGED THE SKULL.

CHANGED THE SKULL?

YEAH.

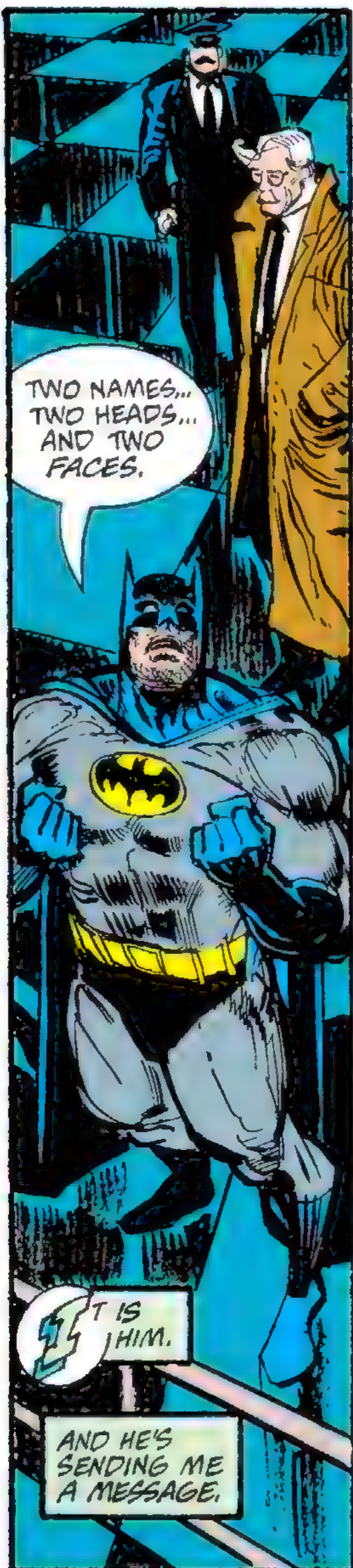


SEE, WHEN THEY FOUND THE FIRST SPECIMEN, WAY BACK, IT WAS MIXED IN WITH OTHER BONES--INCLUDING A SKULL WHICH SEEMED TO FIT BUT WAS ACTUALLY WRONG. NOW THEY'VE FOUND COMPLETE SPECIMENS.



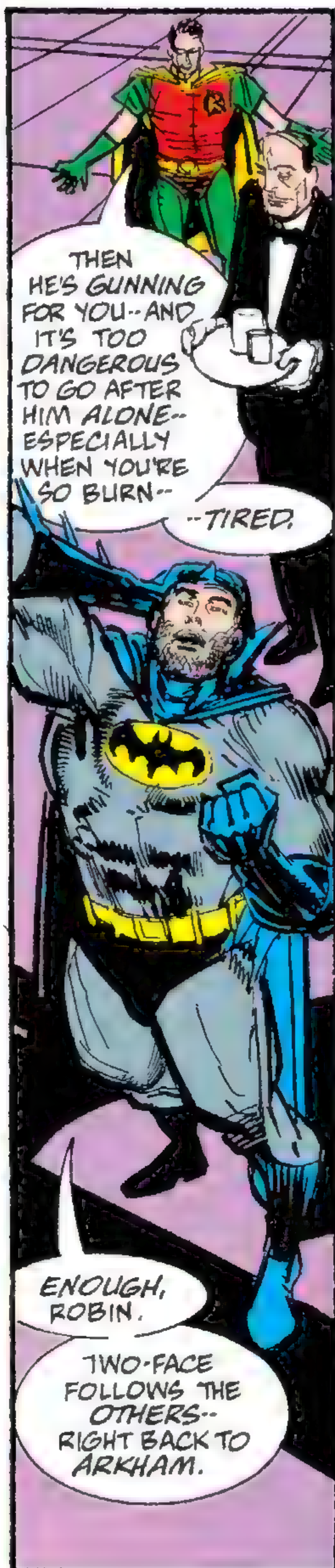
...INCLUDING THE LARGER CORRECT SKULL... THAT SKULL.

THE ONLY DINOSAUR IN HISTORY--OR PREHISTORY, ANYWAY-- TO HAVE TWO NAMES AND TWO HEADS.



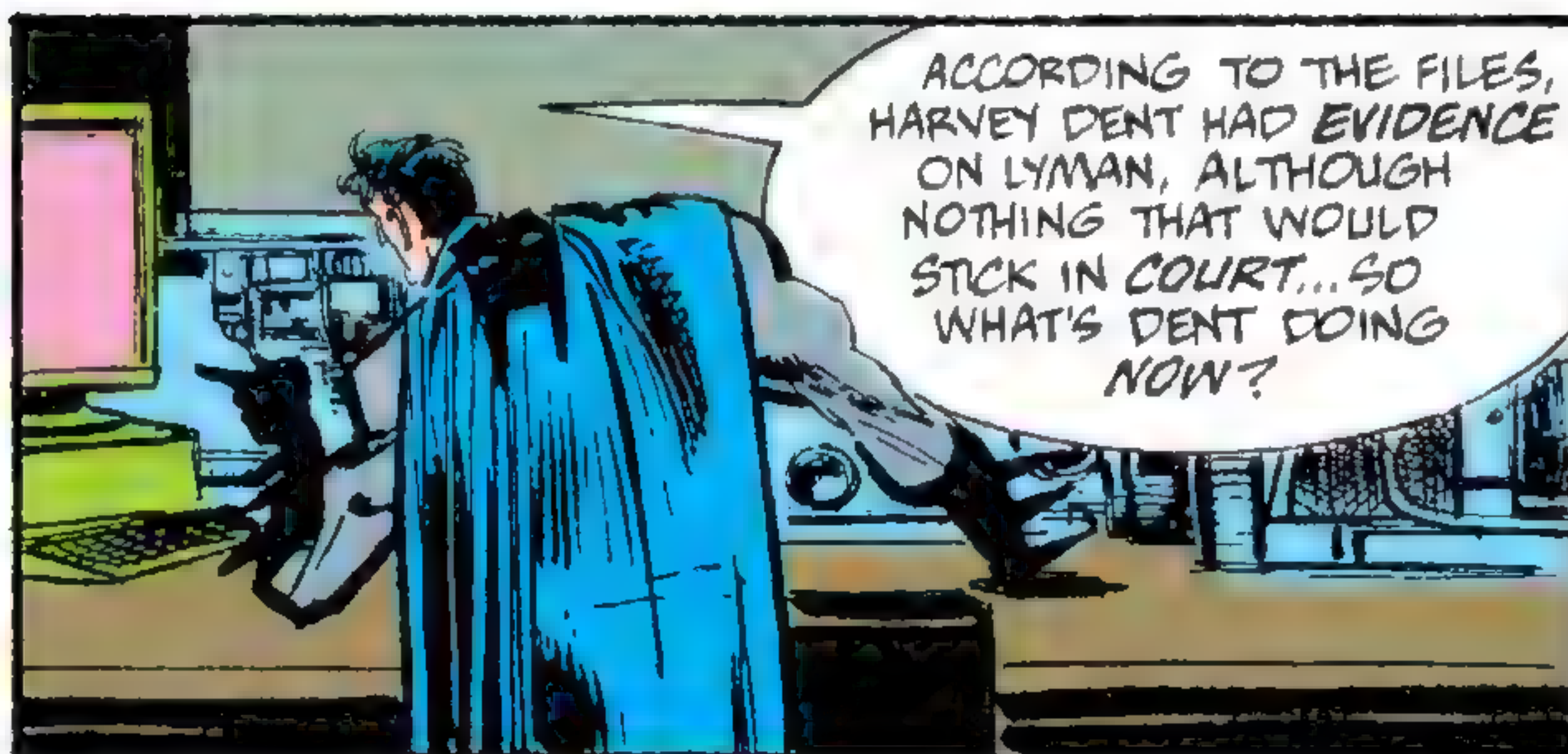
TWO NAMES...
TWO HEADS...
AND TWO
FACES.

IT IS
HIM.
AND HE'S
SENDING ME
A MESSAGE.

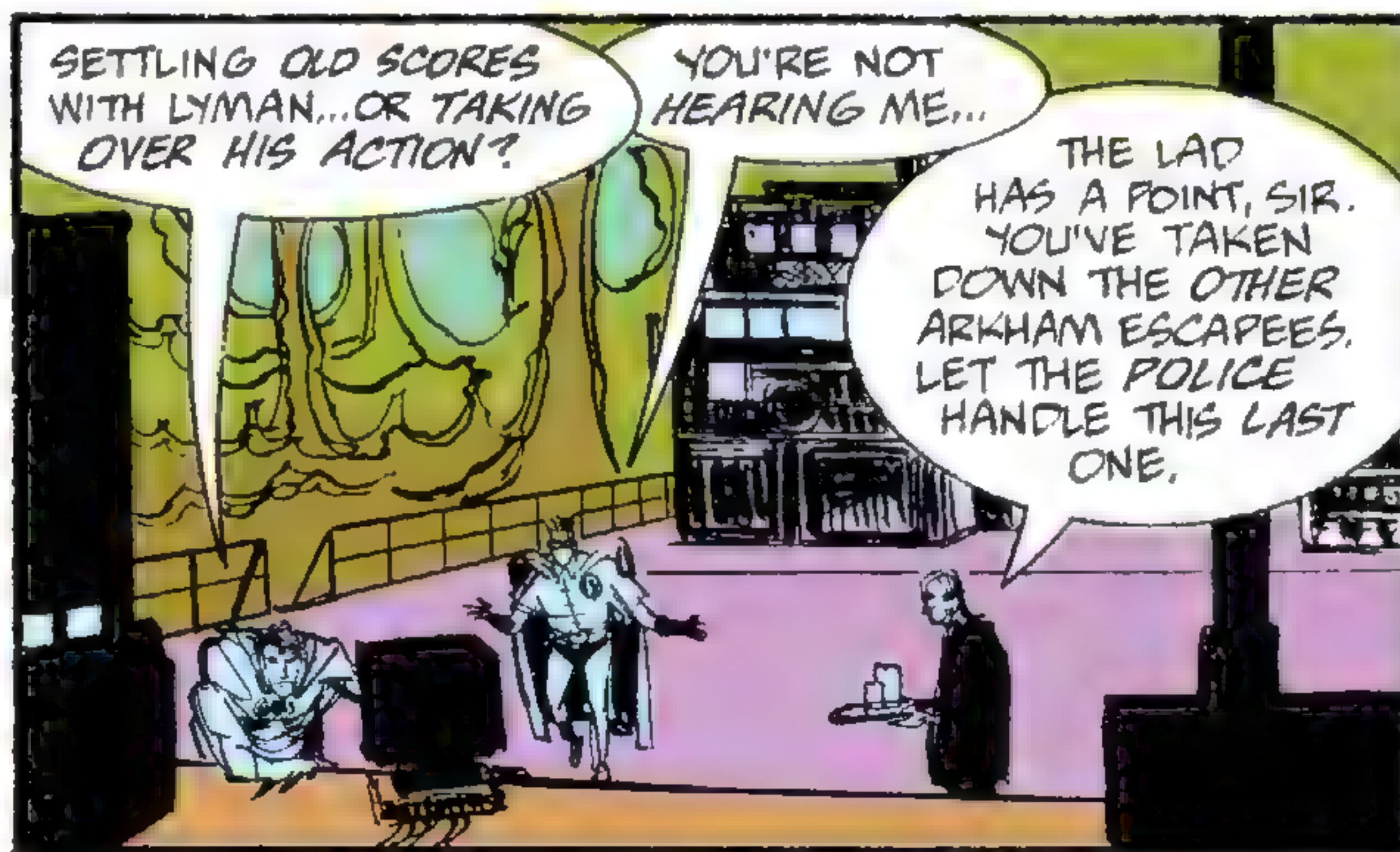


THEN
HE'S GUNNING
FOR YOU--AND
IT'S TOO
DANGEROUS
TO GO AFTER
HIM ALONE--
ESPECIALLY
WHEN YOU'RE
SO BURN--
--TIRED.

ENOUGH,
ROBIN.
TWO-FACE
FOLLOWS THE
OTHERS--
RIGHT BACK TO
ARKHAM.



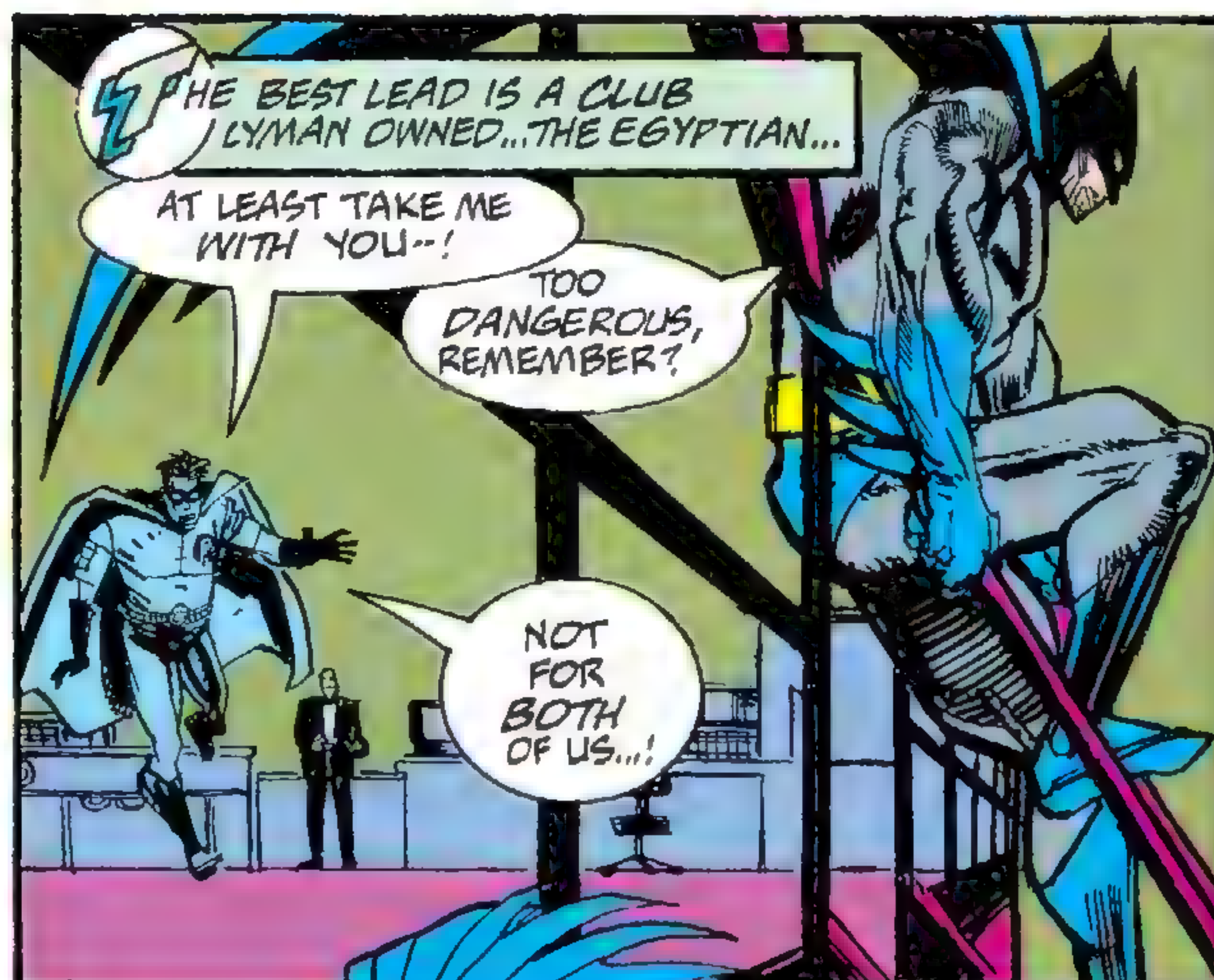
ACCORDING TO THE FILES,
HARVEY DENT HAD EVIDENCE
ON LYMAN, ALTHOUGH
NOTHING THAT WOULD
STICK IN COURT...SO
WHAT'S DENT DOING
NOW?



SETTLING OLD SCORES
WITH LYMAN...OR TAKING
OVER HIS ACTION?

YOU'RE NOT
HEARING ME...

THE LAD
HAS A POINT, SIR.
YOU'VE TAKEN
DOWN THE OTHER
ARKHAM ESCAPEES.
LET THE POLICE
HANDLE THIS LAST
ONE.

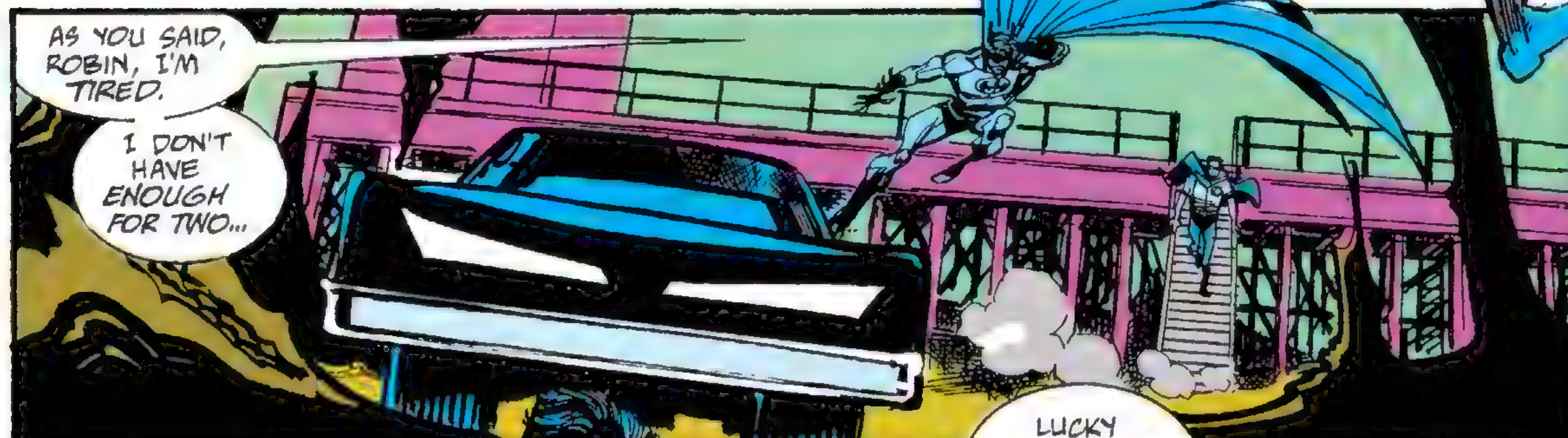


THE BEST LEAD IS A CLUB
LYMAN OWNED...THE EGYPTIAN...

AT LEAST TAKE ME
WITH YOU--!

TOO
DANGEROUS,
REMEMBER?

NOT
FOR
BOTH
OF US...!



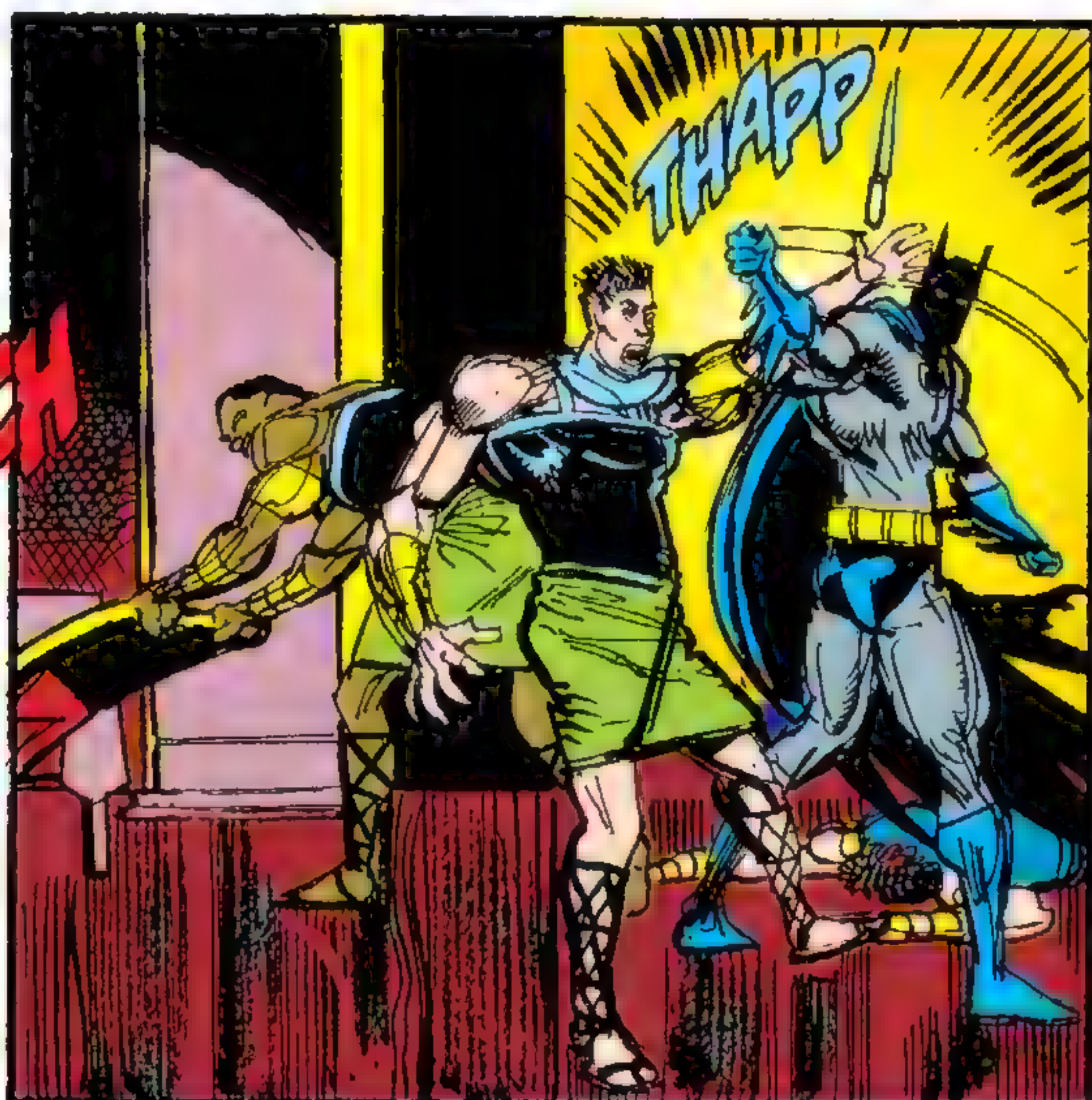
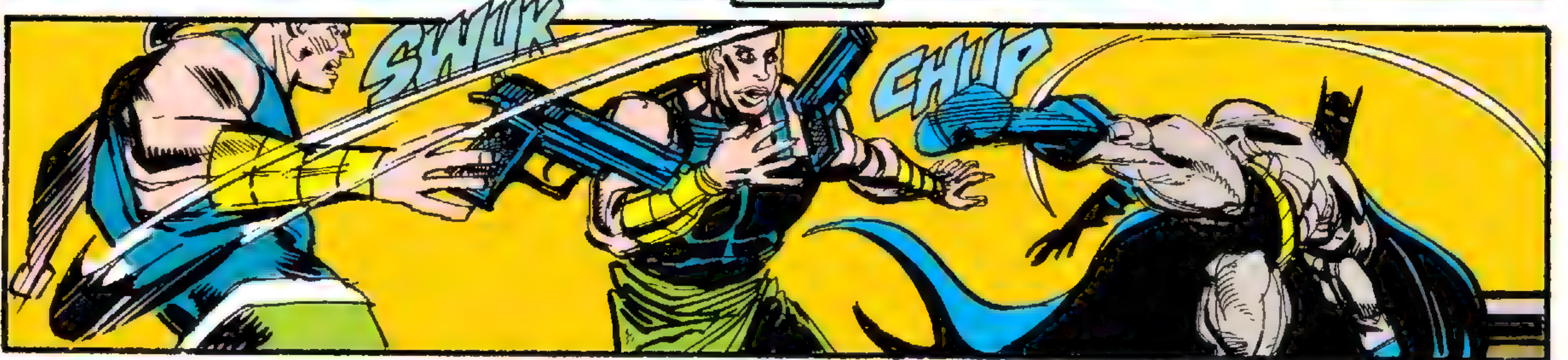
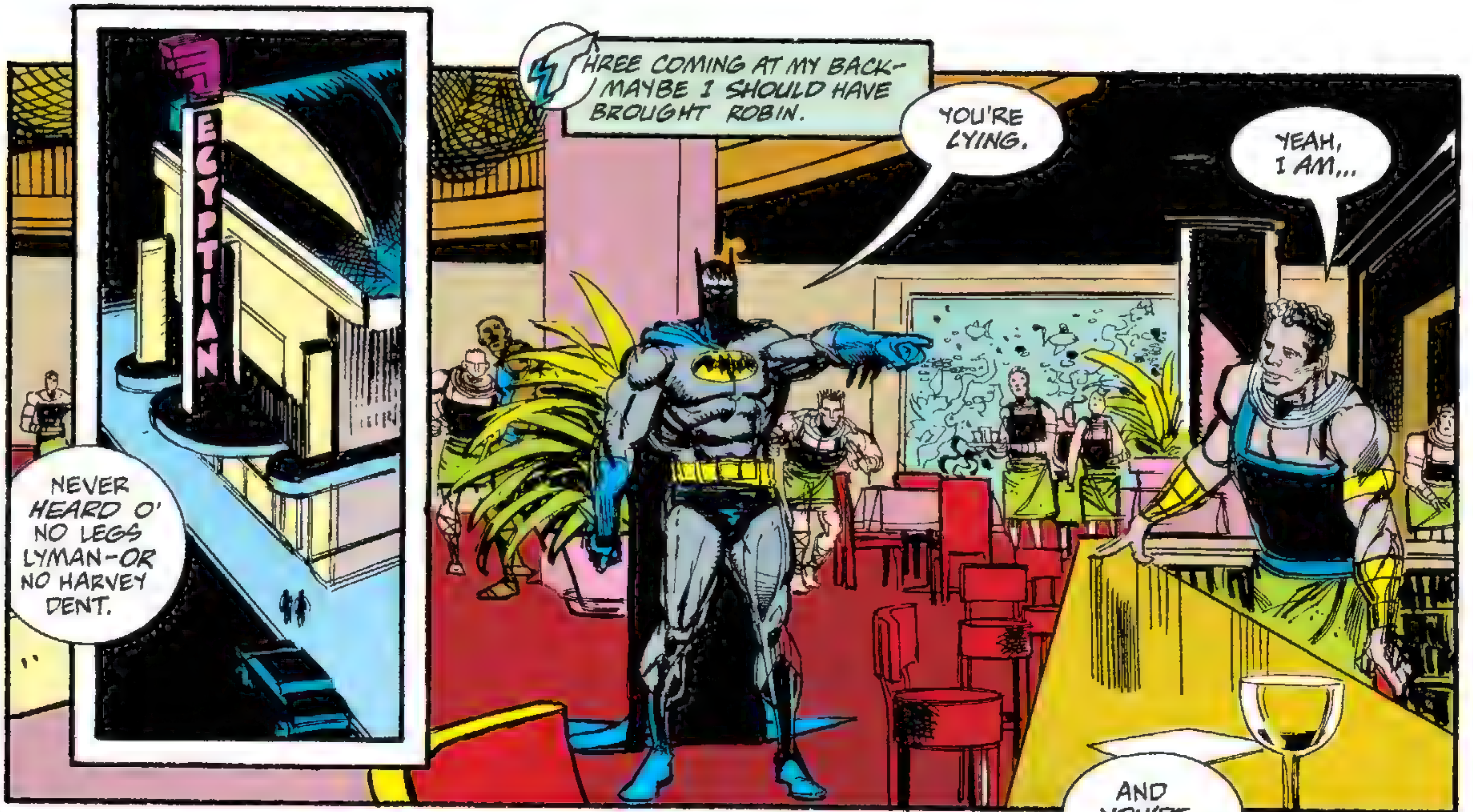
AS YOU SAID,
ROBIN, I'M
TIRED.

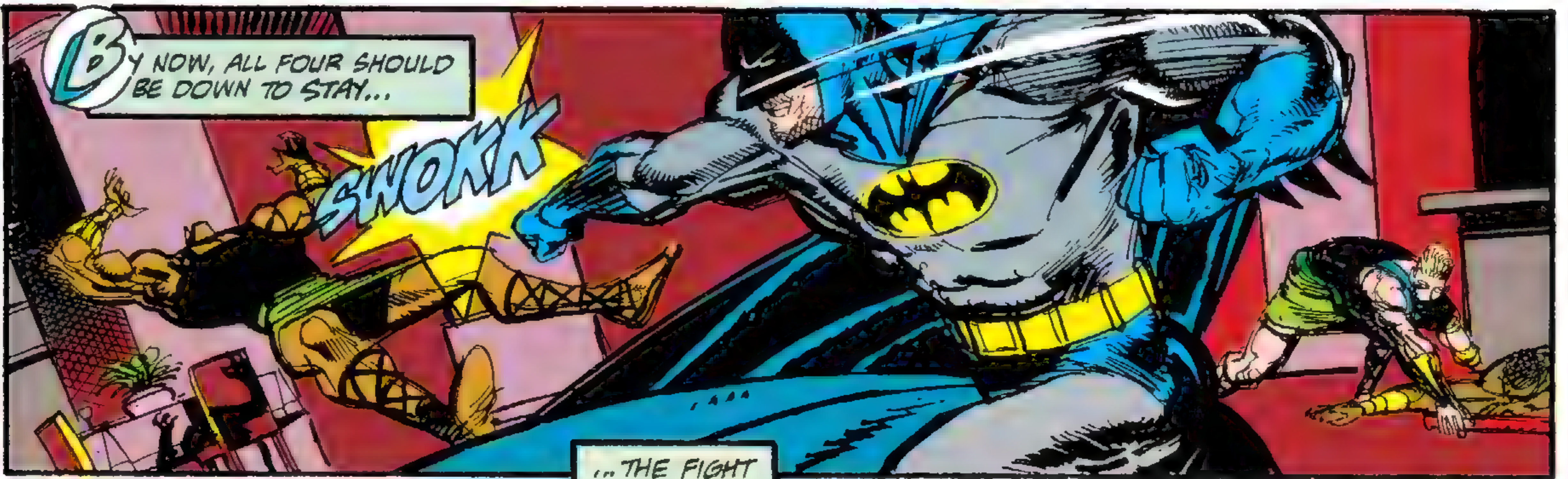
I DON'T
HAVE
ENOUGH
FOR TWO...

LUCKY
IF I CAN
COVER MY
OWN BACK.



CRASH

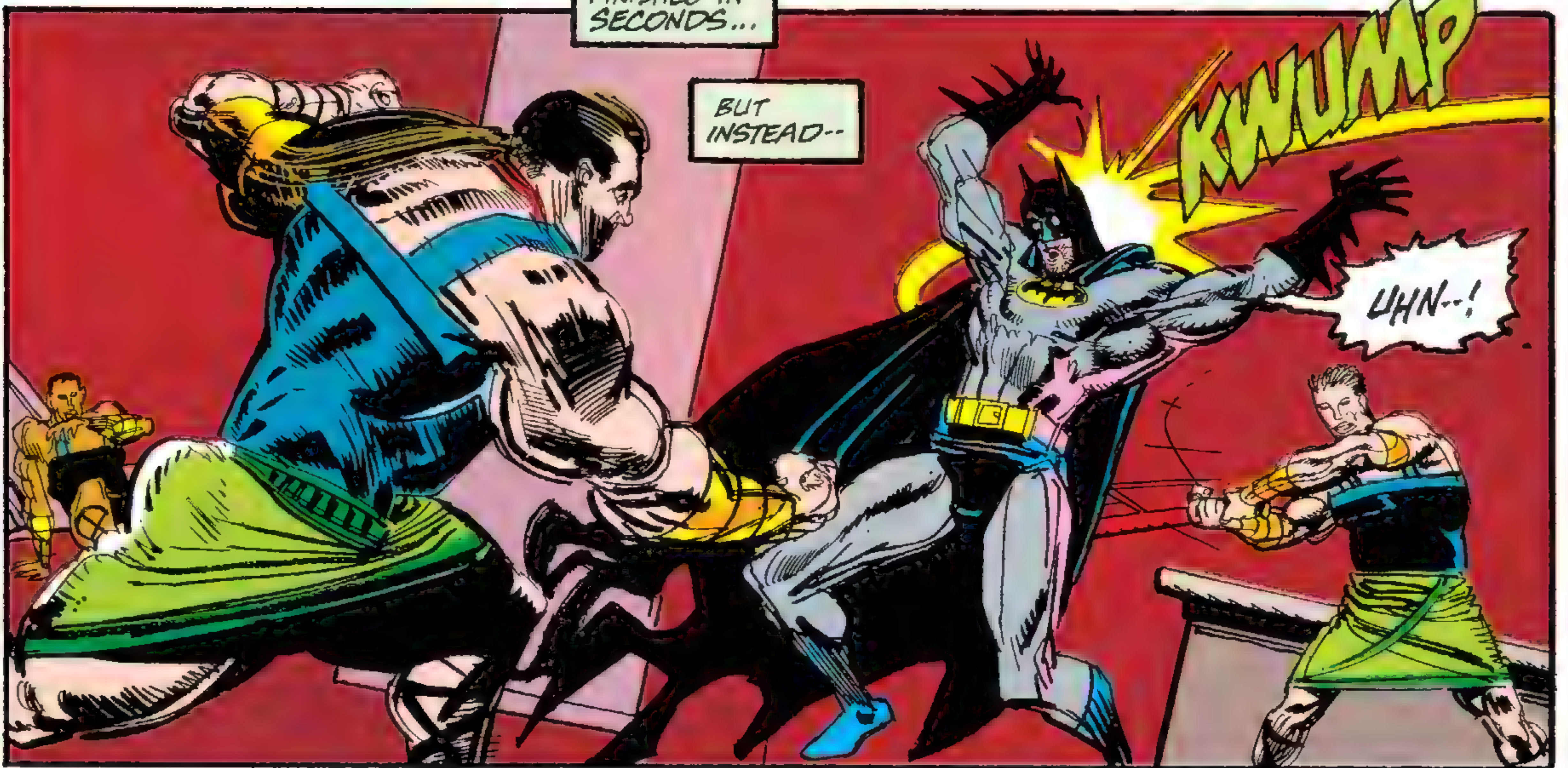




BY NOW, ALL FOUR SHOULD BE DOWN TO STAY...

SNOKK

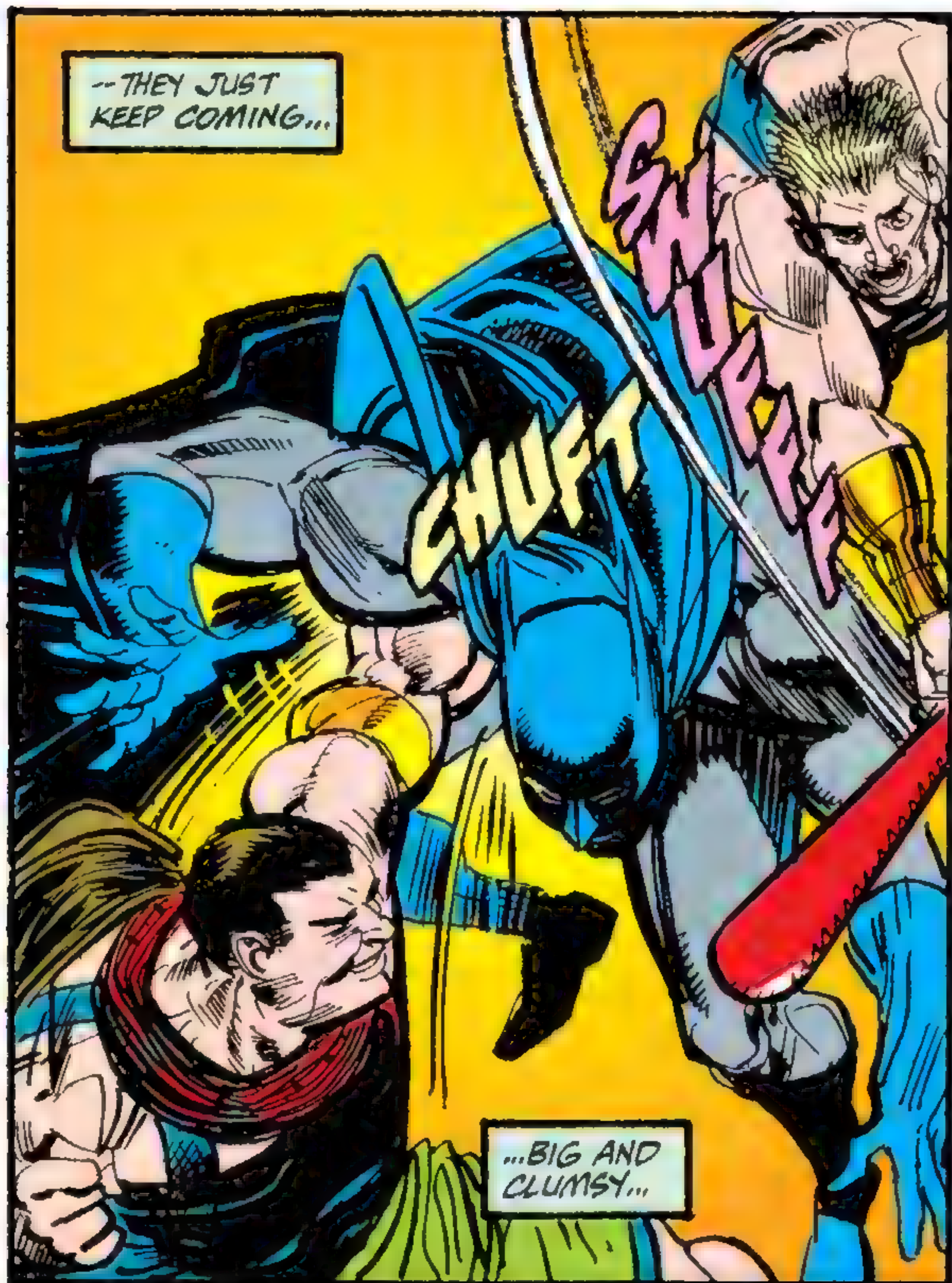
...THE FIGHT FINISHED IN SECONDS...



BUT INSTEAD--

KWUMP

UHN--!



--THEY JUST KEEP COMING...

CHUFT

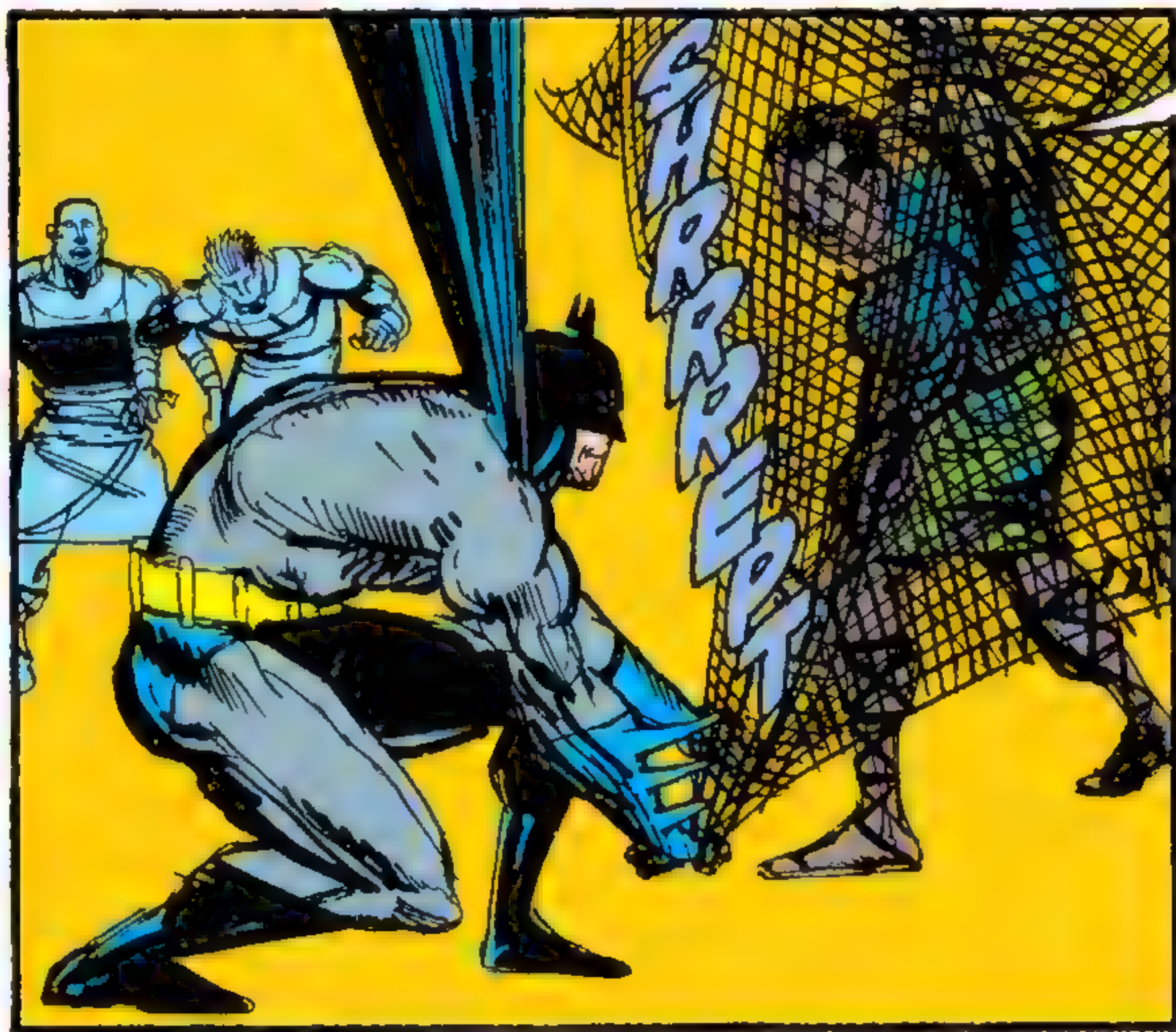
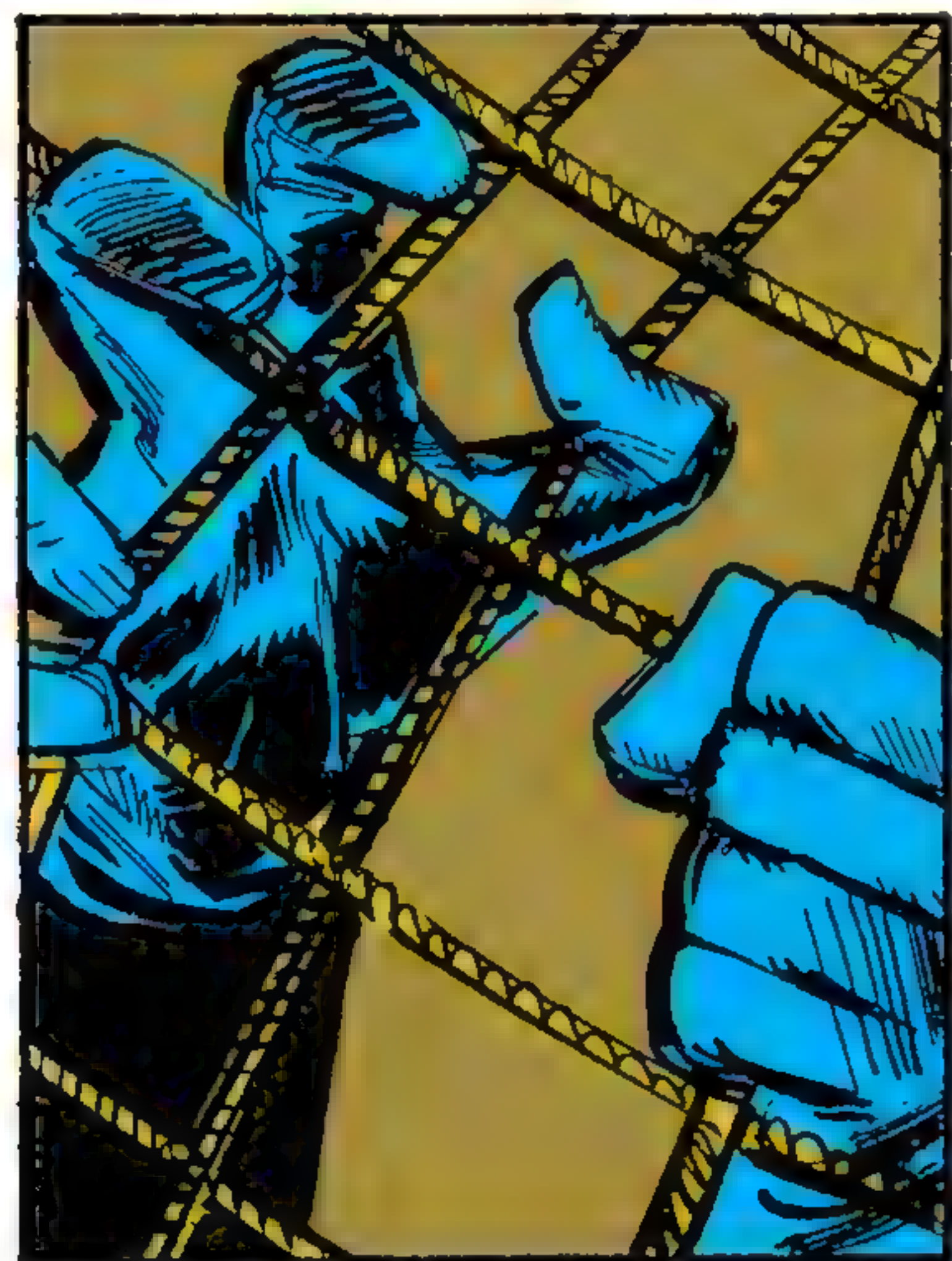
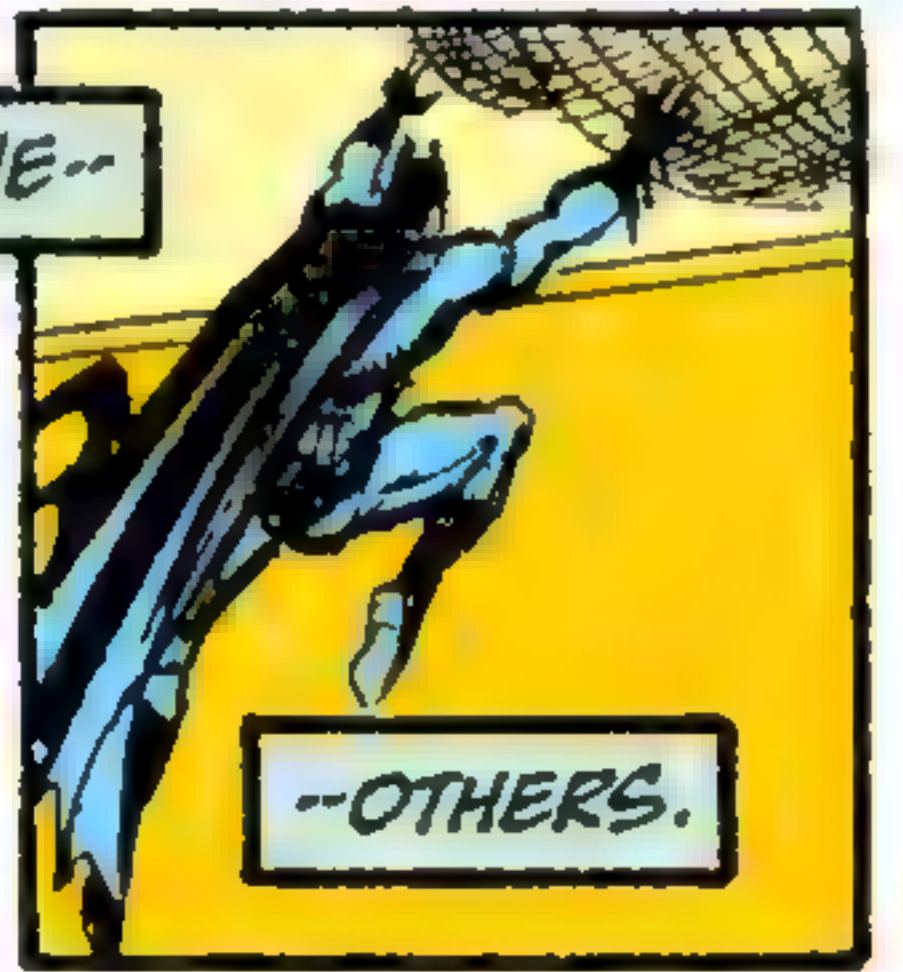
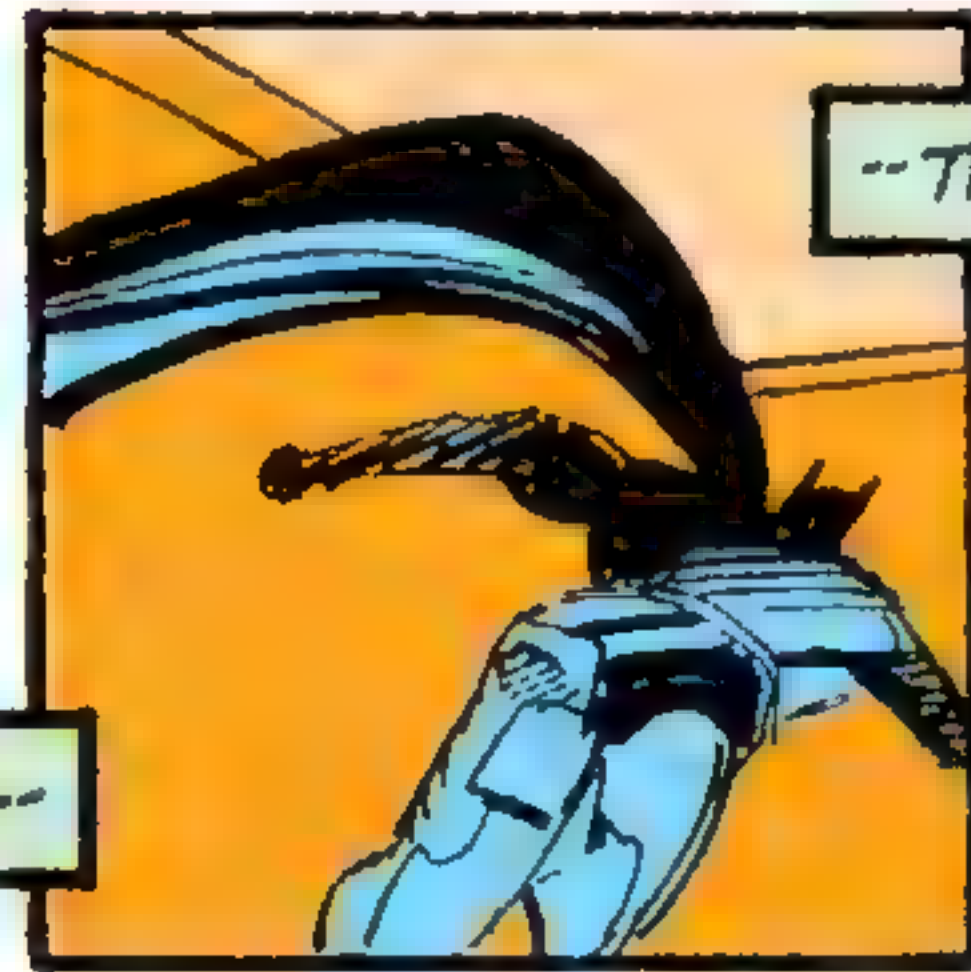
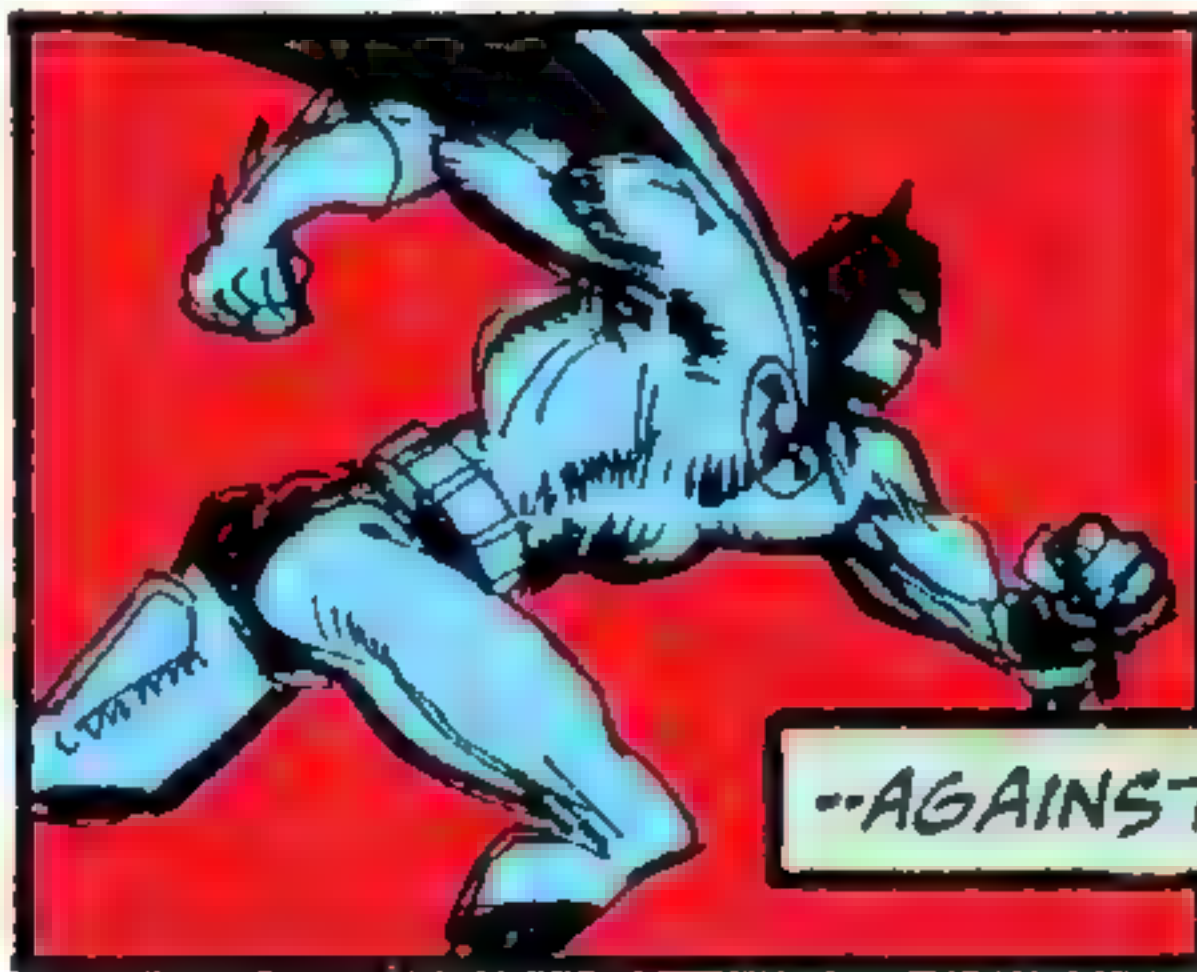
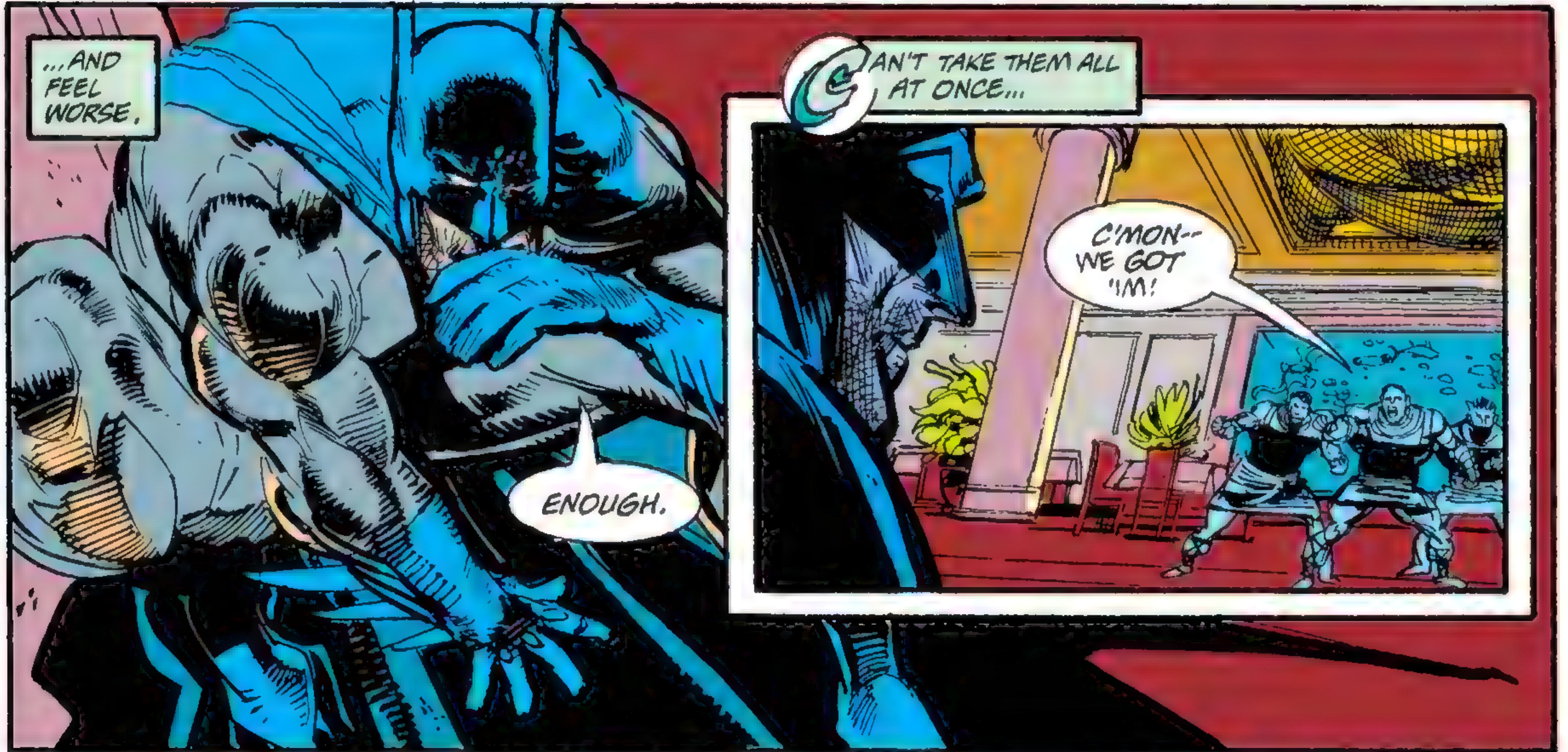
...BIG AND CLUMSY...

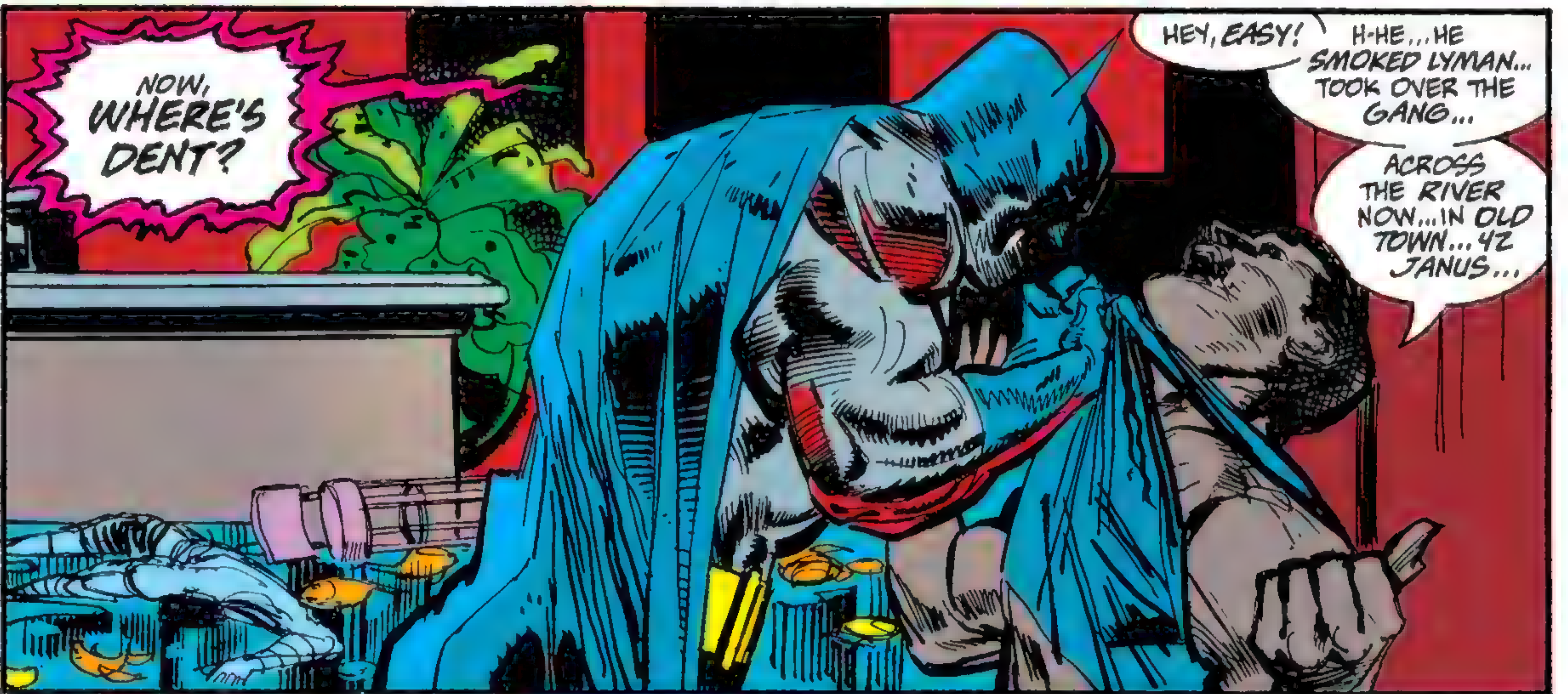
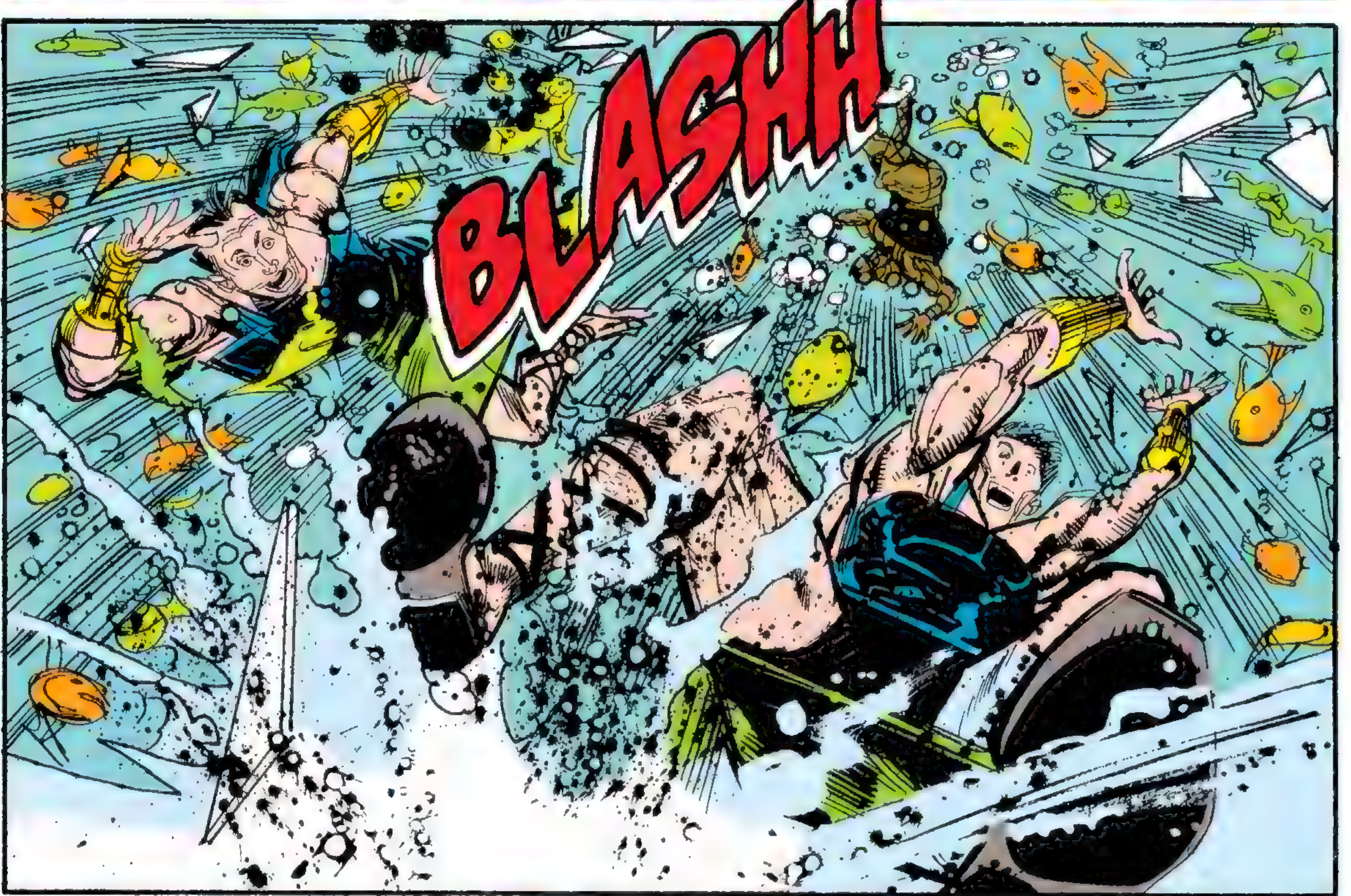
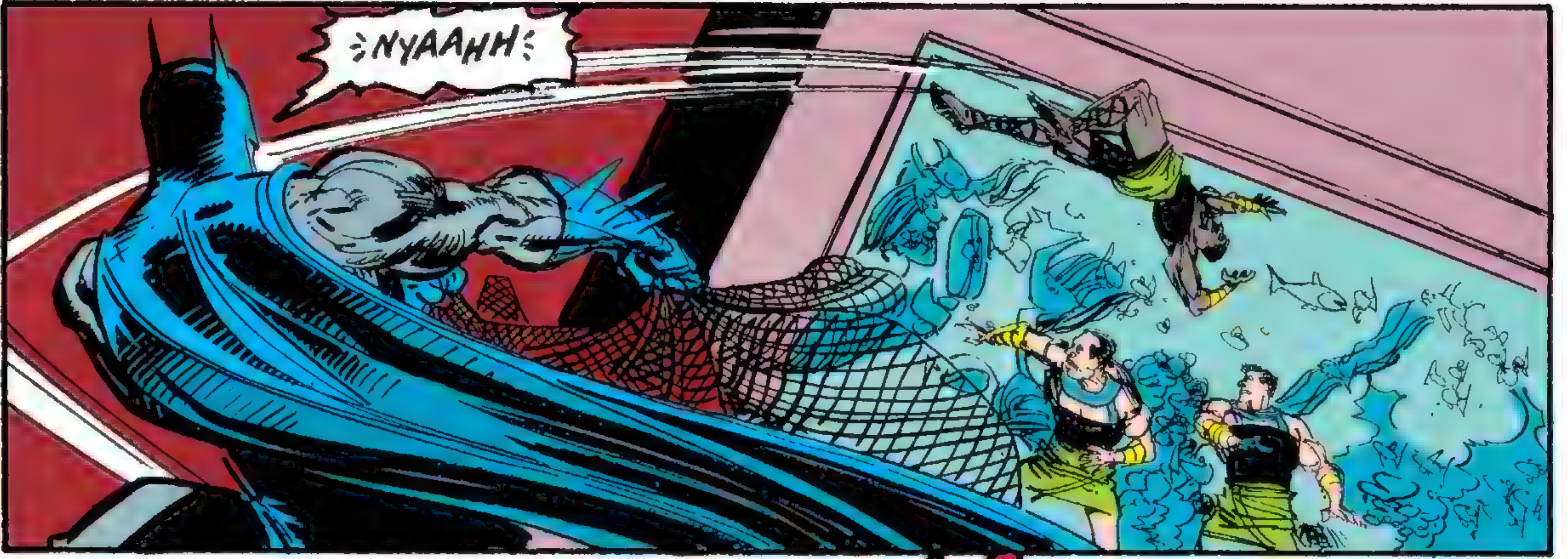


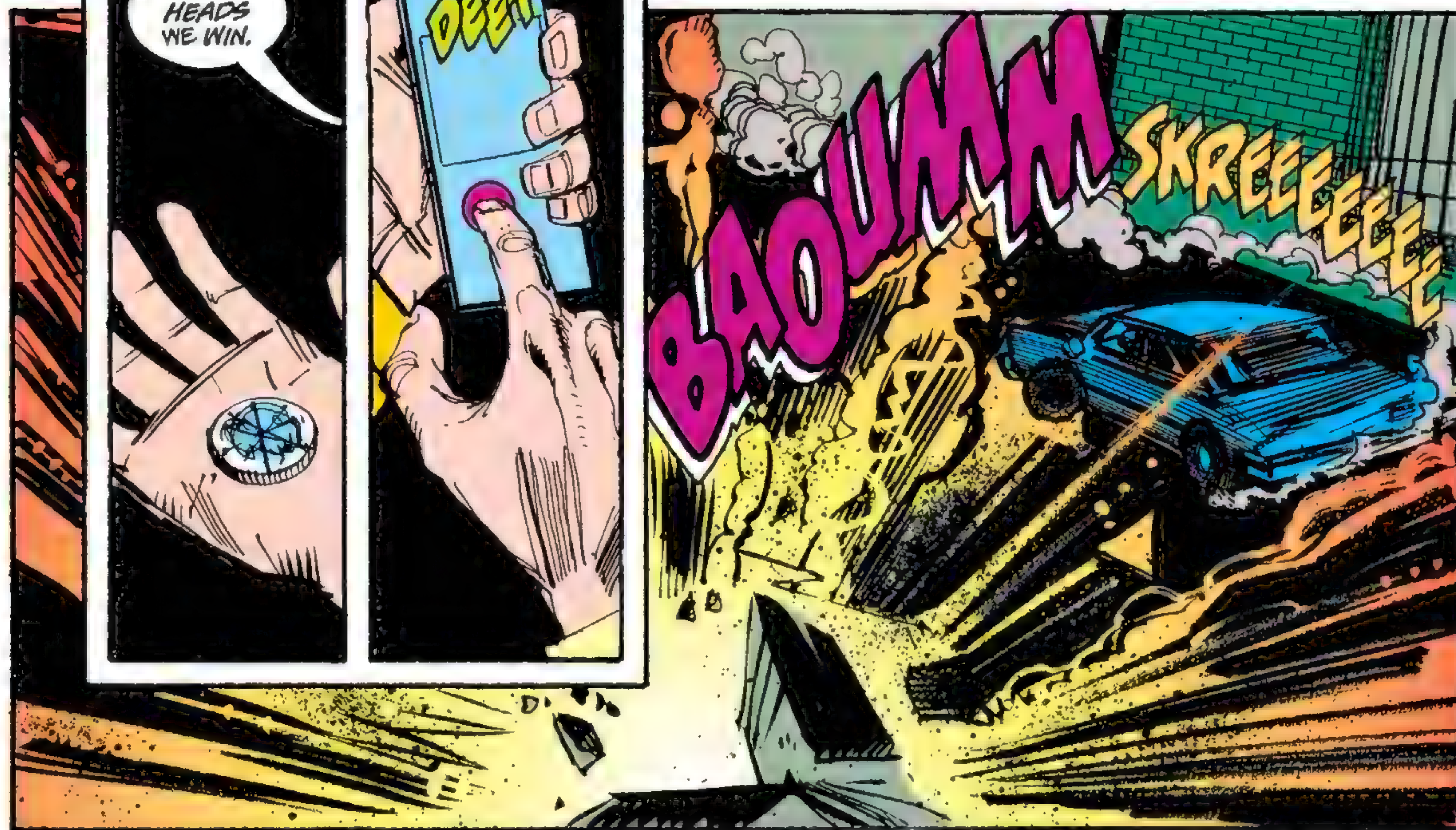
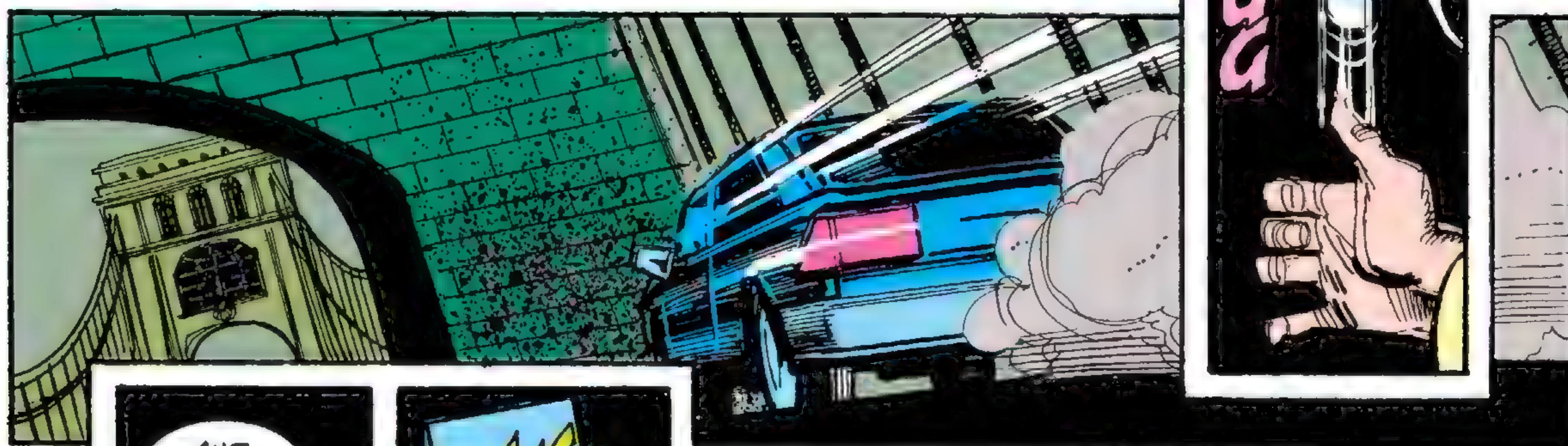
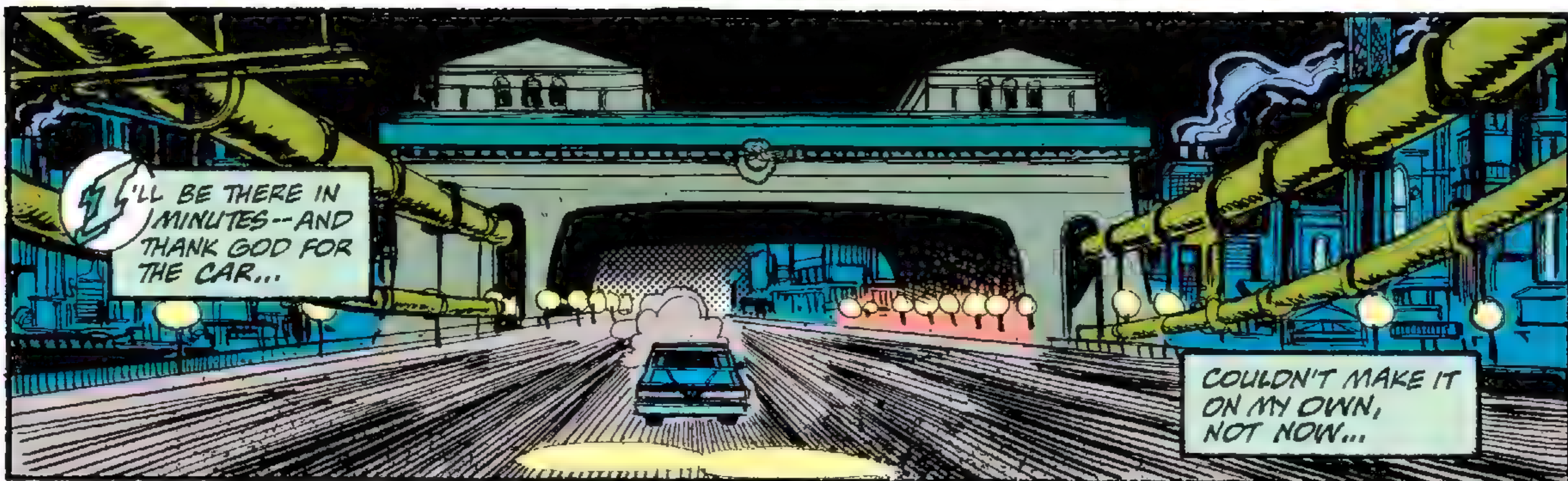
...PUSHOVERS...

SHU

CHUD

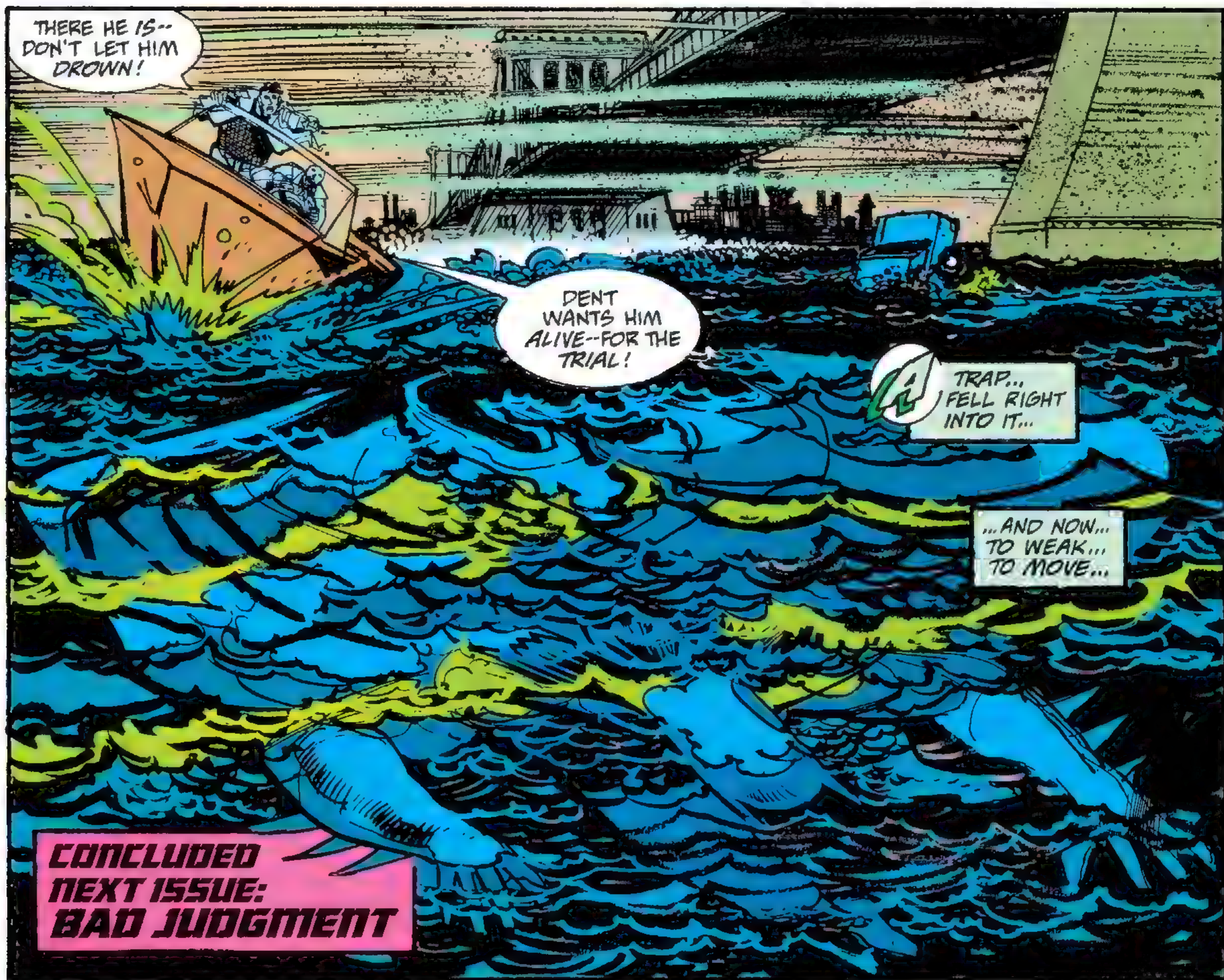








VAMP





KNIGHTFALL



TWO-FACE

8
OF TWELVE



STEWART

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

BATMAN
DEADSHOT
FIRE & ICE



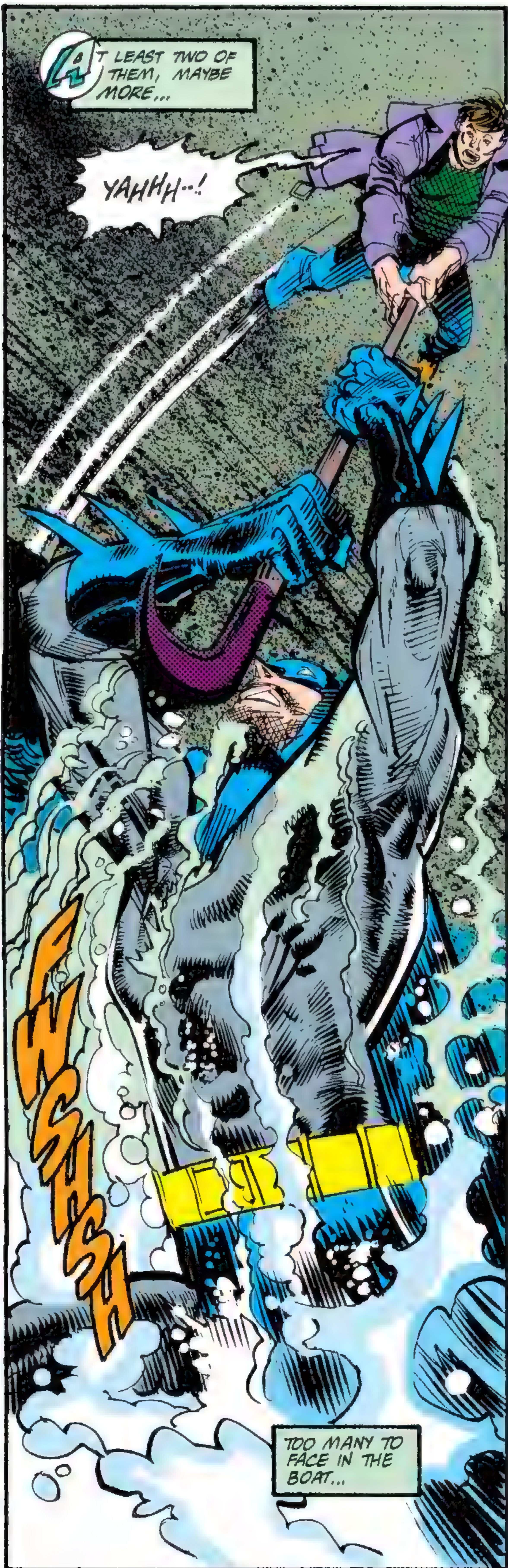
GO^{THAM} RIVER...
MIDWAY BETWEEN
ROXBURY AND OLD
TOWN, HALFWAY
BETWEEN THE TWO
SIDES OF GOTHAM...

GUN IT!
IF HE DROWNS,
TWO-FACE'LL
CUT US IN
HALF!

CAN'T HOLD
MY BREATH...
MUCH...
LONGER...



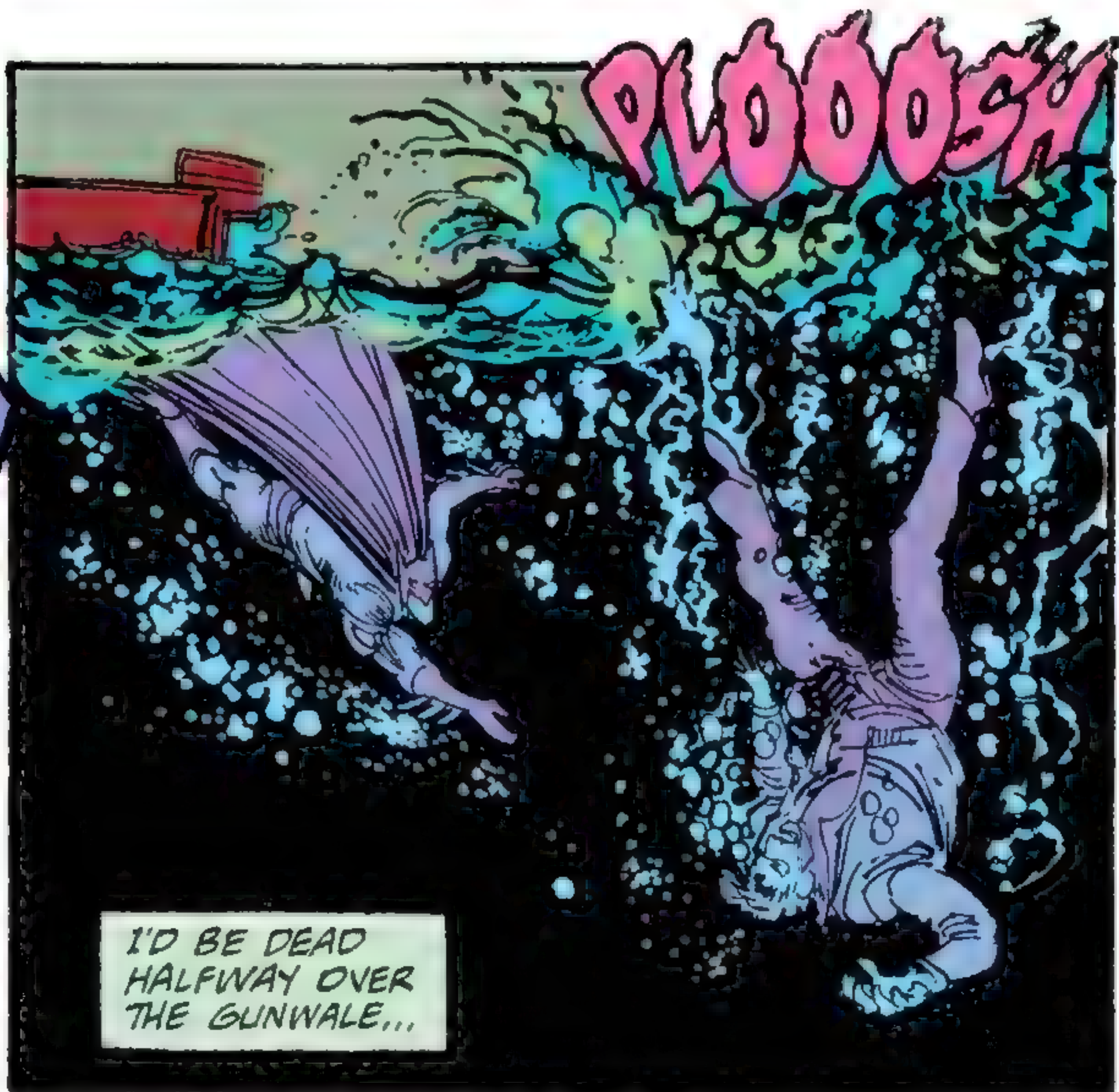
DOUG MOENCH--writer
KLAUS JANSON--artist/colorist
KEN BRUZENAK--letterer
DENNIS O'NEIL--consulting editor
NEAL POZNER--editor



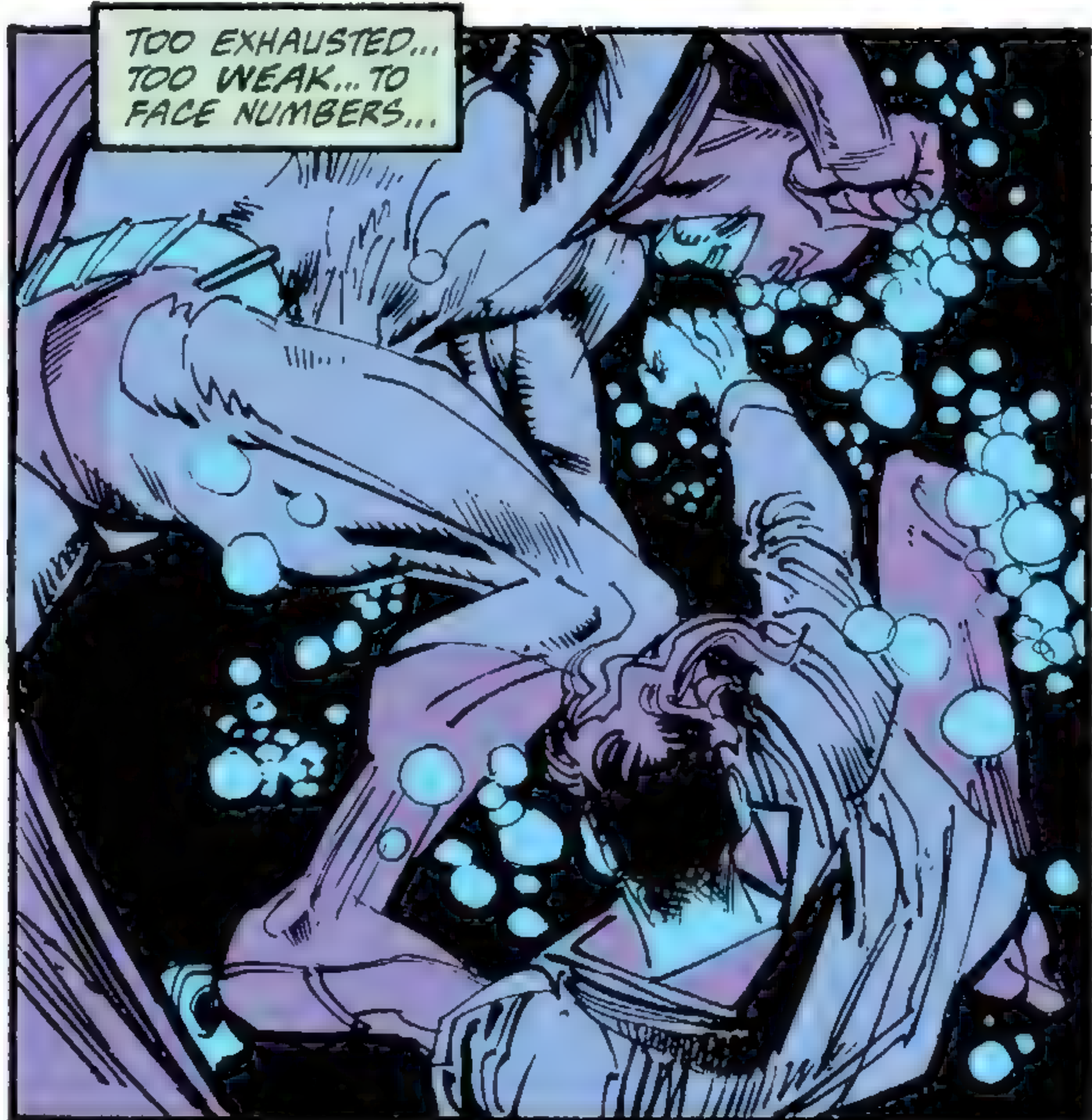
AT LEAST TWO OF THEM, MAYBE MORE...

YAHHH...!

TOO MANY TO FACE IN THE BOAT...



I'D BE DEAD HALFWAY OVER THE GUNWALE...



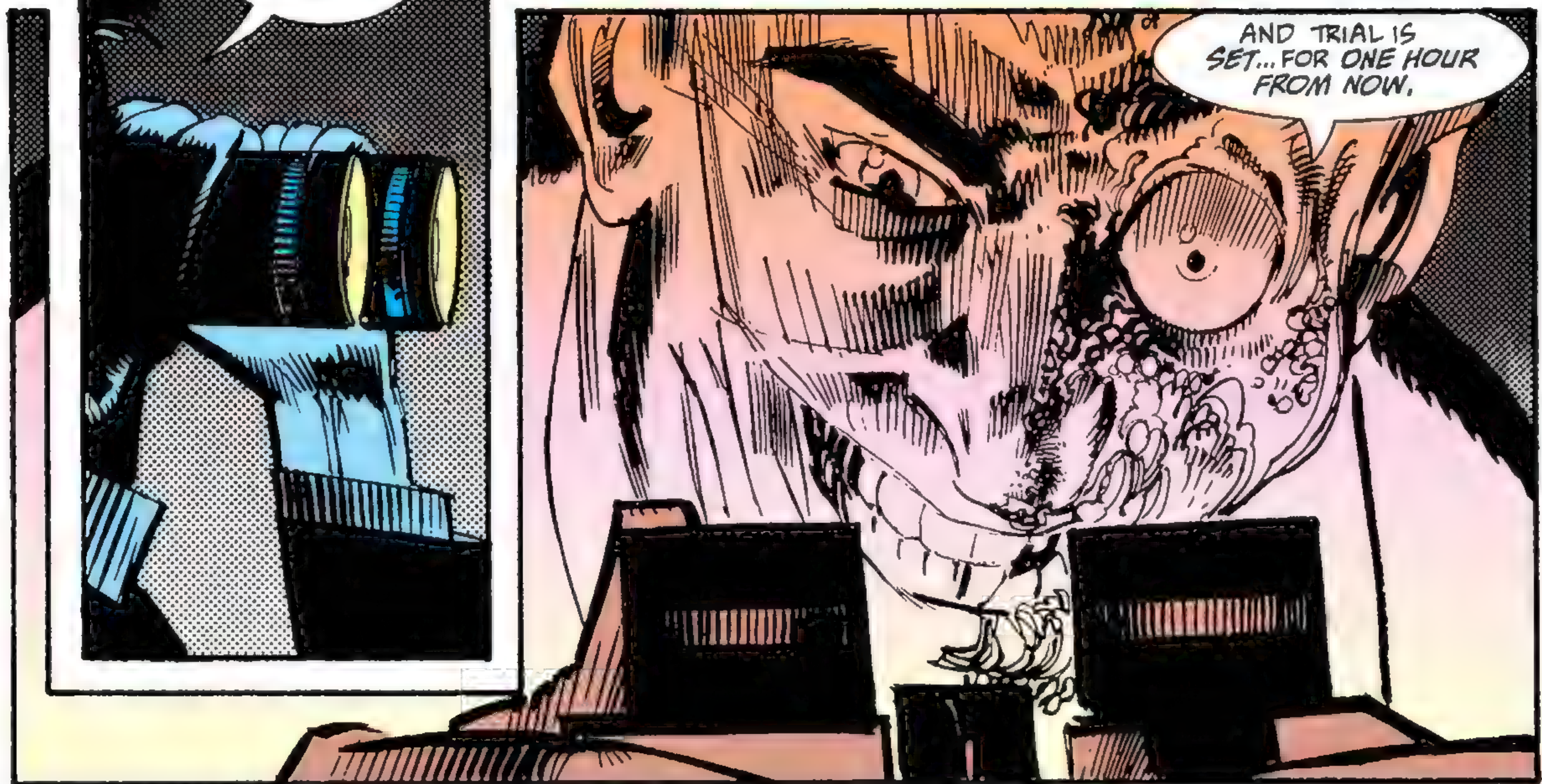
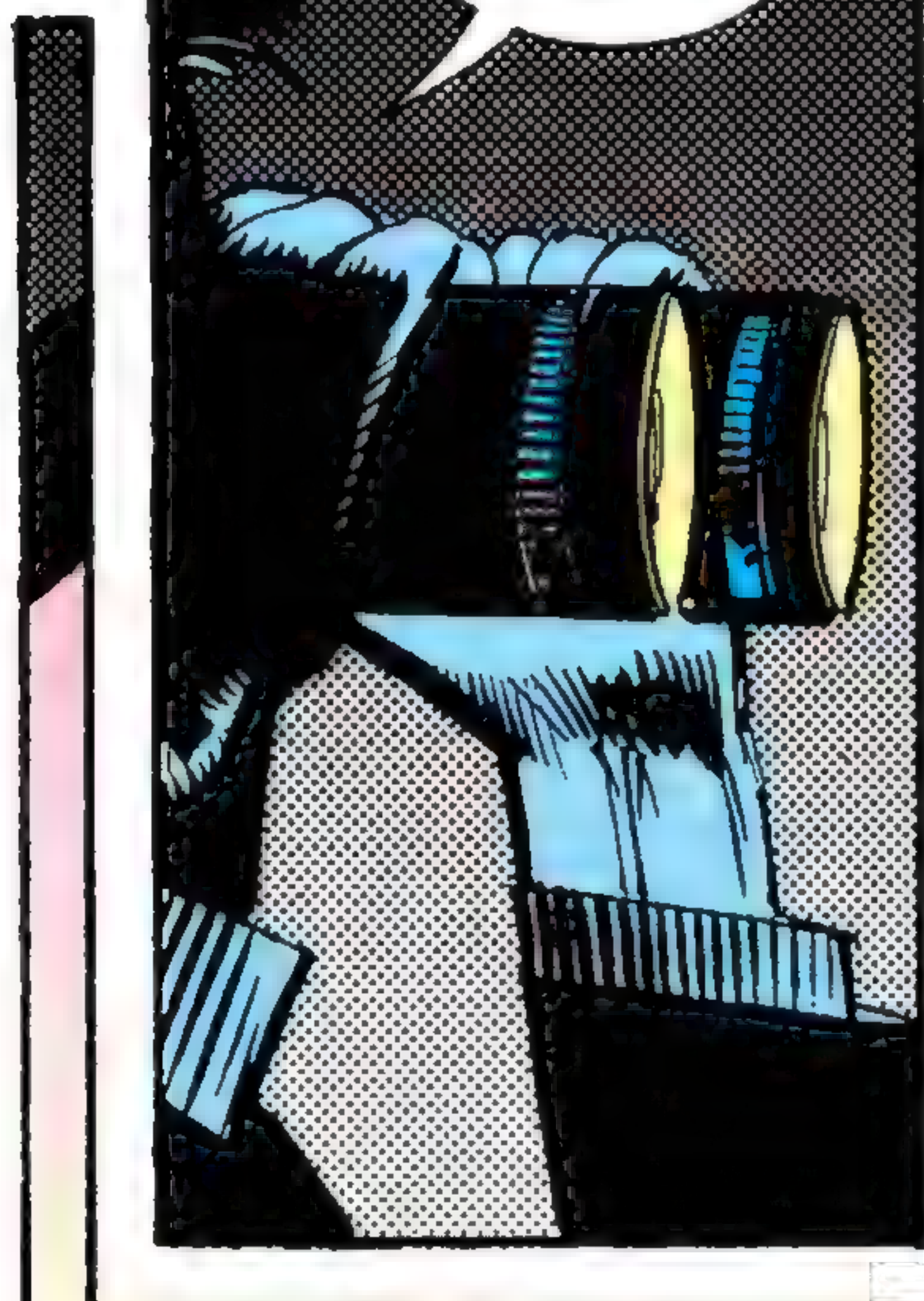
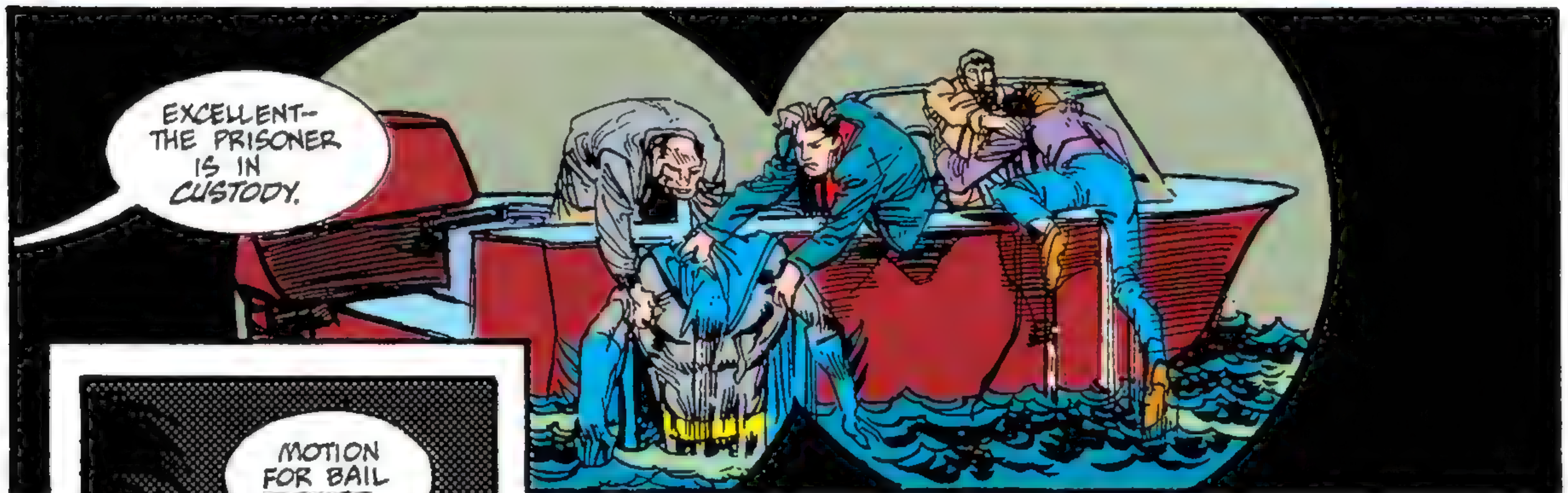
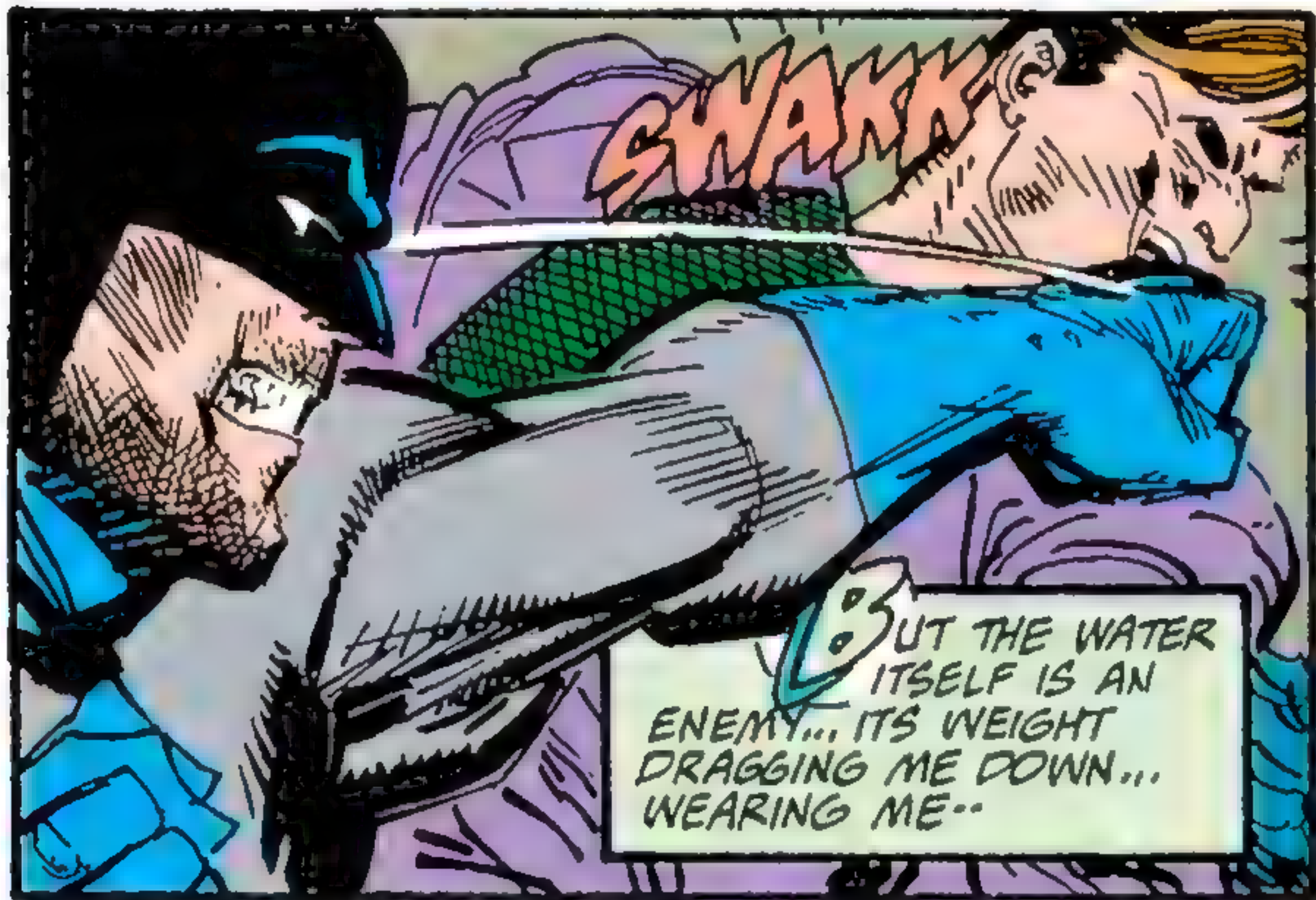
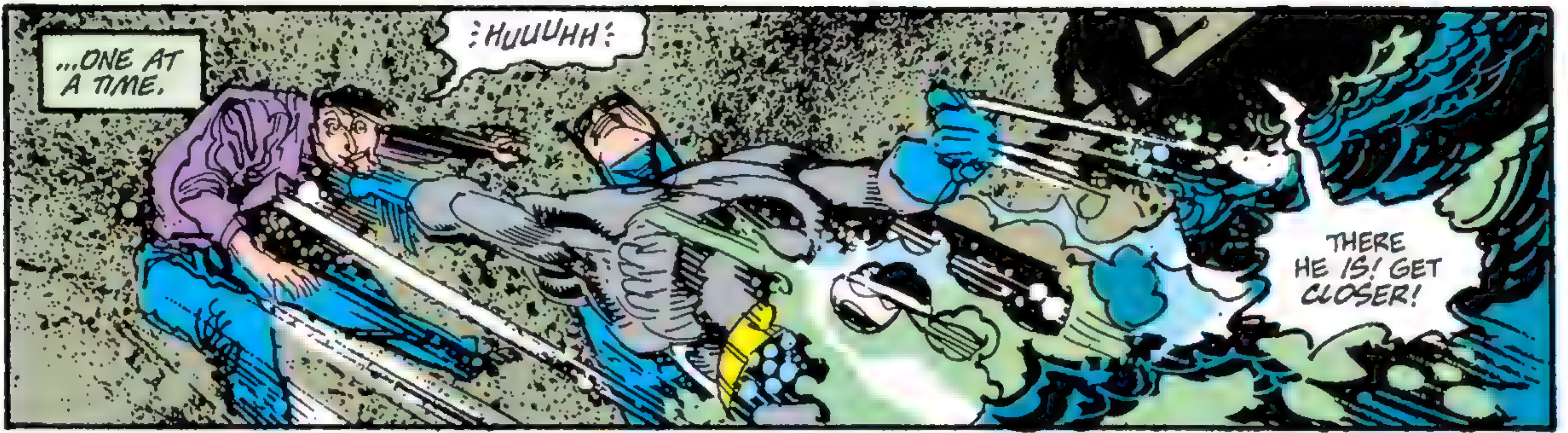
TOO EXHAUSTED... TOO WEAK... TO FACE NUMBERS...

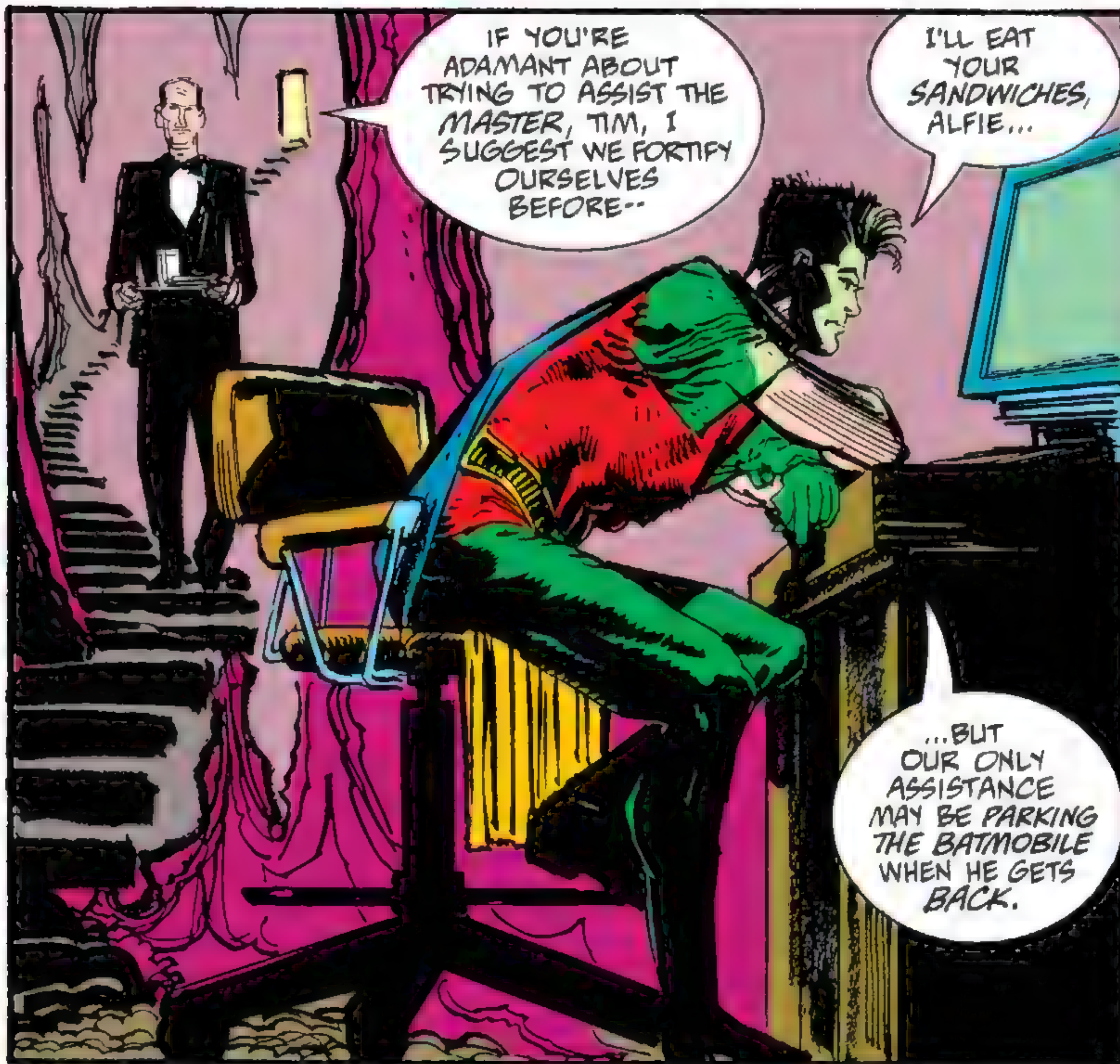


THE WATER'S MY ONLY CHANCE...



GOT TO USE IT... TO TAKE THEM OUT...





IF YOU'RE ADAMANT ABOUT TRYING TO ASSIST THE MASTER, TIM, I SUGGEST WE FORTIFY OURSELVES BEFORE--

I'LL EAT YOUR SANDWICHES, ALFIE...

...BUT OUR ONLY ASSISTANCE MAY BE PARKING THE BATMOBILE WHEN HE GETS BACK.



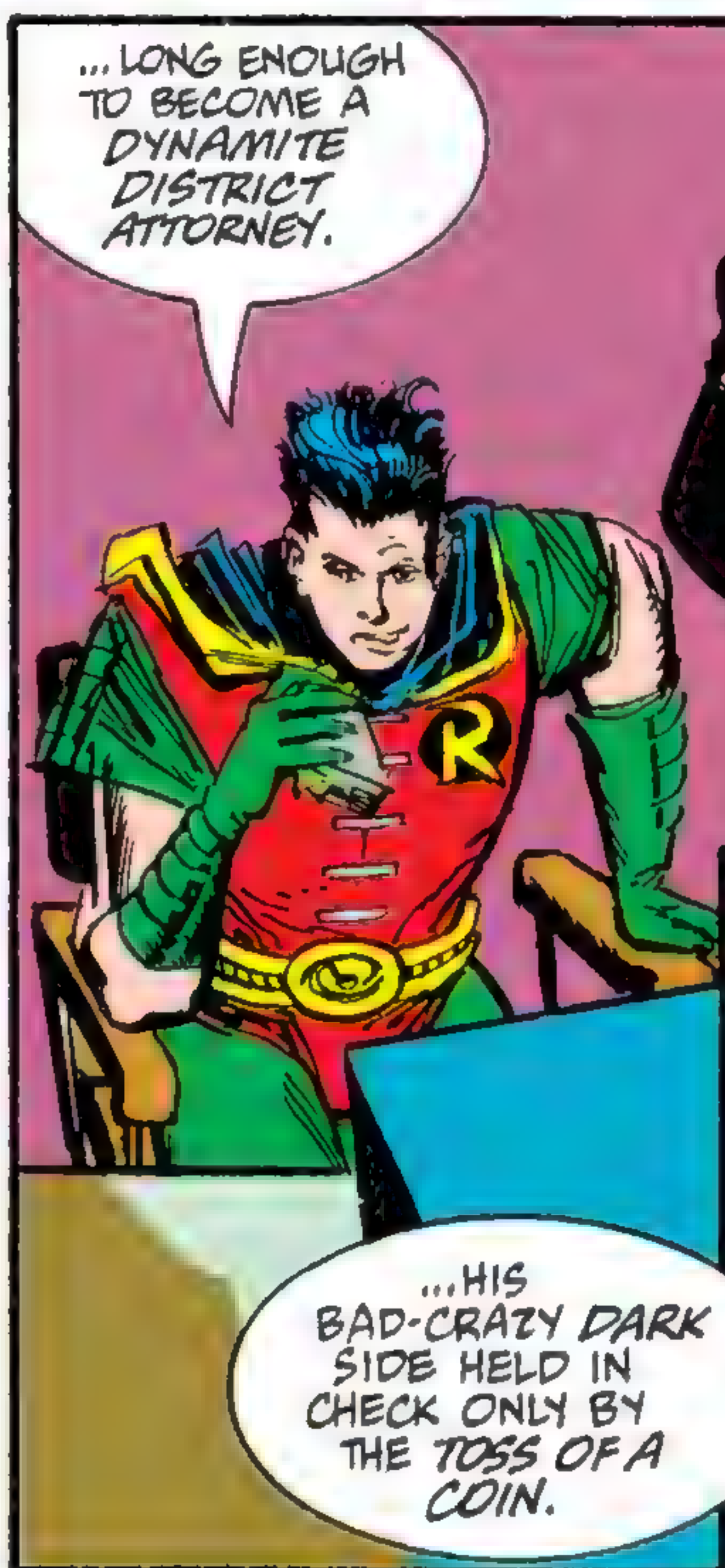
NO LUCK IN THE COMPUTER FILES?

NADA-- ZIP...

ONLY THING I'VE LEARNED IS THAT CHILD ABUSE SCARRED HARVEY DENT'S SOUL LONG BEFORE BOSS MARONI'S ACID HIT HIS FACE.



BUT EVEN SO, IT SEEMS HE WAS ABLE TO KEEP HIS BAD SIDE DOWN FOR QUITE A WHILE...



...LONG ENOUGH TO BECOME A DYNAMITE DISTRICT ATTORNEY.

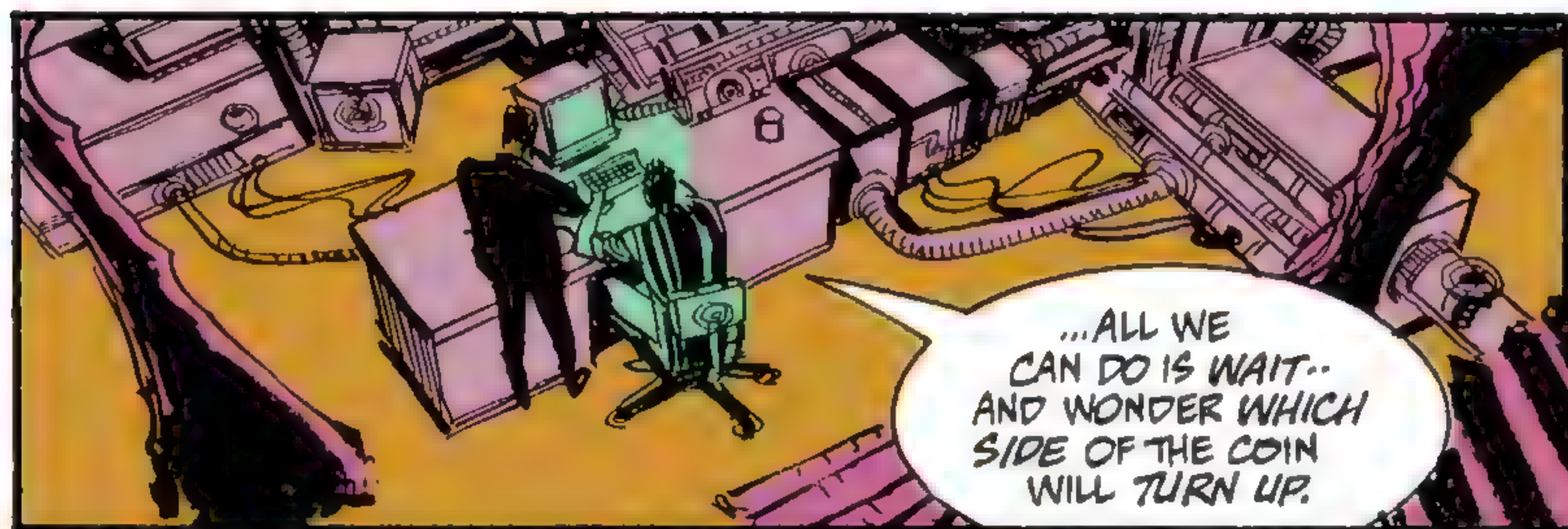
YES, THE MASTER HAS OFTEN COMMENTED ON WHAT A TRAGEDY HIS CASE IS-- AND THAT HARVEY DENT WAS ONCE A GENUINELY GOOD MAN.

WELL, HE'S TWO MEN NOW...

...HIS BAD-CRAZY DARK SIDE HELD IN CHECK ONLY BY THE TOSS OF A COIN.



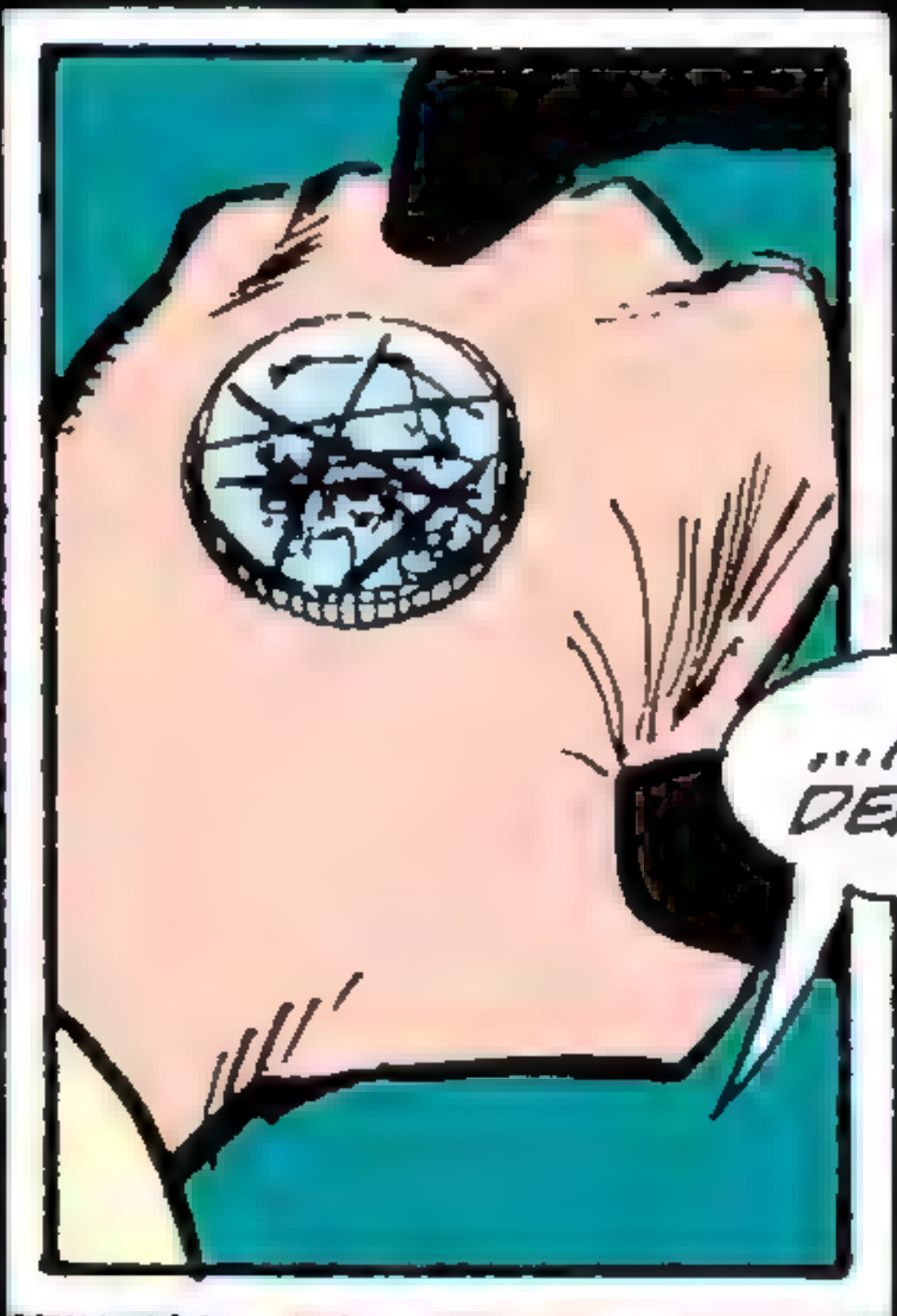
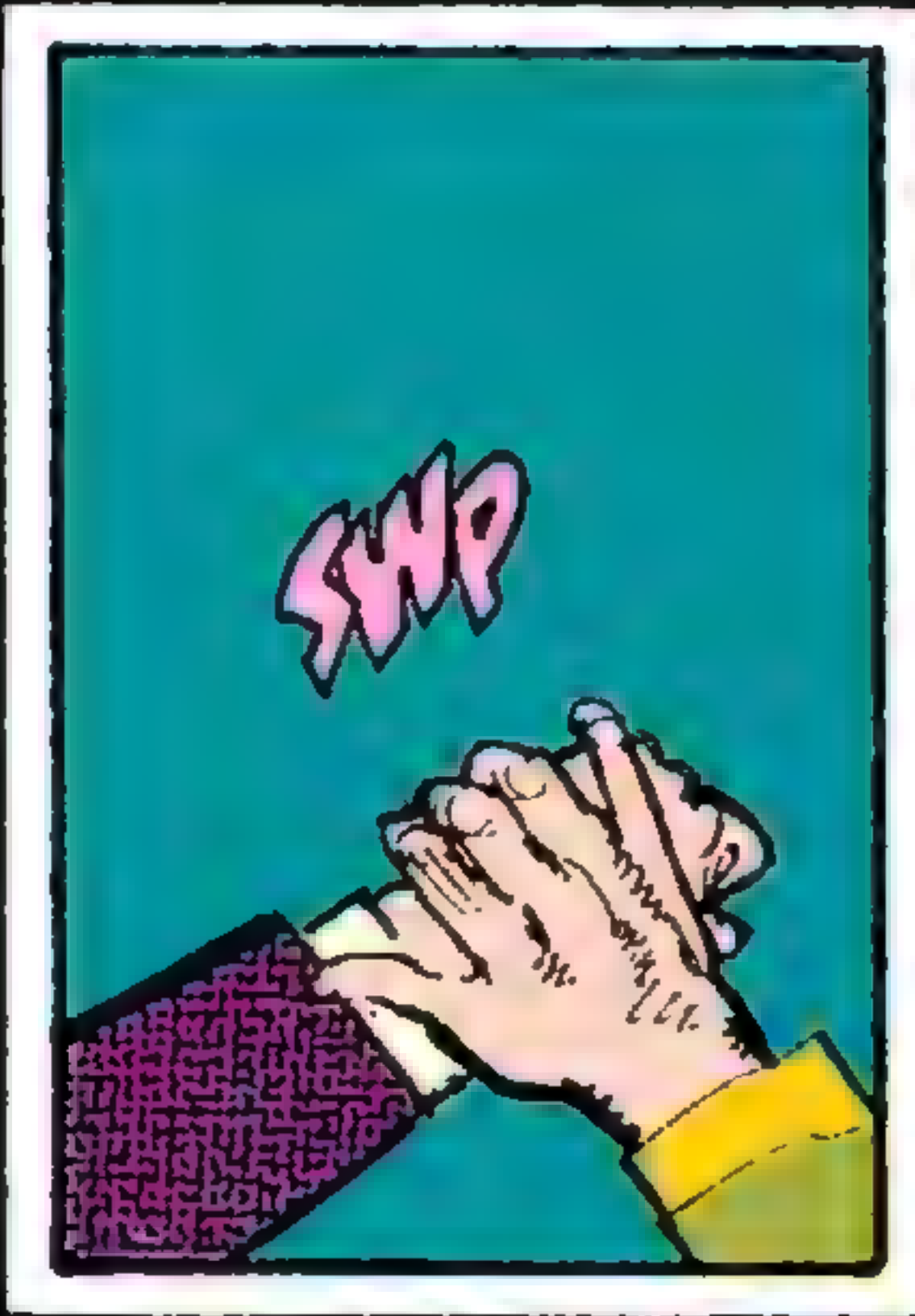
AND SINCE I CAN'T FIND A CLUE AS TO WHERE HE MIGHT BE HOLED UP, OR WHERE BATMAN MIGHT HAVE GONE LOOKING FOR HIM...



...ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT-- AND WONDER WHICH SIDE OF THE COIN WILL TURN UP.



MOTIONS FOR VOIR DIRE, CLEMENCY, AND CHANGE OF VENUE...



...ALL DENIED.

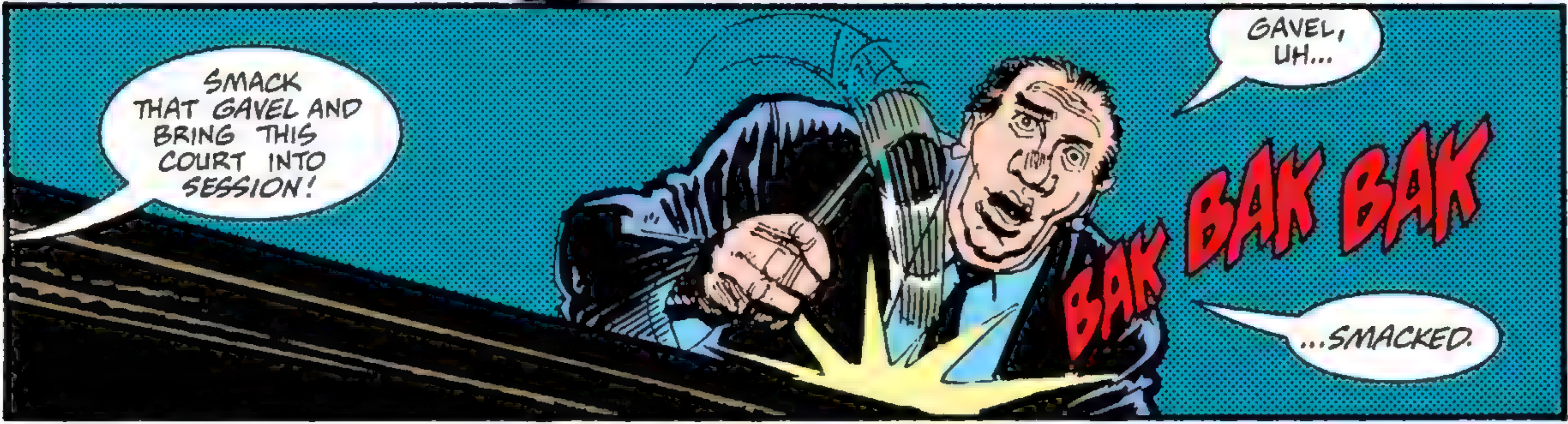
NOR WILL WE HEAR ANY OTHER PLEAS.

DEMOLITION SITE... RUINS OF THE OLD COURTHOUSE... WHERE HARVEY DENT PROSECUTED BOSS MARONI... AND WHERE TWO-FACE PLANS TO JUDGE ME...



INSANE... AND I FELL RIGHT INTO THE TRAP...

ALL RIGHT, YOUR HONOR...

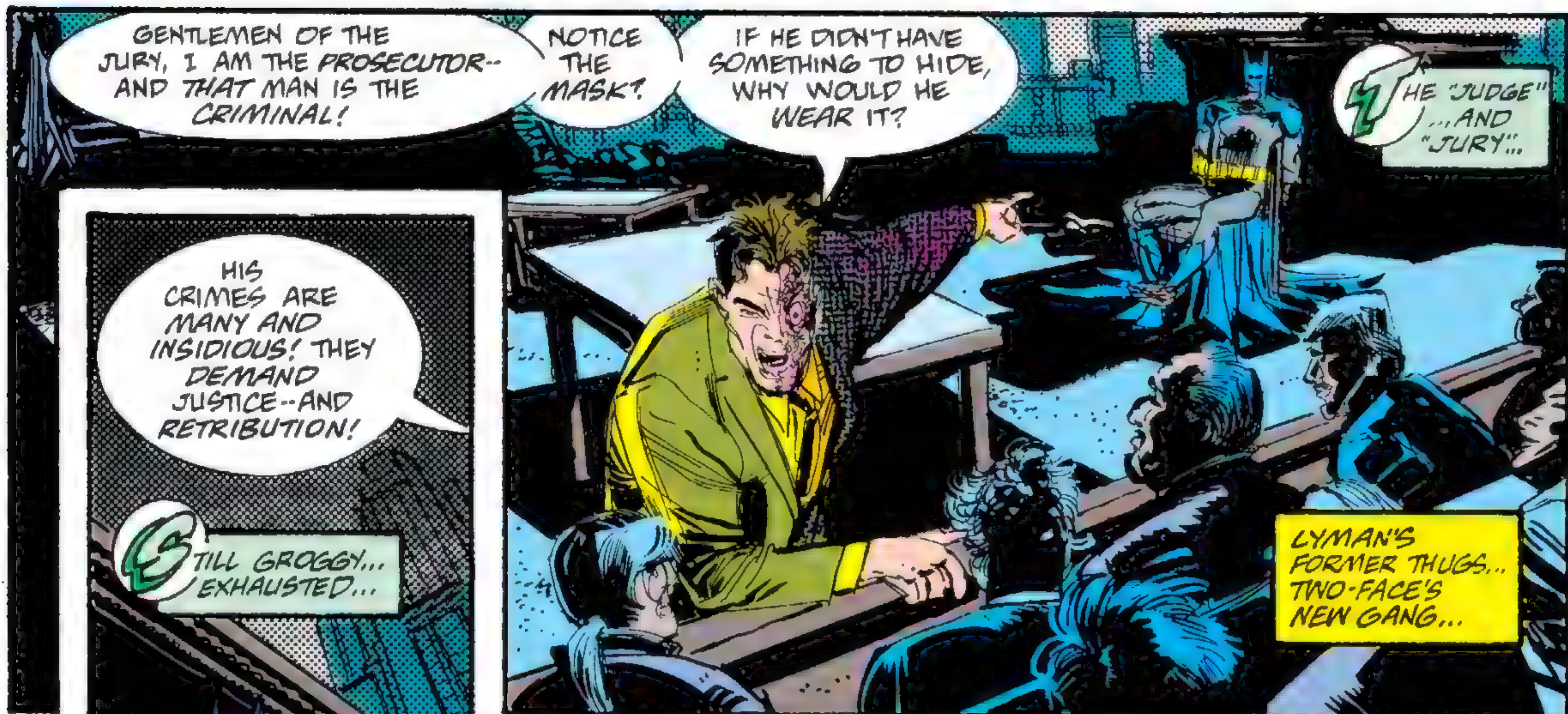


SMACK THAT GAVEL AND BRING THIS COURT INTO SESSION!

GAVEL, UH...

BAK BAK BAK

...SMACKED.



GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY, I AM THE PROSECUTOR-- AND THAT MAN IS THE CRIMINAL!

NOTICE THE MASK?

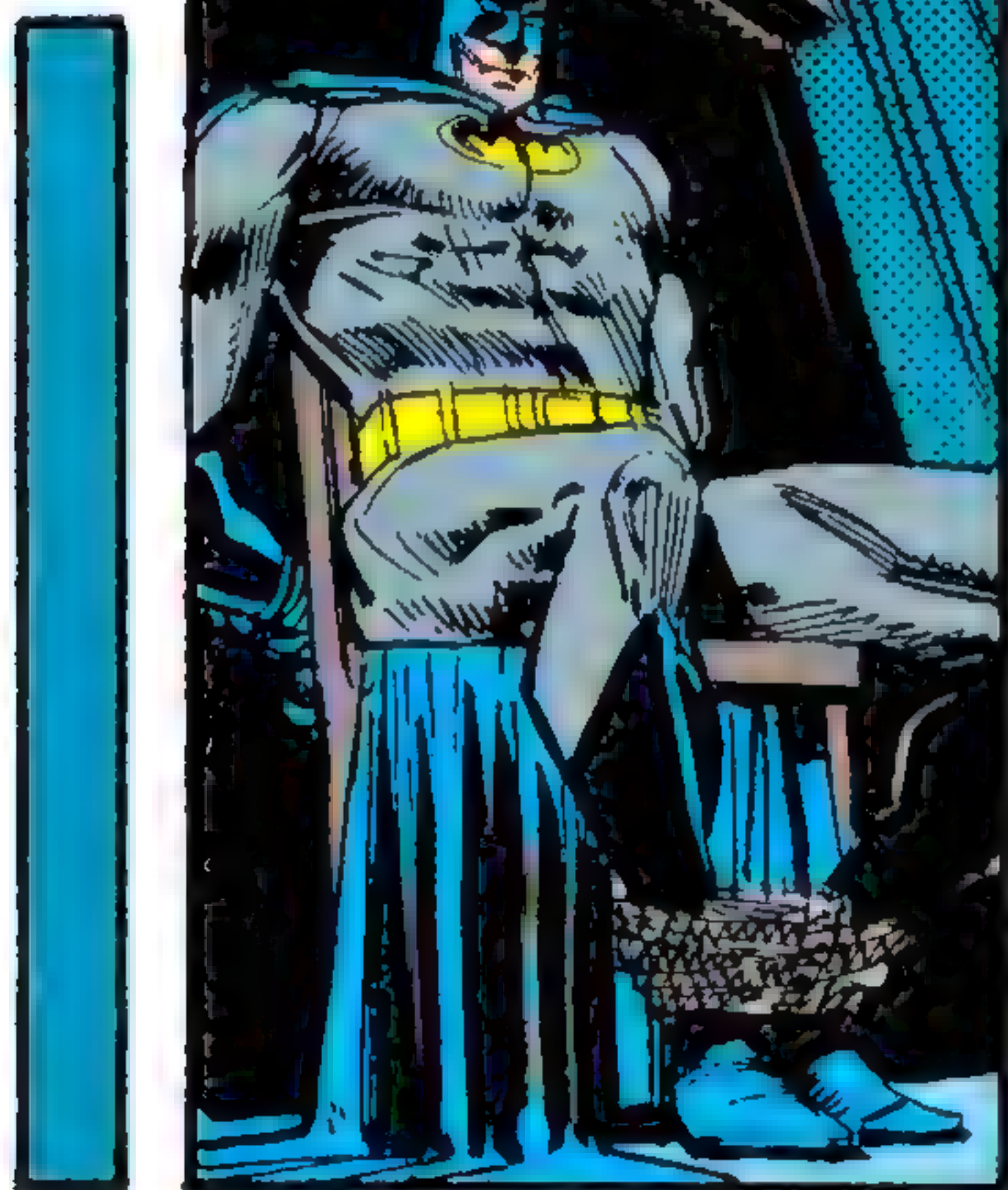
IF HE DIDN'T HAVE SOMETHING TO HIDE, WHY WOULD HE WEAR IT?

HE "JUDGE" ...AND "JURY"...

HIS CRIMES ARE MANY AND INSIDIOUS! THEY DEMAND JUSTICE--AND RETRIBUTION!

G TILL GROGGY... EXHAUSTED...

LYMAN'S FORMER THUGS... TWO-FACE'S NEW GANG...



JUST FOR STARTERS, HE IS CHARGED WITH TWO-FACED DUPLICITY, DOUBLE-DEALING, TWO COUNTS OF BETRAYAL, AND DOUBLE-CROSS!

ONCE CONVICTED, HIS PUNISHMENT WILL BE SEVERE--AND PERSONALLY ENFORCED BY ME!

I INSIST ON THE DEATH PENALTY, GENTLEMEN--

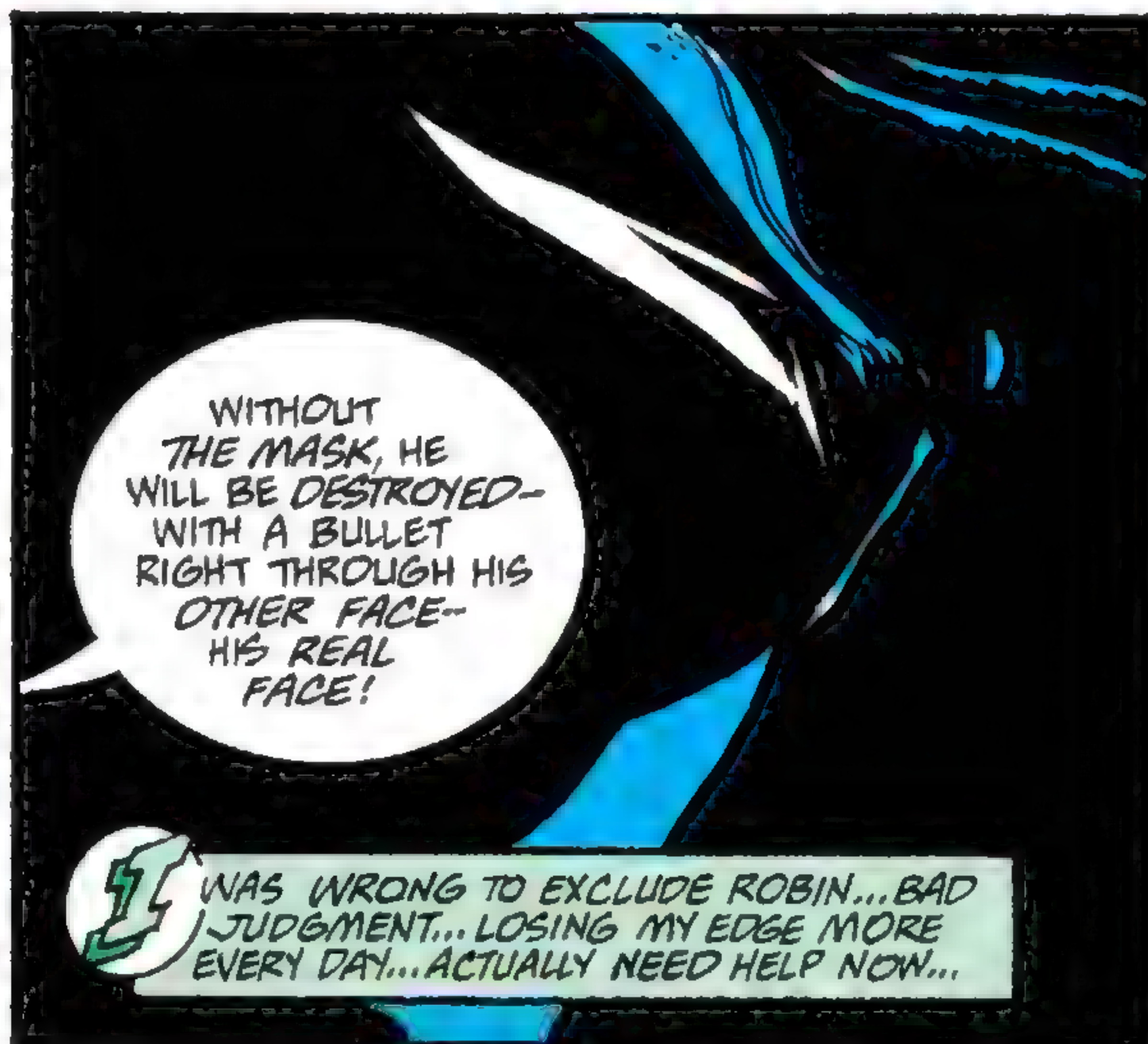


--AND THAT PUNISHMENT WILL BE PRECEDED BY NOTHING LESS THAN THE REMOVAL OF HIS MASK--THE STRIPPING AWAY OF THE SECOND FACE BEHIND WHICH HE HIDES!



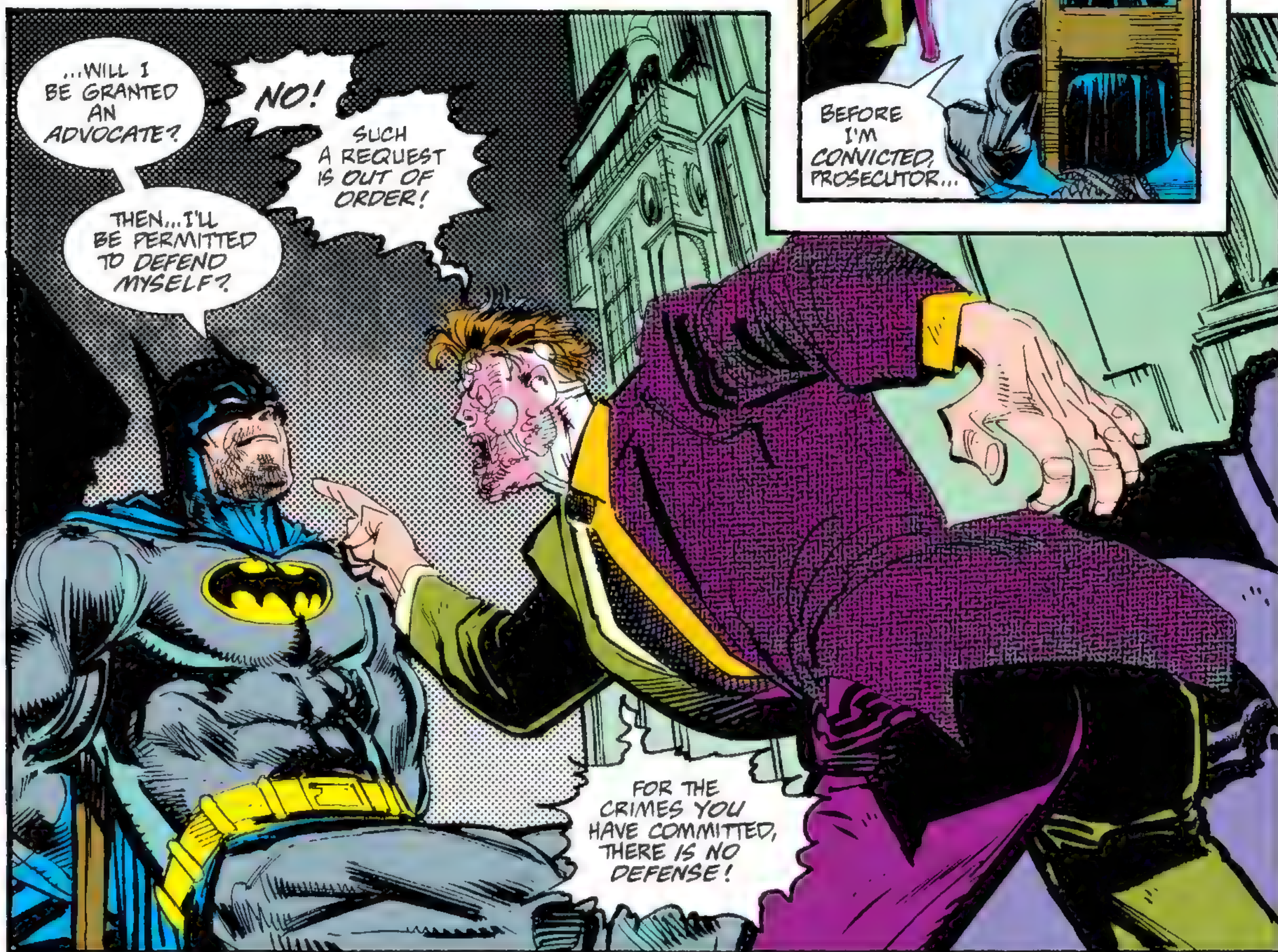
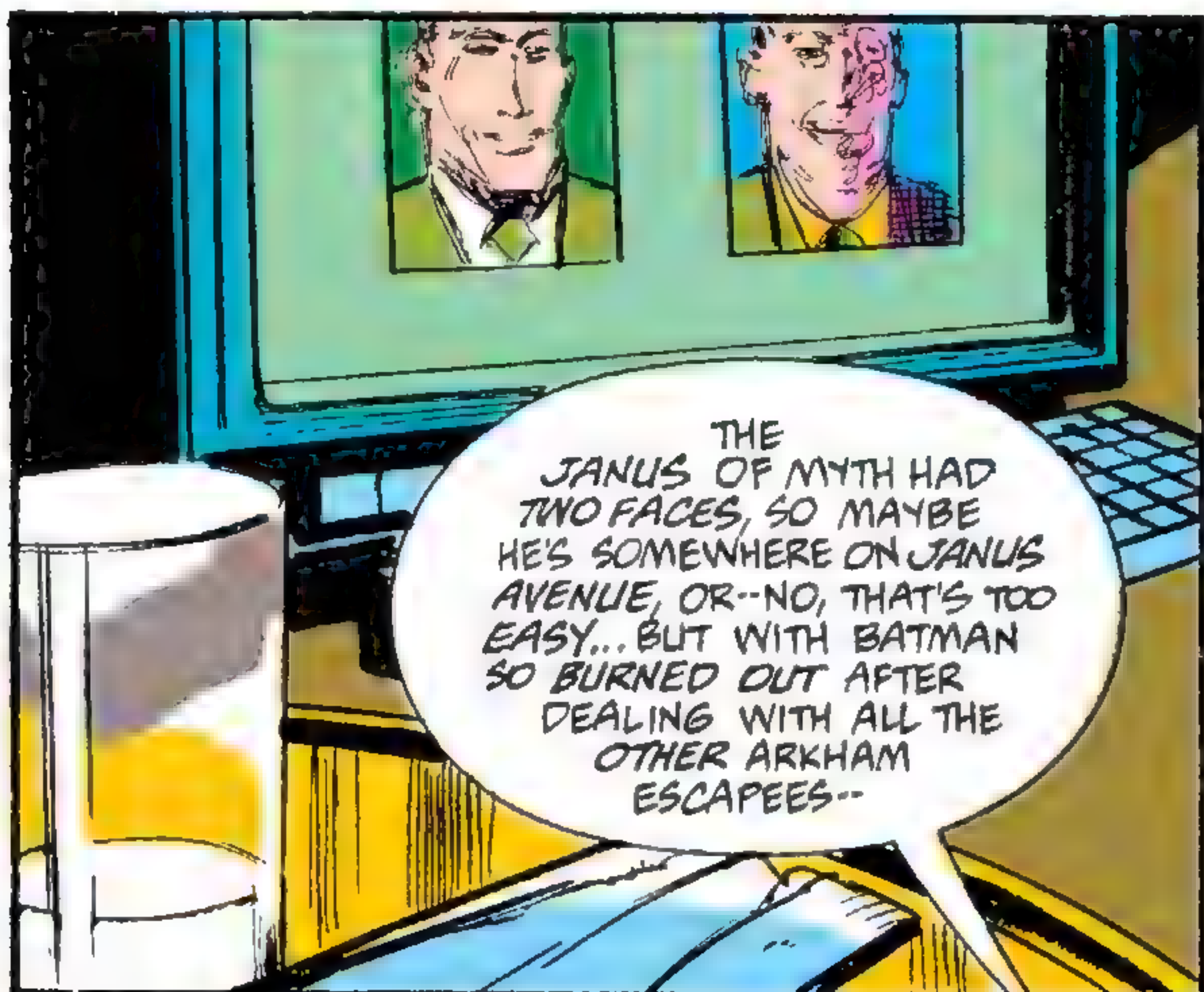
WITHOUT THE MASK, HIS SINS WILL NO LONGER BE COVERED UP! THEY WILL BE NAKED FOR ALL TO SEE!

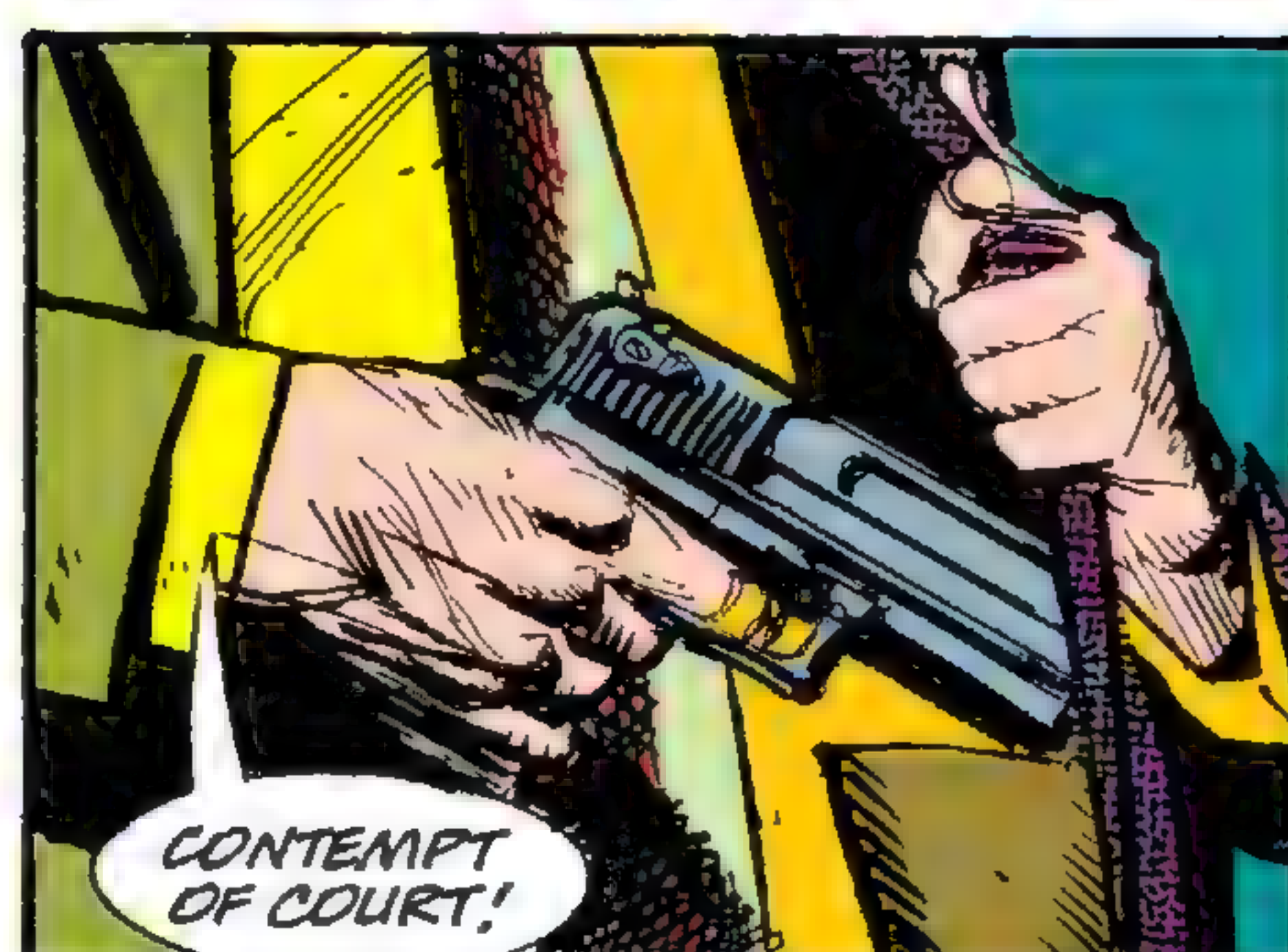
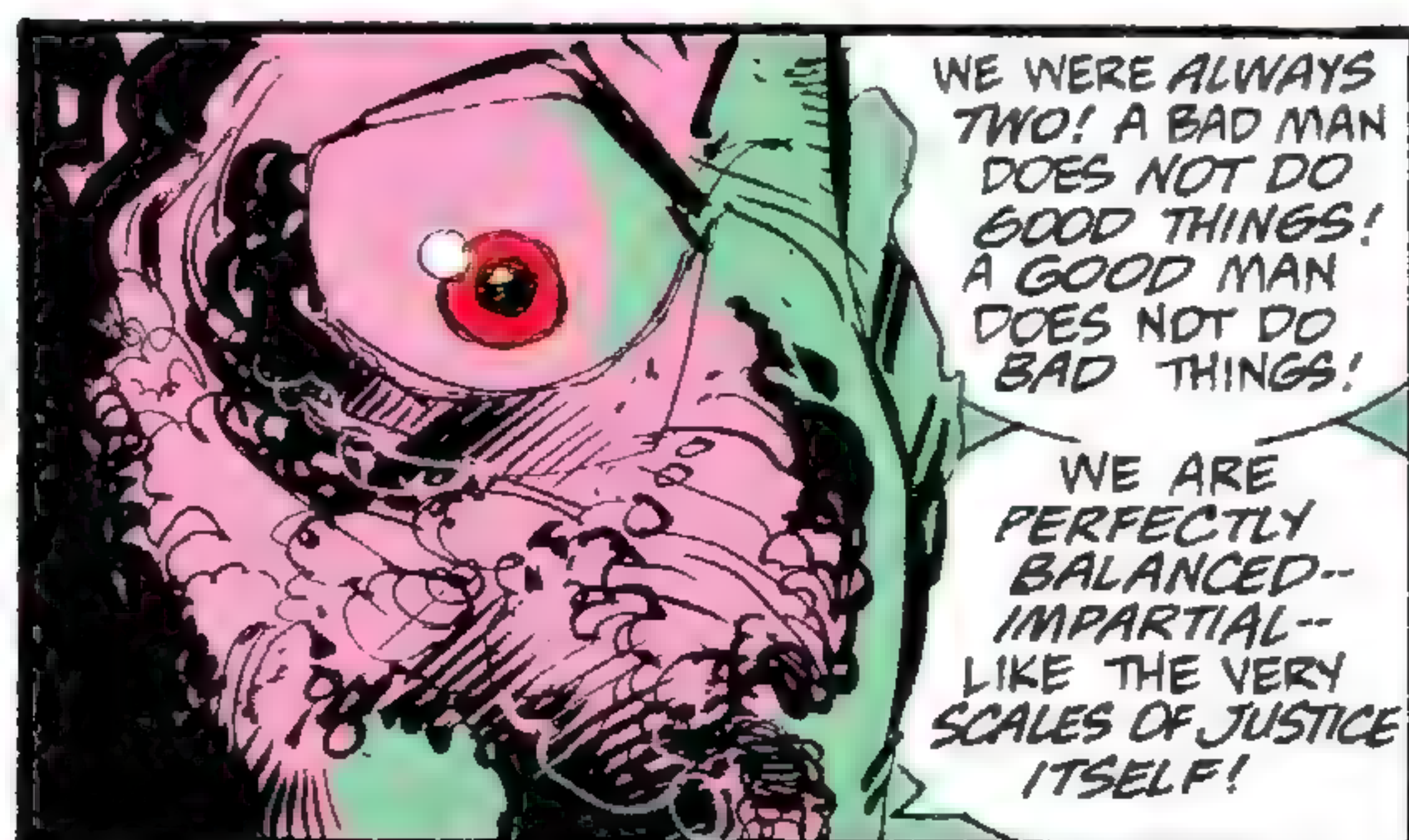
WITHOUT THE MASK, HE WILL BE EXPOSED FOR WHAT HE TRULY IS!

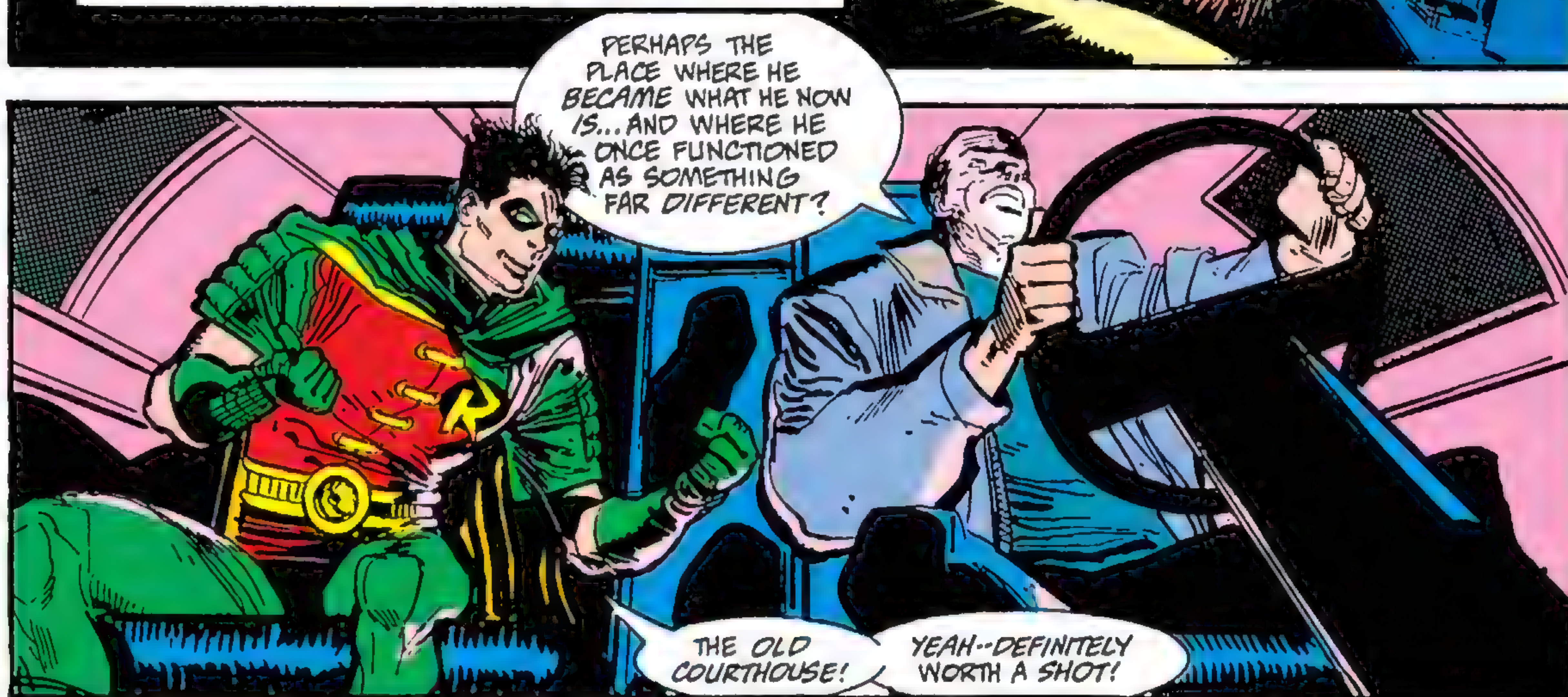
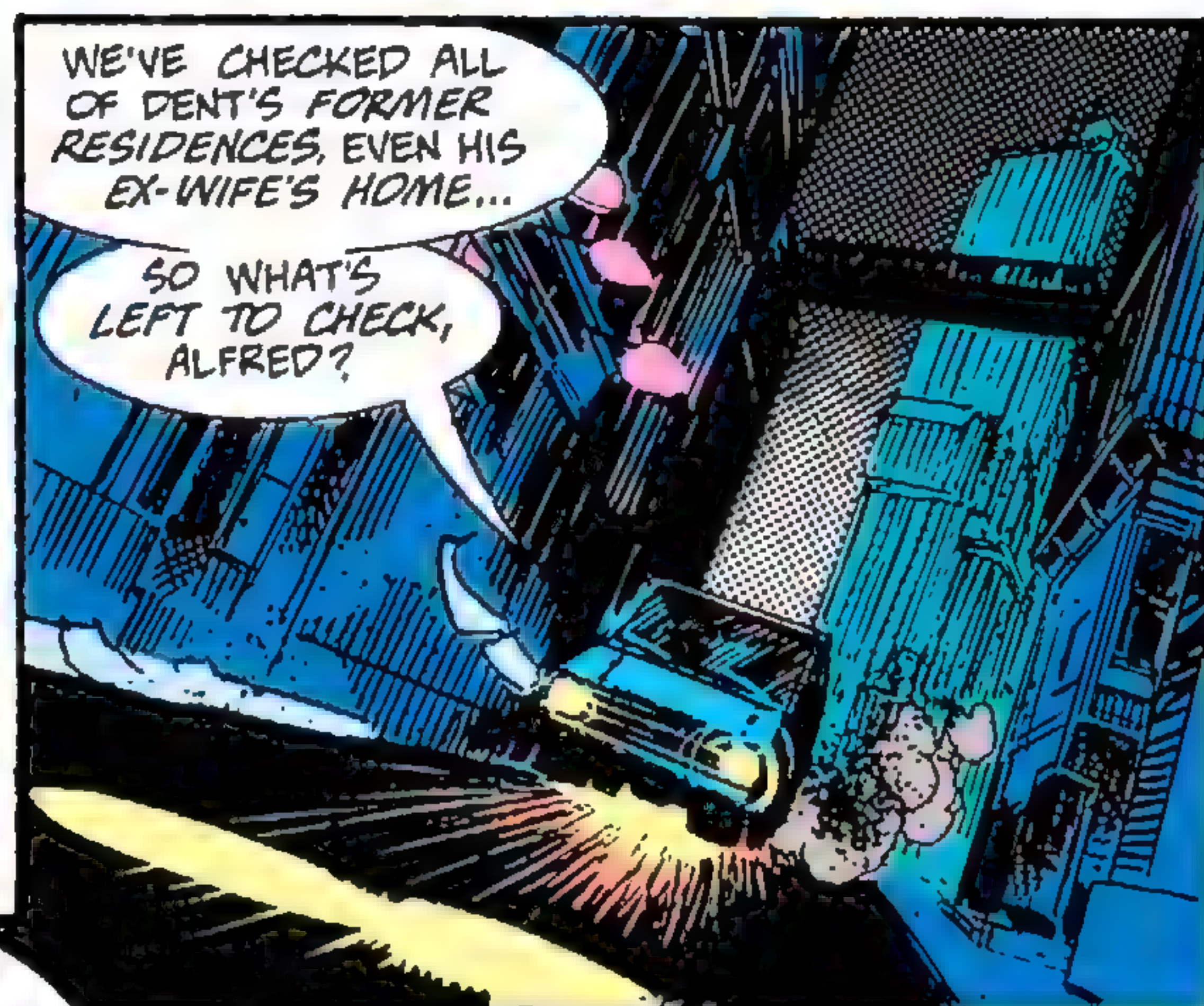
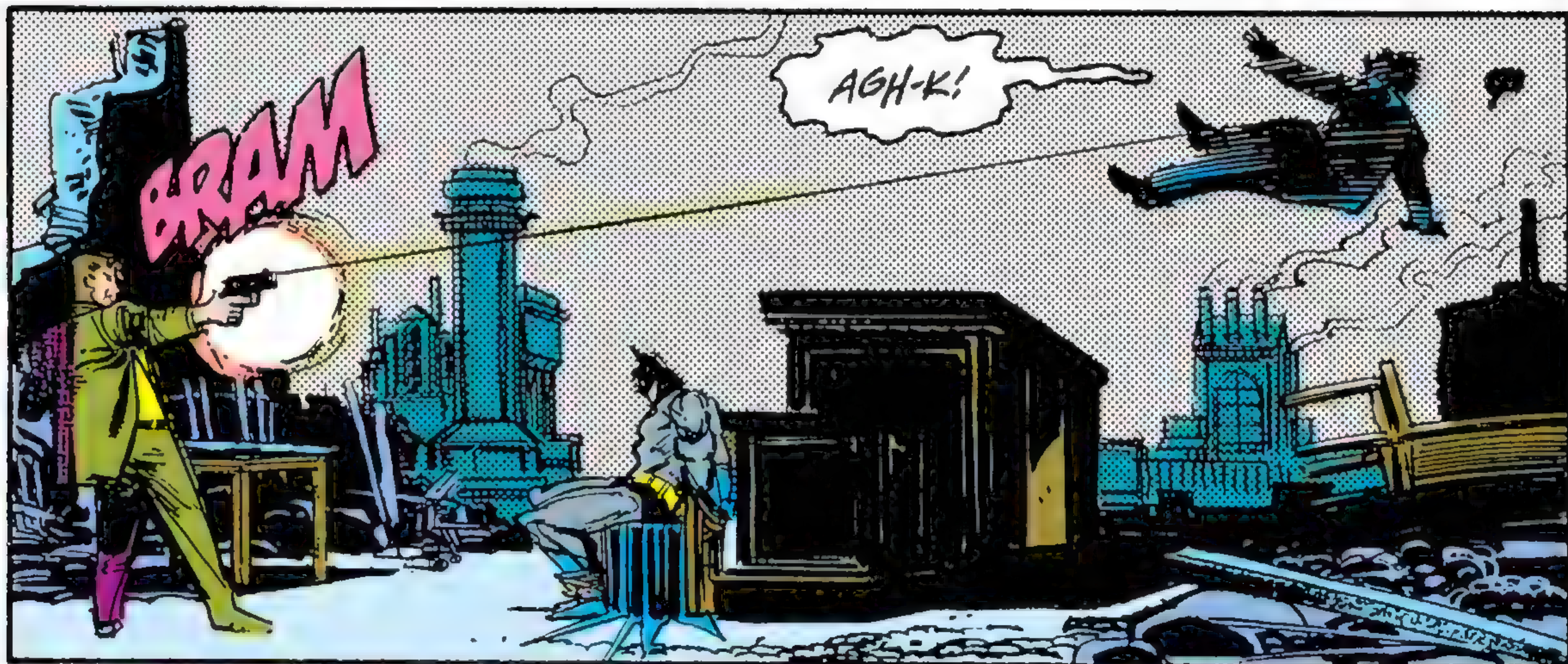


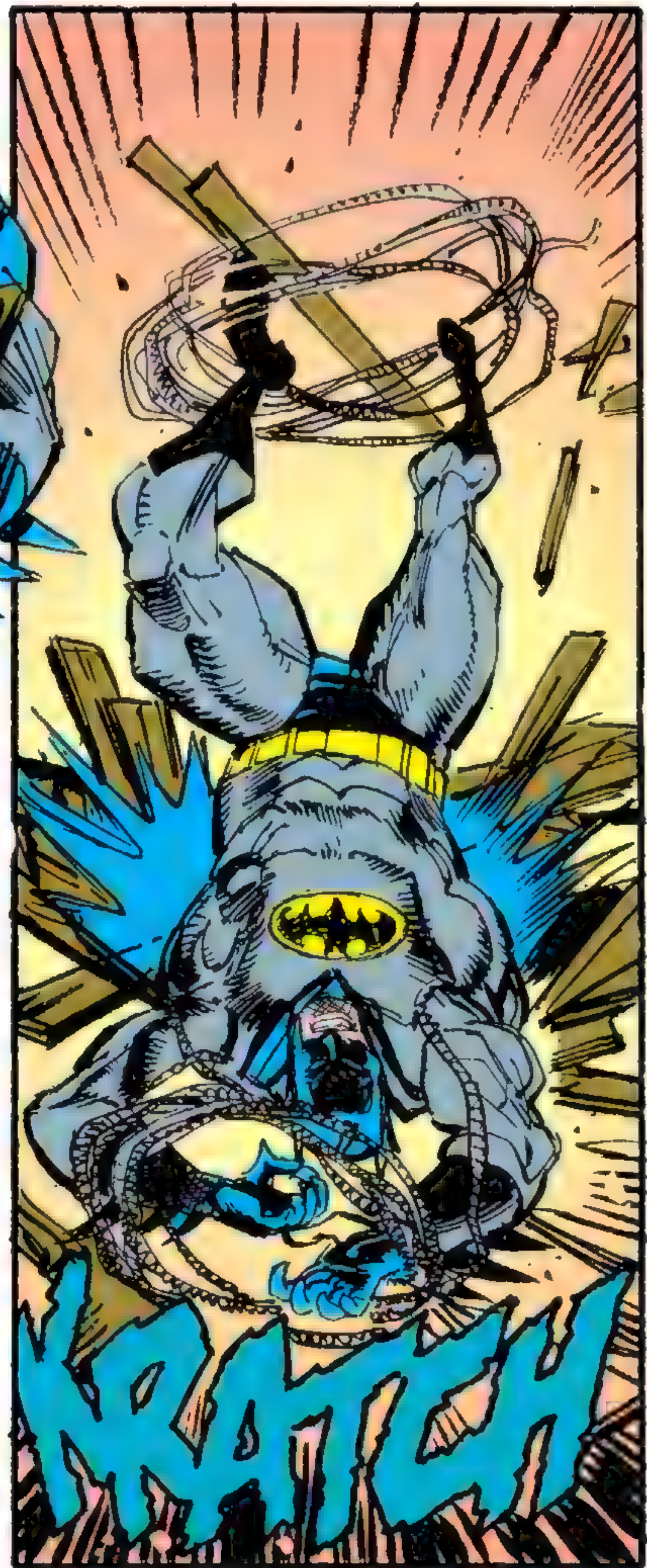
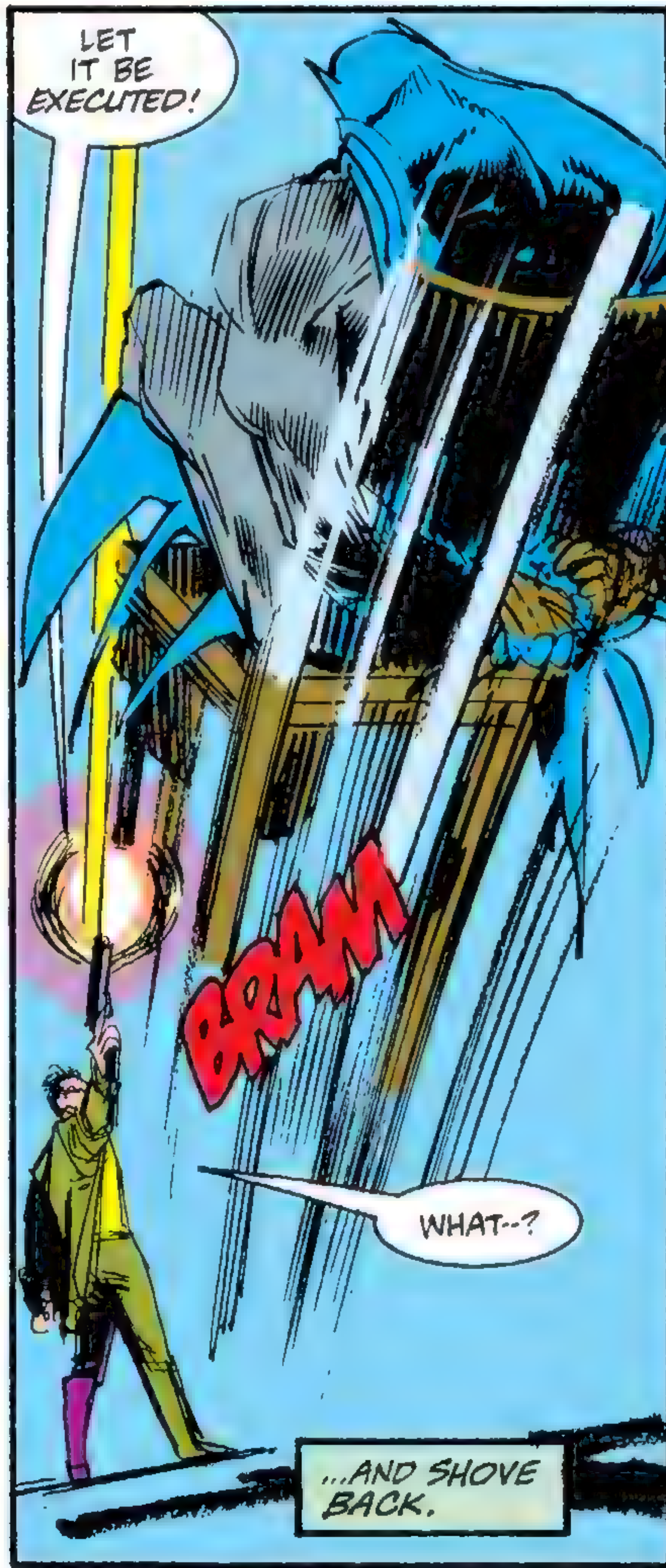
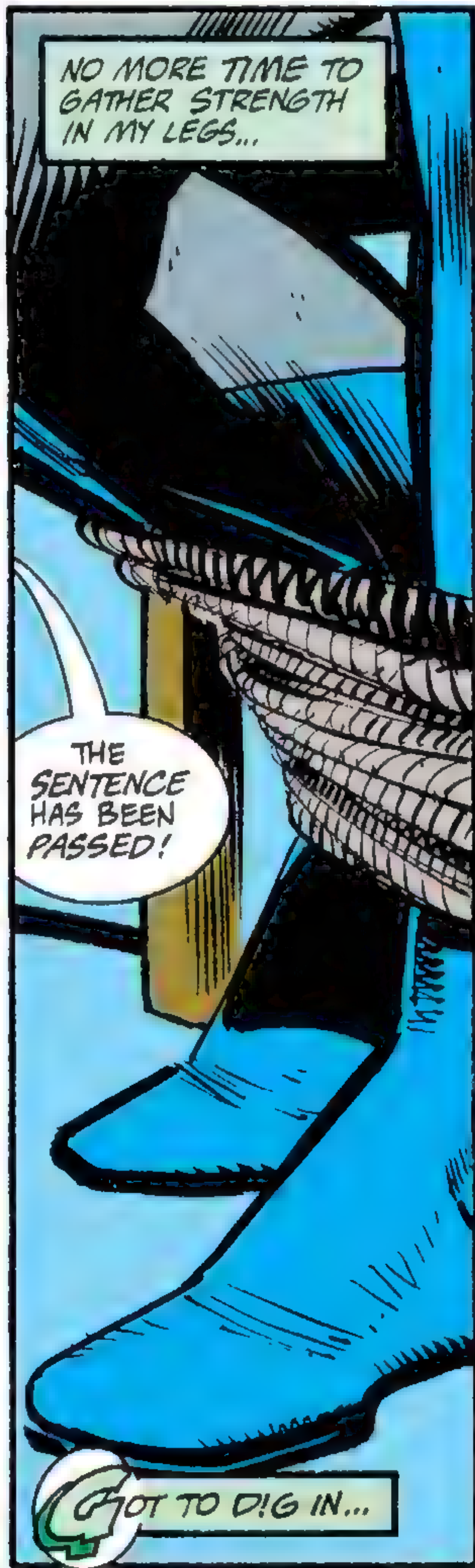
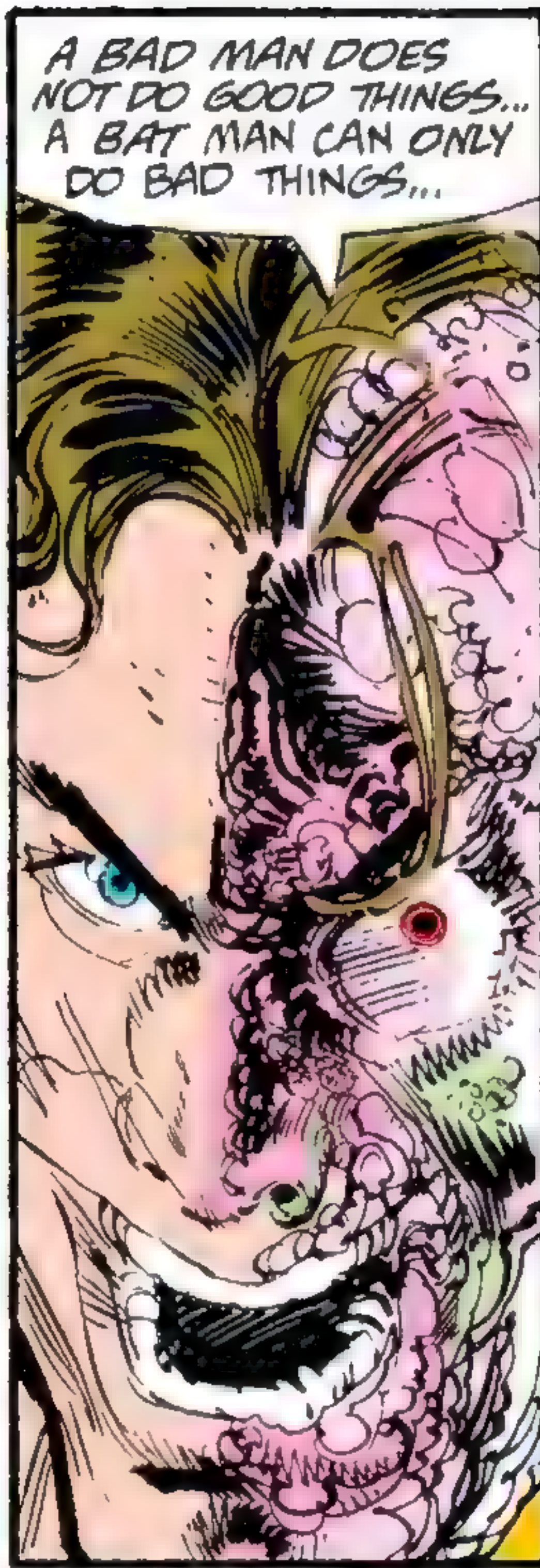
WITHOUT THE MASK, HE WILL BE DESTROYED-- WITH A BULLET RIGHT THROUGH HIS OTHER FACE-- HIS REAL FACE!

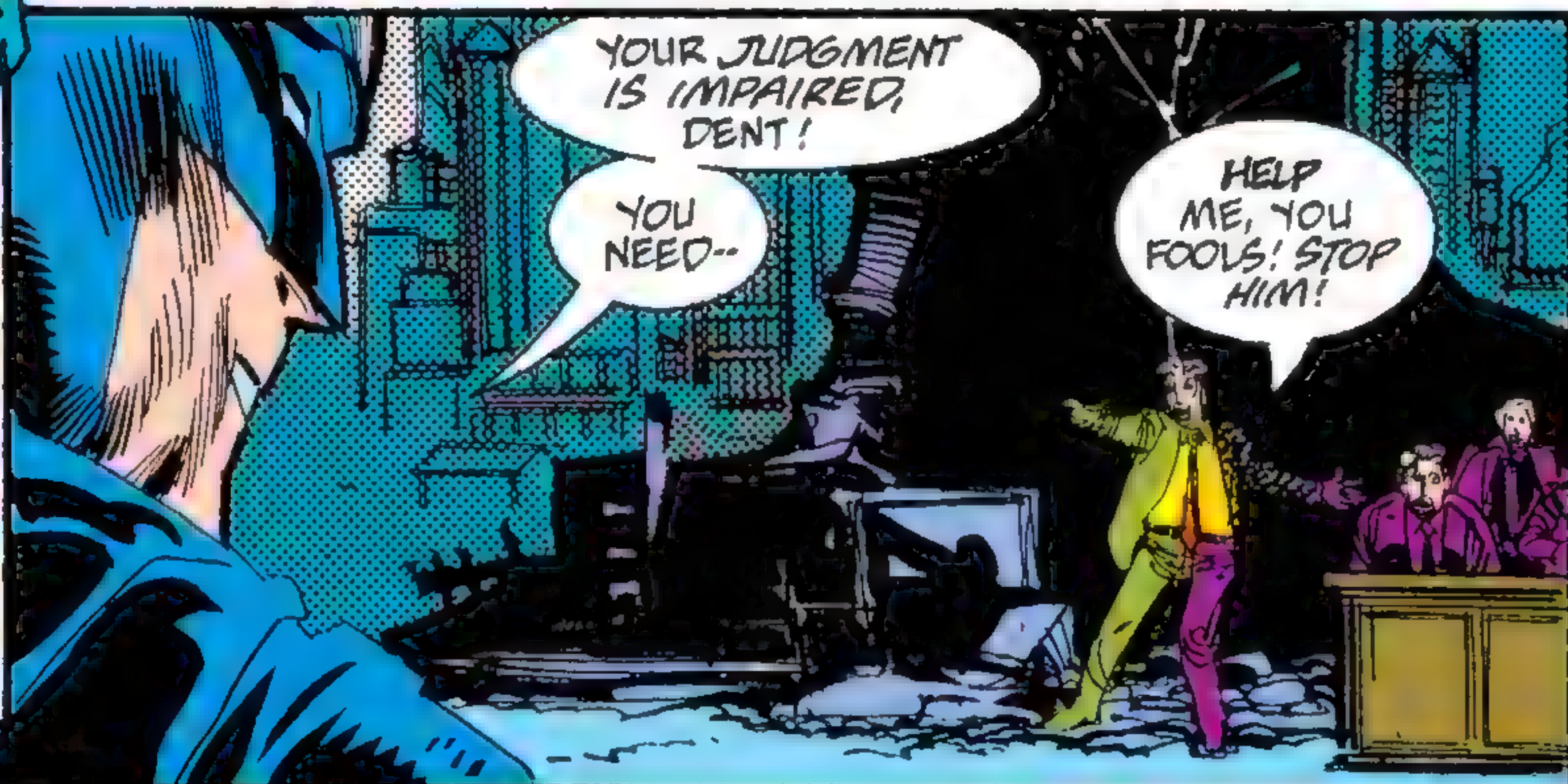
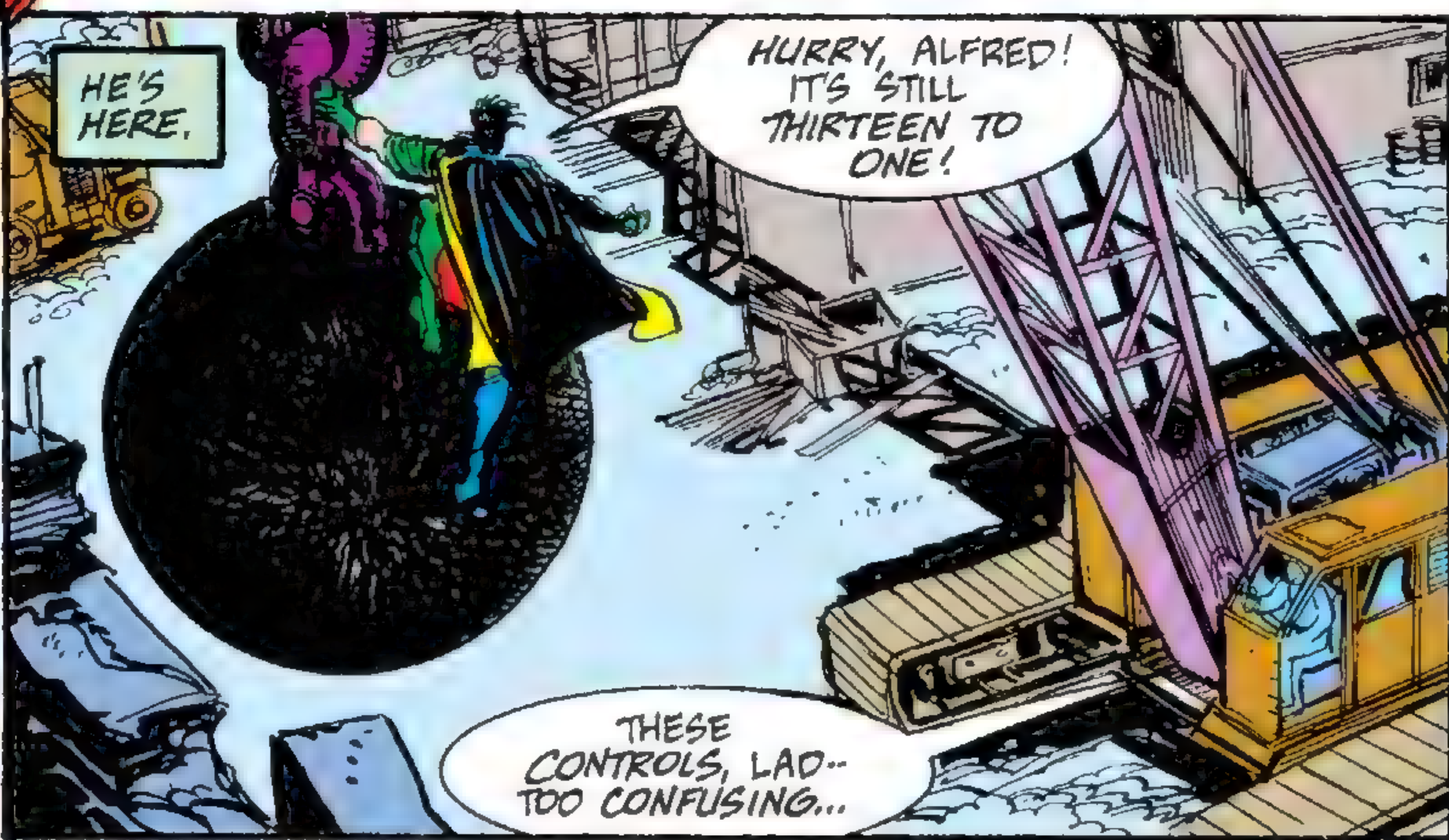
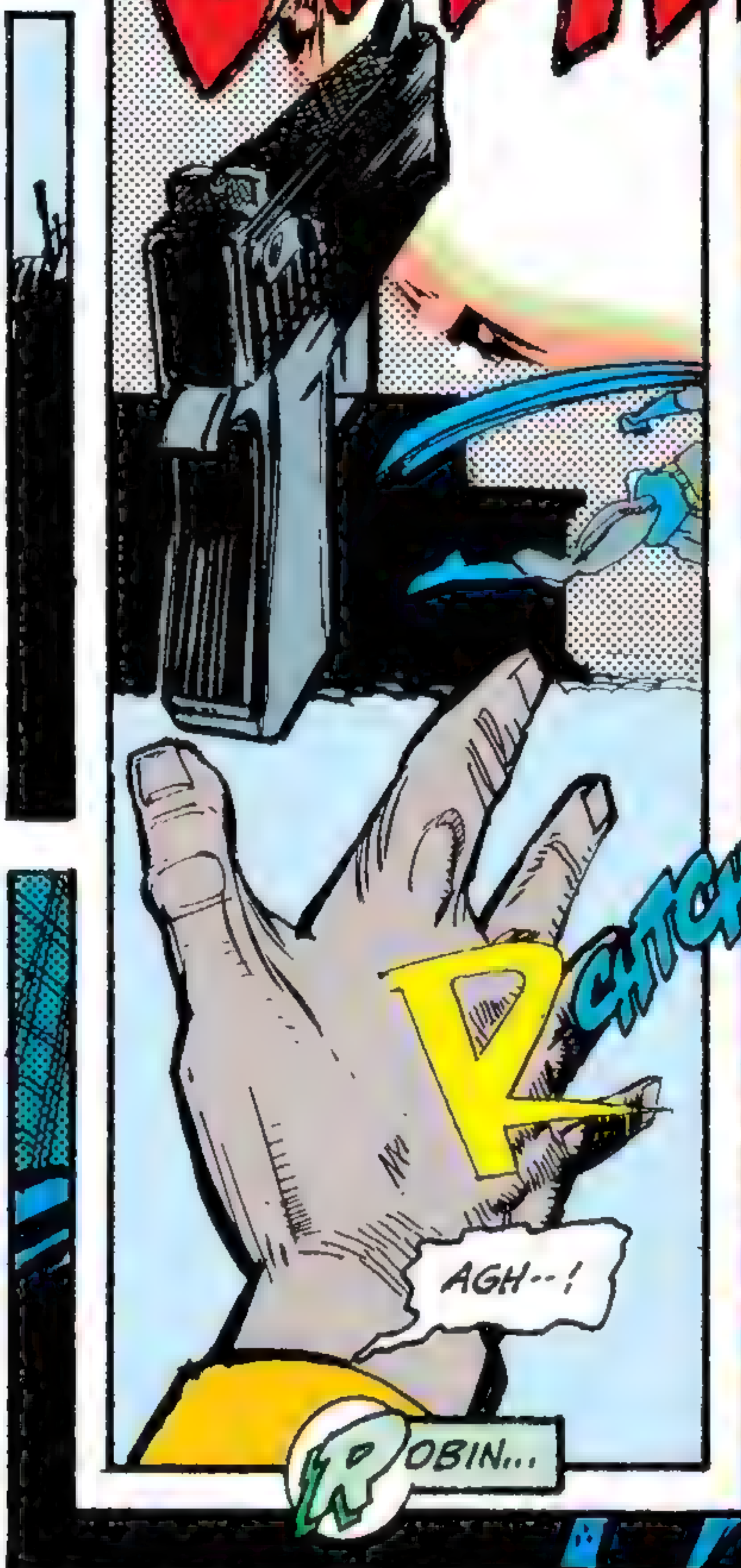
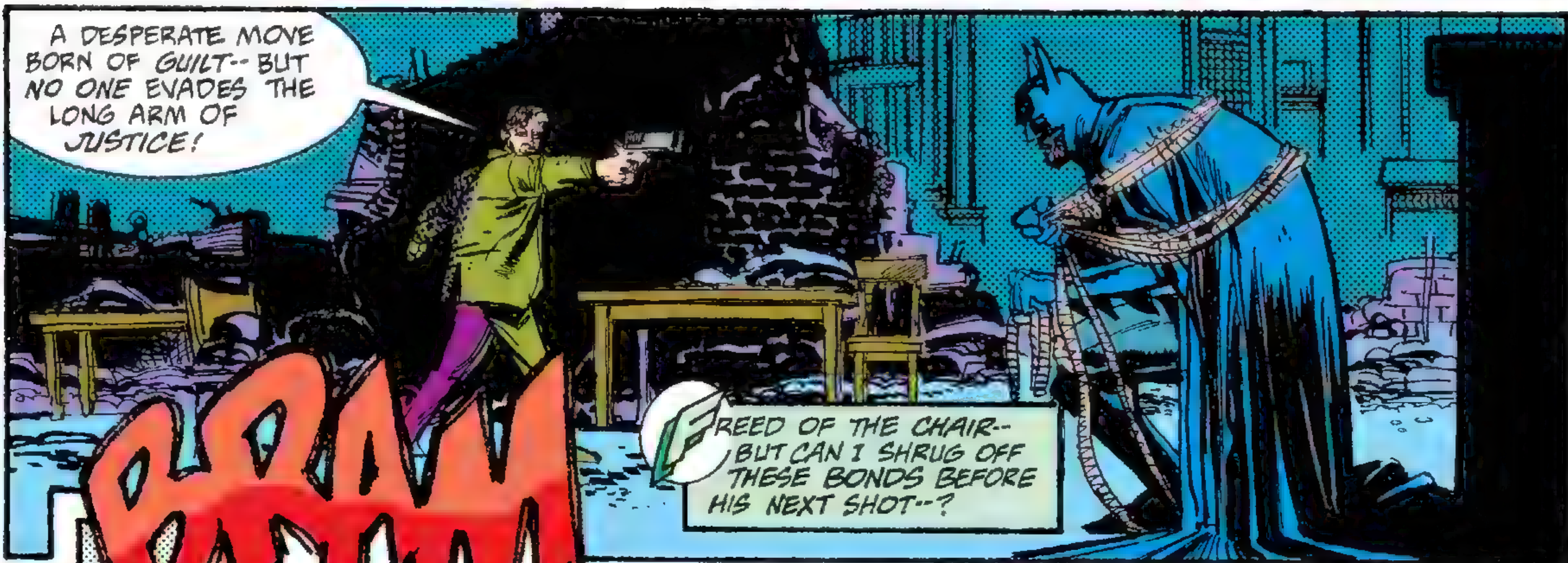
I WAS WRONG TO EXCLUDE ROBIN...BAD JUDGMENT... LOSING MY EDGE MORE EVERY DAY... ACTUALLY NEED HELP NOW...

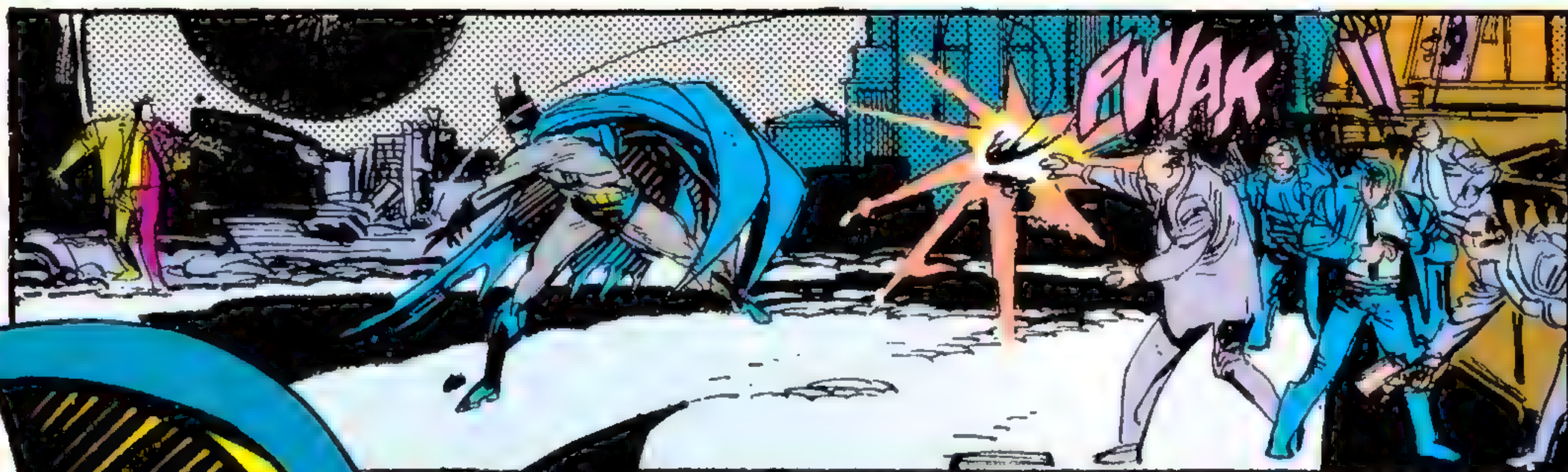


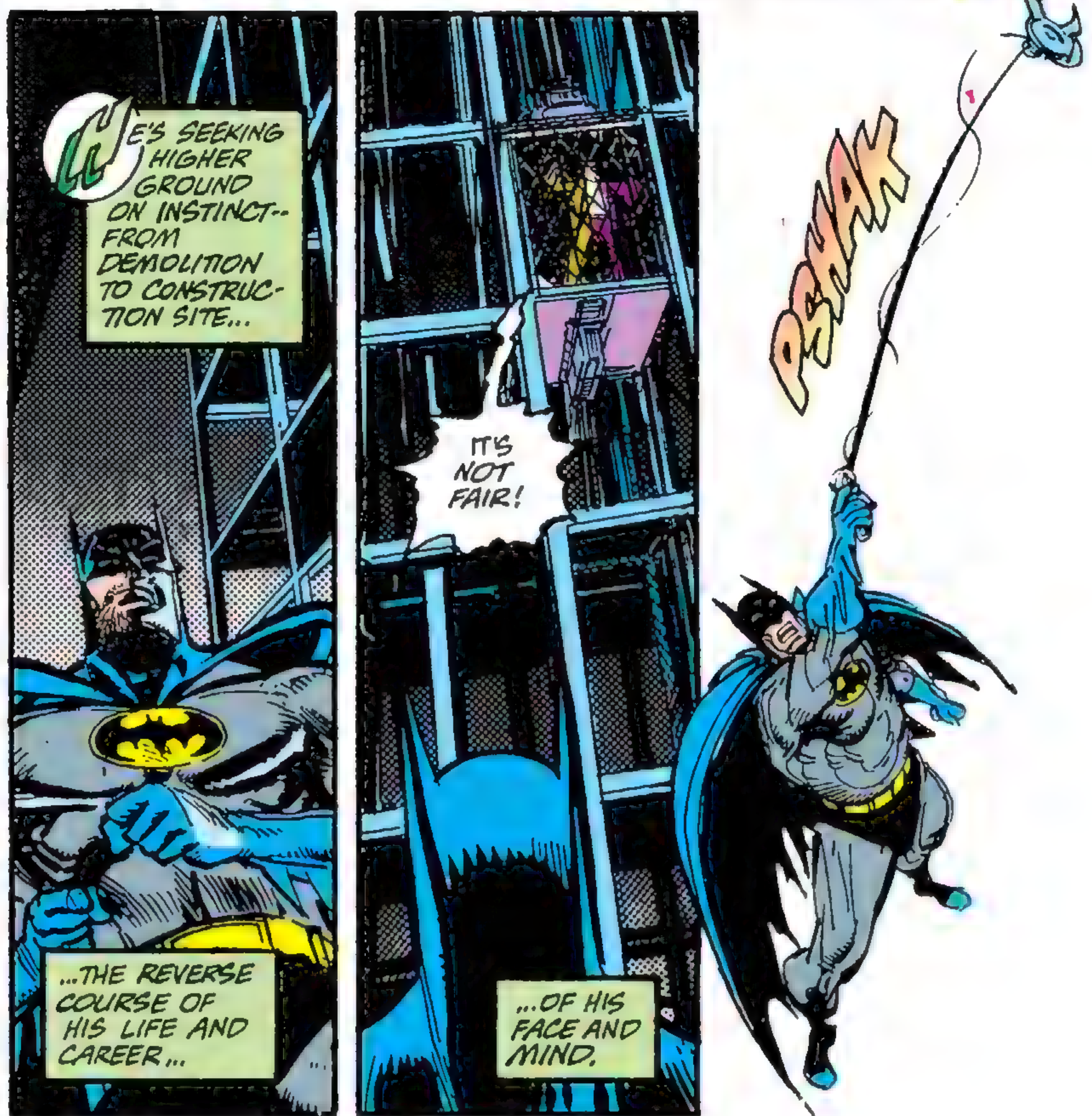


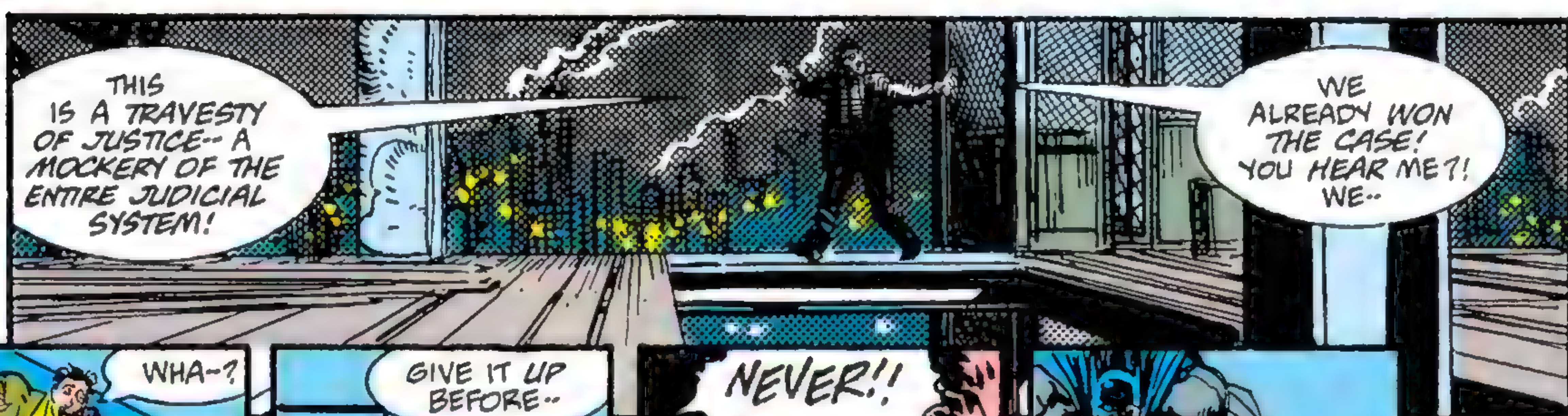
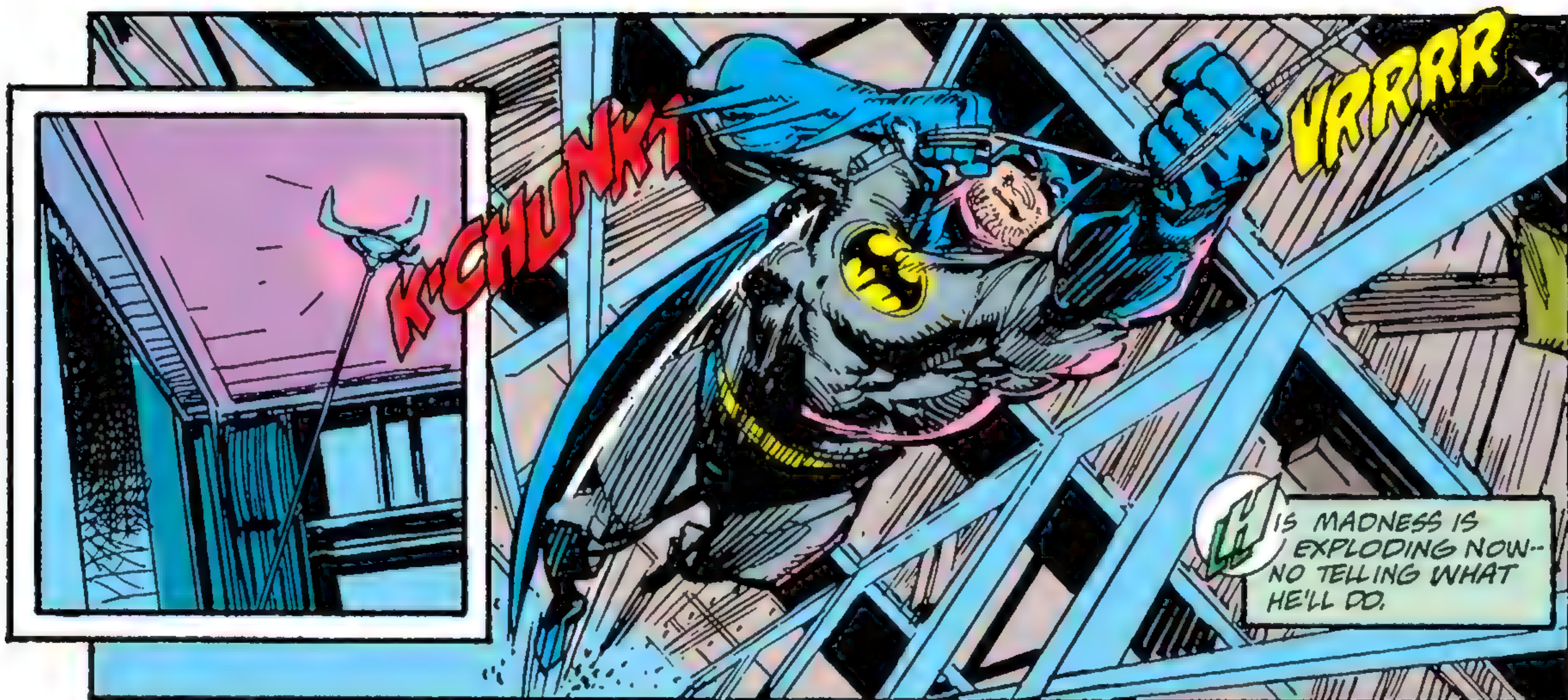


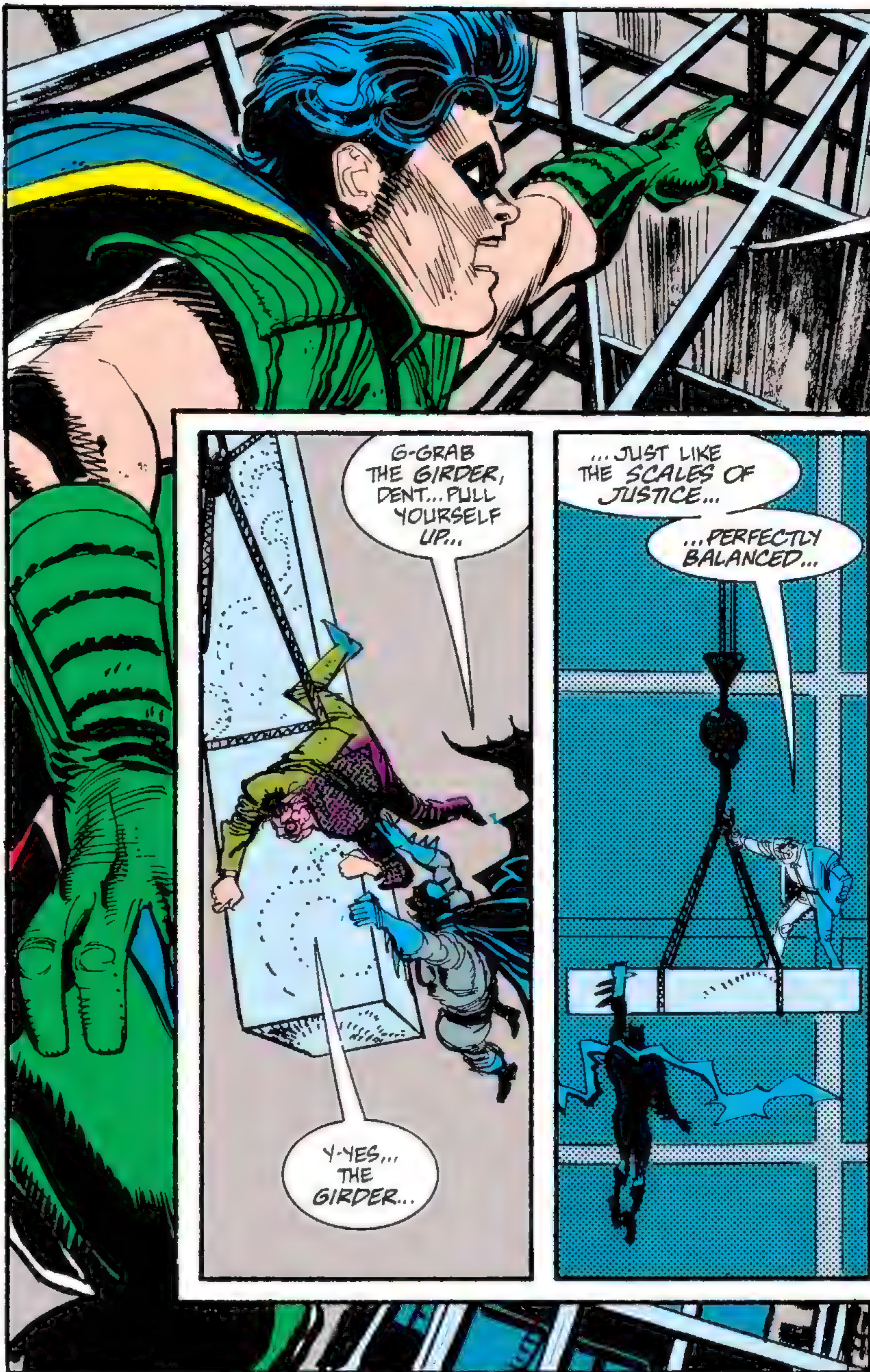
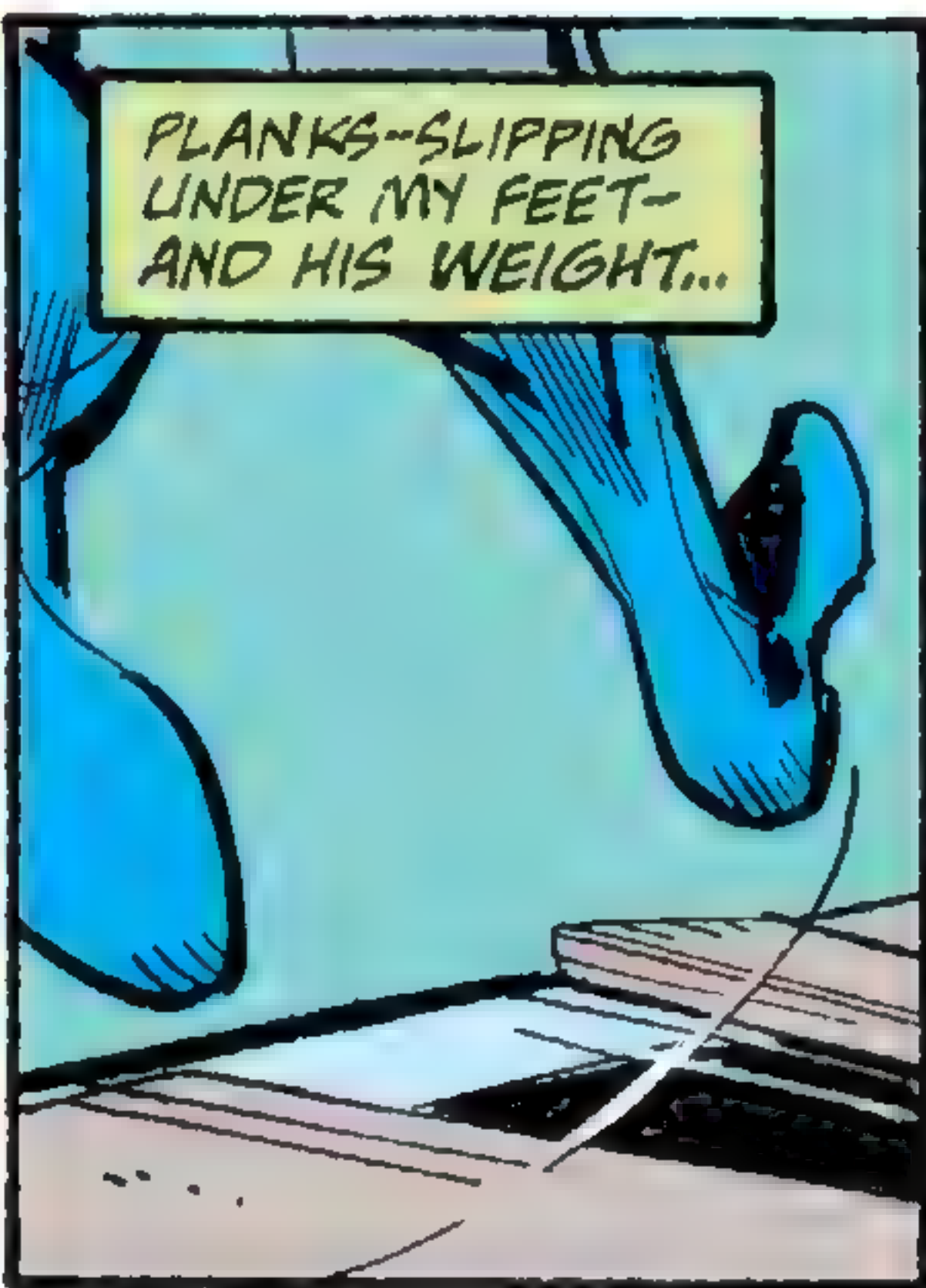




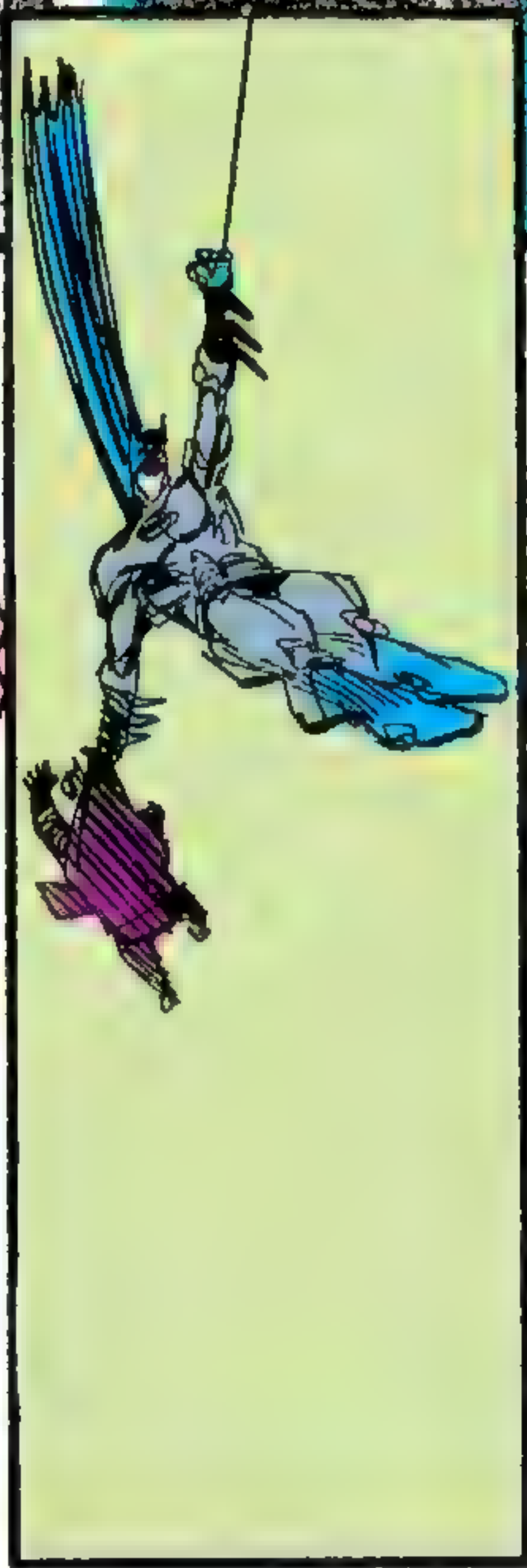
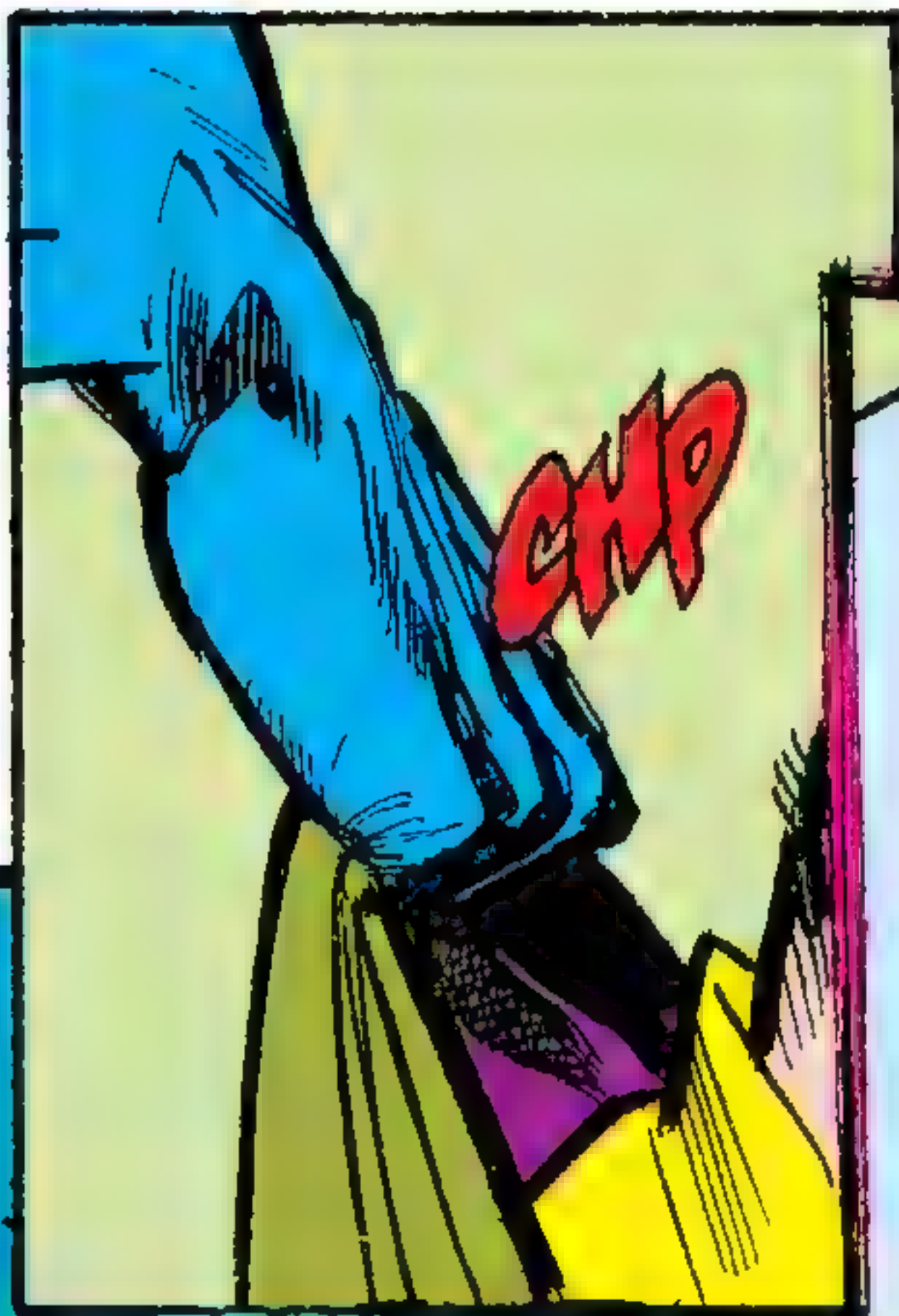


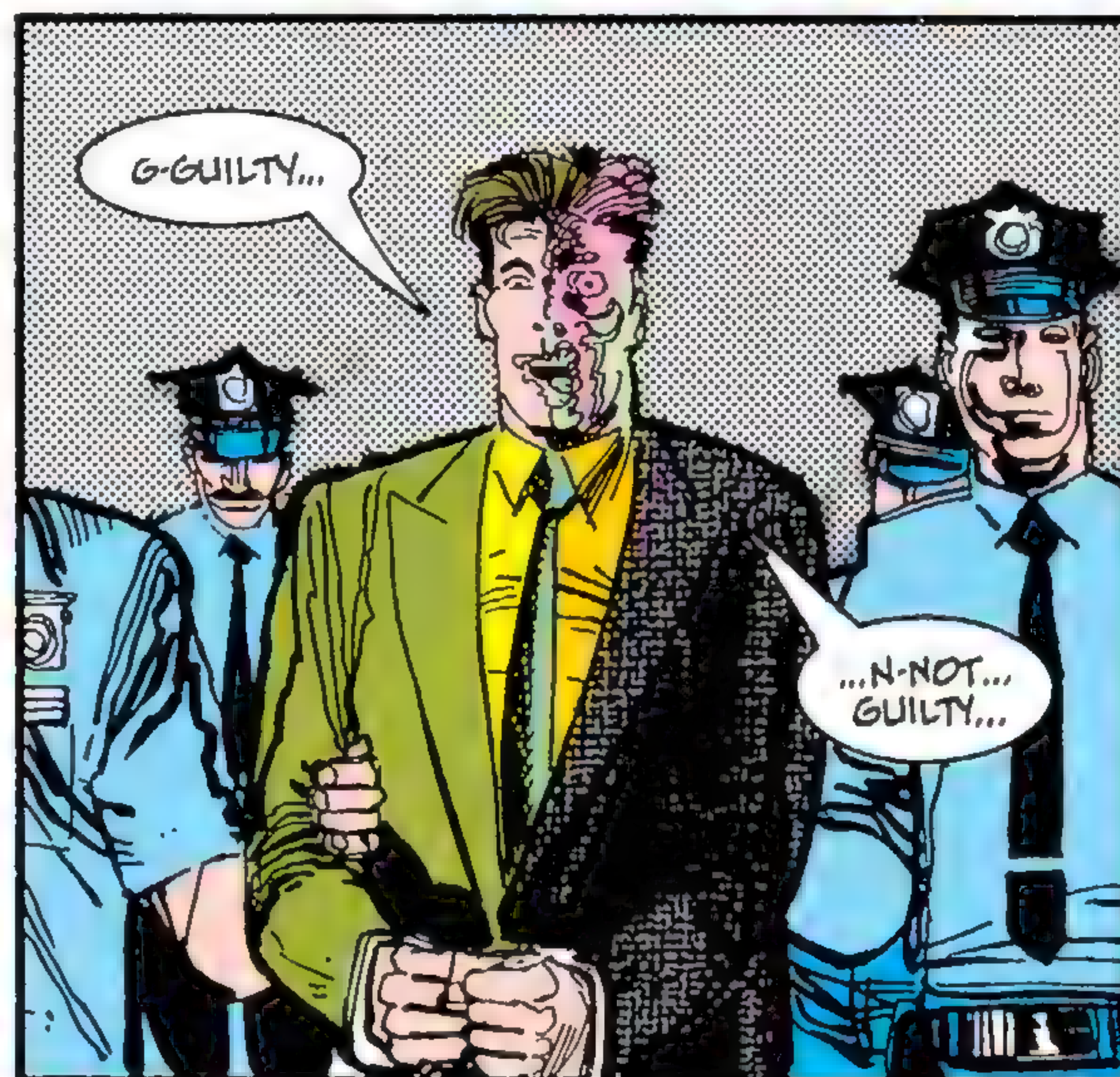
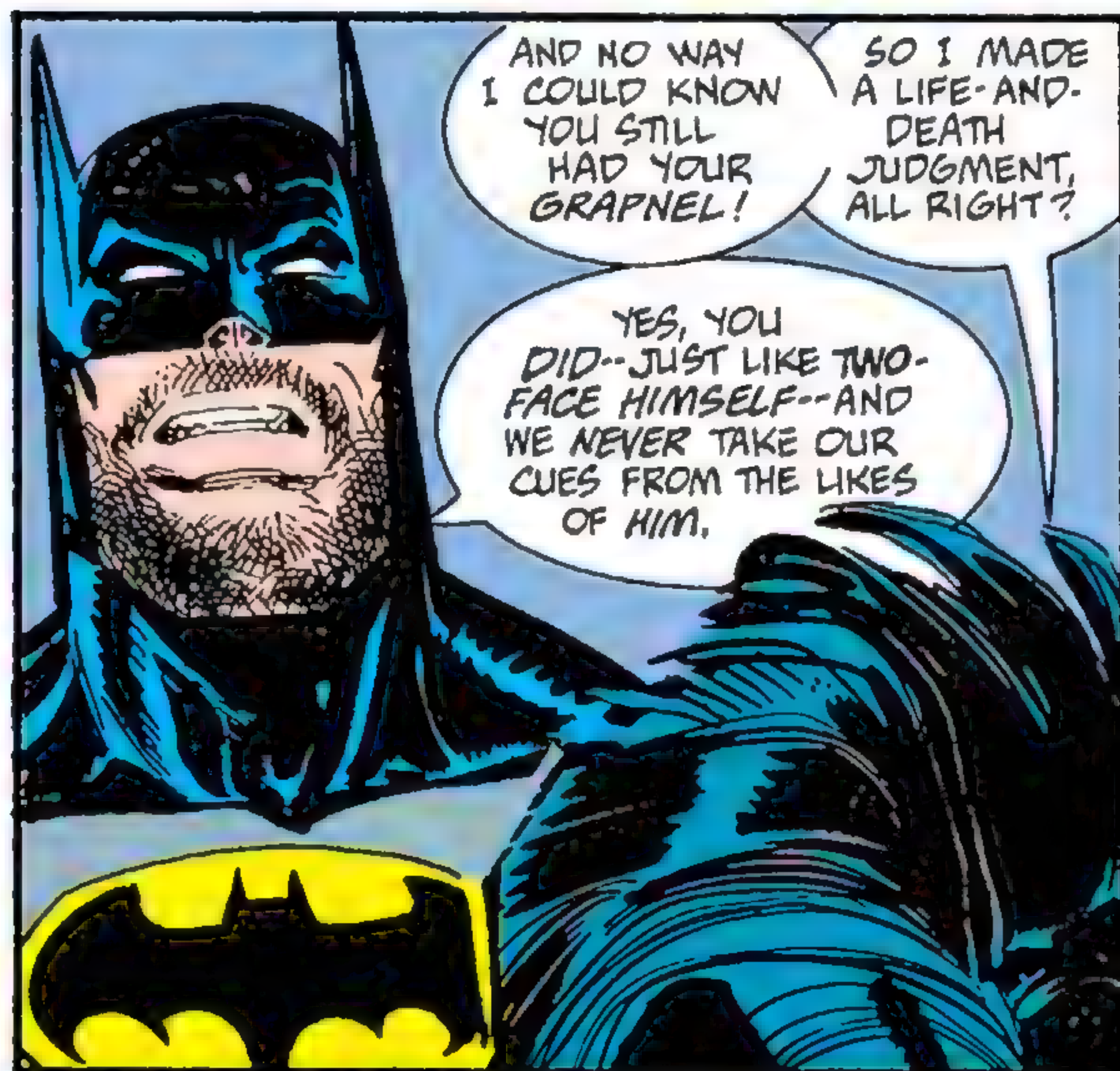
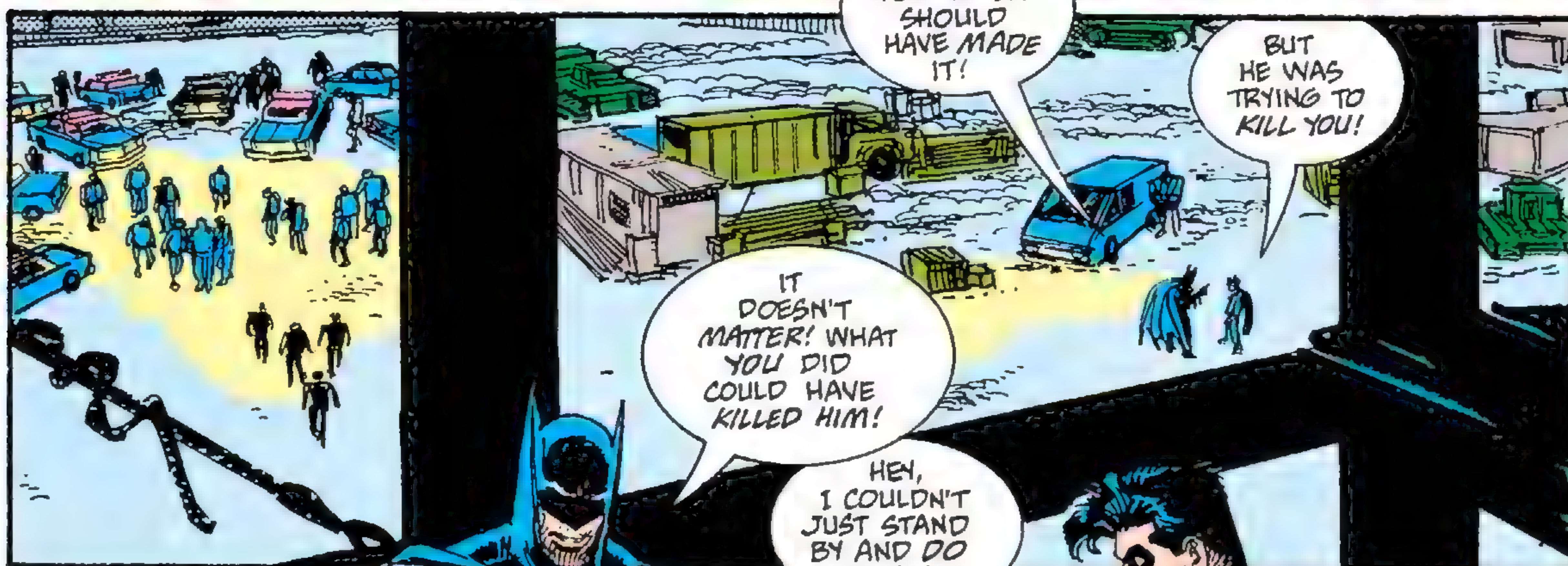














THE CAVE, WHERE THE DARK KNIGHT LIES FALLEN AND SILENT, THREE WEEKS LATER...

ALL MY FAULT... SHOULD HAVE ACTED SOONER...

...NO MATTER WHAT HE SAID...



AND NOW... WHAT IF HE... IF HE DOESN'T WAKE UP?

ONE OF OUR LAST MEMORIES COULD BE... HIM BLAMING ME... BLAMING ME FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS...



PLEASE, SIR... YOU'RE STRONGER THAN THIS...

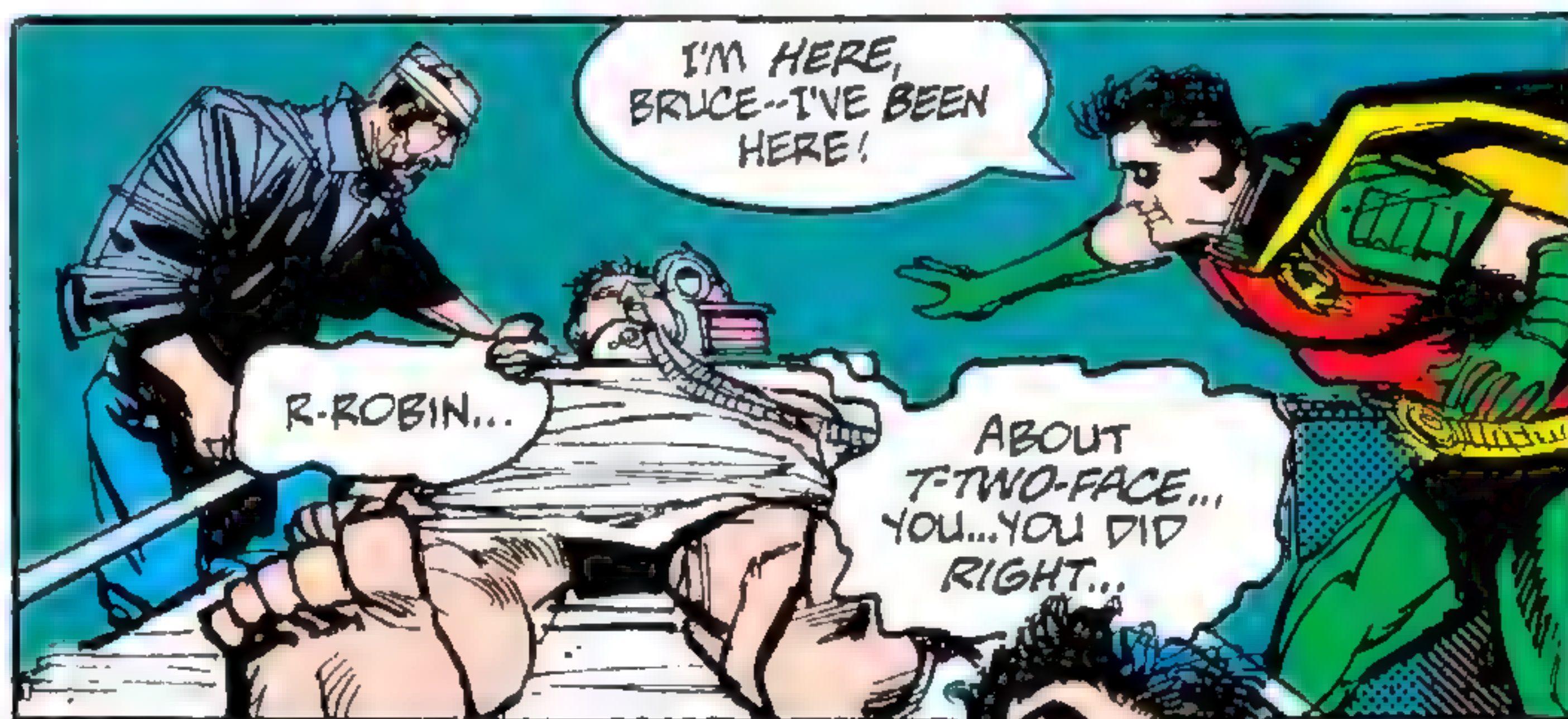
I... I KNOW YOU ARE.



A-ALFRED?

THE DECADRON-- IT WORKED!

YOU'RE BACK, SIR-- THANK GOD, YOU'RE BACK!



I'M HERE, BRUCE-- I'VE BEEN HERE!

R-ROBIN...

ABOUT T-TWO-FACE... YOU... YOU DID RIGHT...



...AND IT... IT WASN'T BAD JUDGMENT... NOT AT ALL.

End


BATMAN
498
AUG 92

KNIGHTFALL™


15

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

BATMAN®



KNIGHTS IN DARKNESS



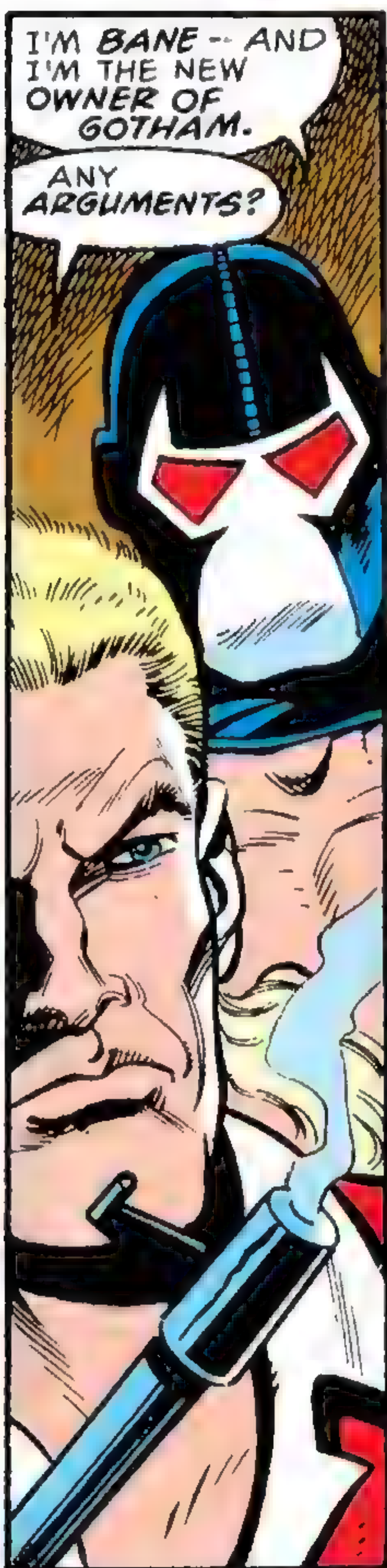
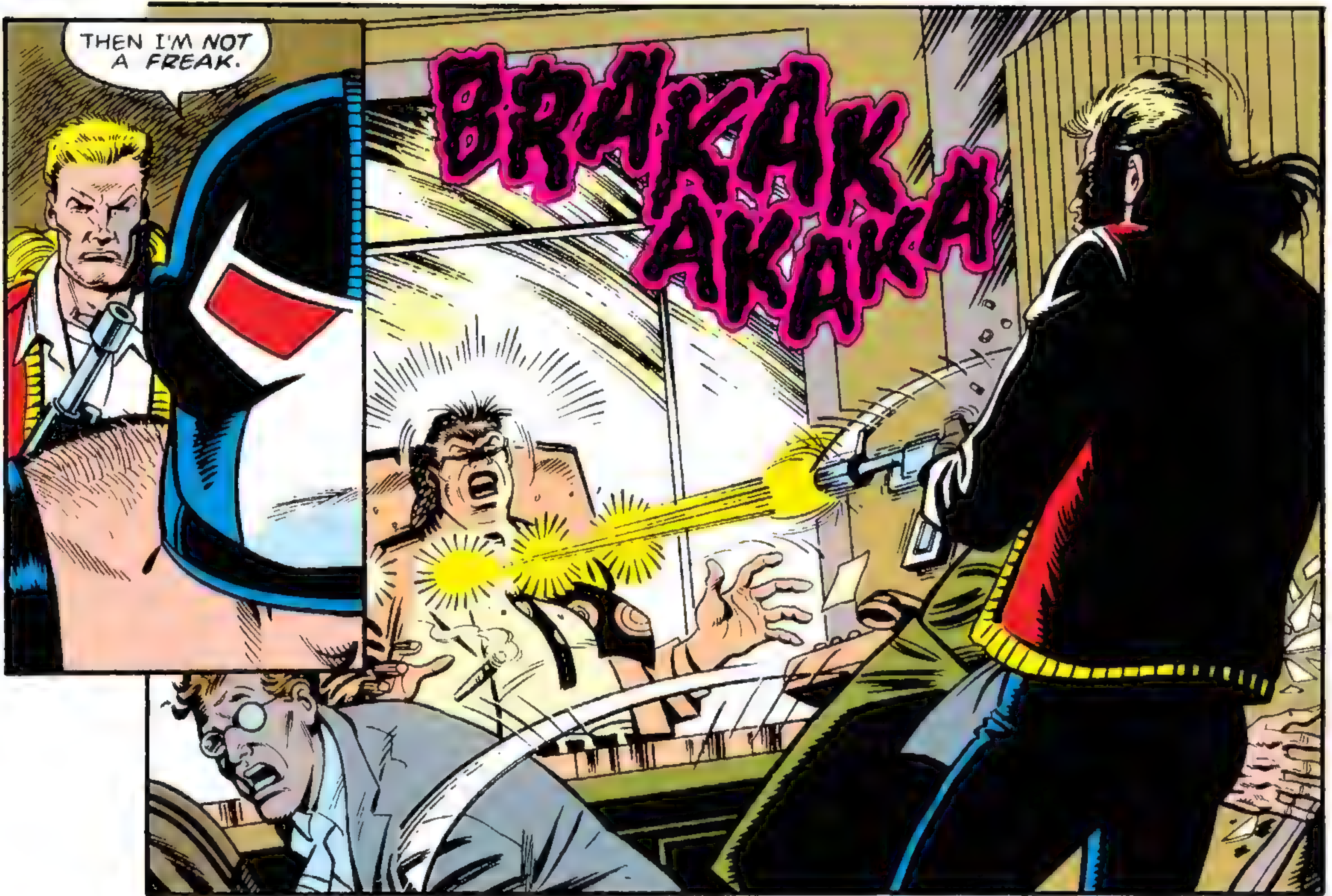
DOUG MOENCH WRITER **JIM APARO** PENCILLER **RICK BURCHETT** INKER

ADRIENNE ROY COLORIST **RICHARD STARKINGS** LETTERER

JORDAN B. GORFINKEL ASSISTANT EDITOR **DENNIS O'NEIL** EDITOR

BATMAN CREATED BY **BOB KANE**





I'M BANE -- AND I'M THE NEW OWNER OF GOTHAM.

ANY ARGUMENTS?



N-NO... NONE... W-WE... WE'LL BE GLAD TO WORK WITH YA...

WORK FOR ME.

UH... Y-YEAH... LIKE YOU S-SAID.



FIRST THING: WE TAKE OUT ALL THE OTHER GANGS.

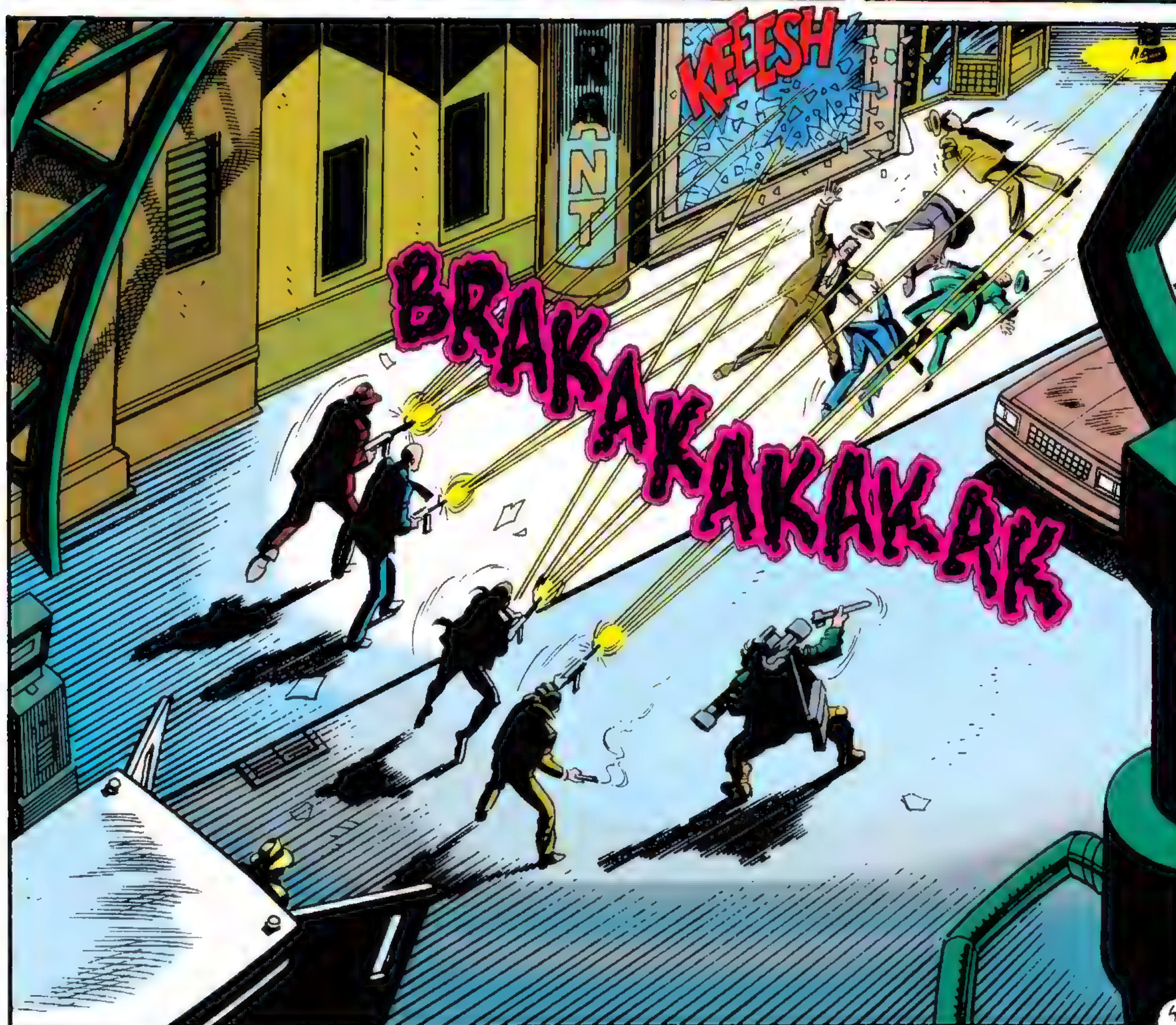
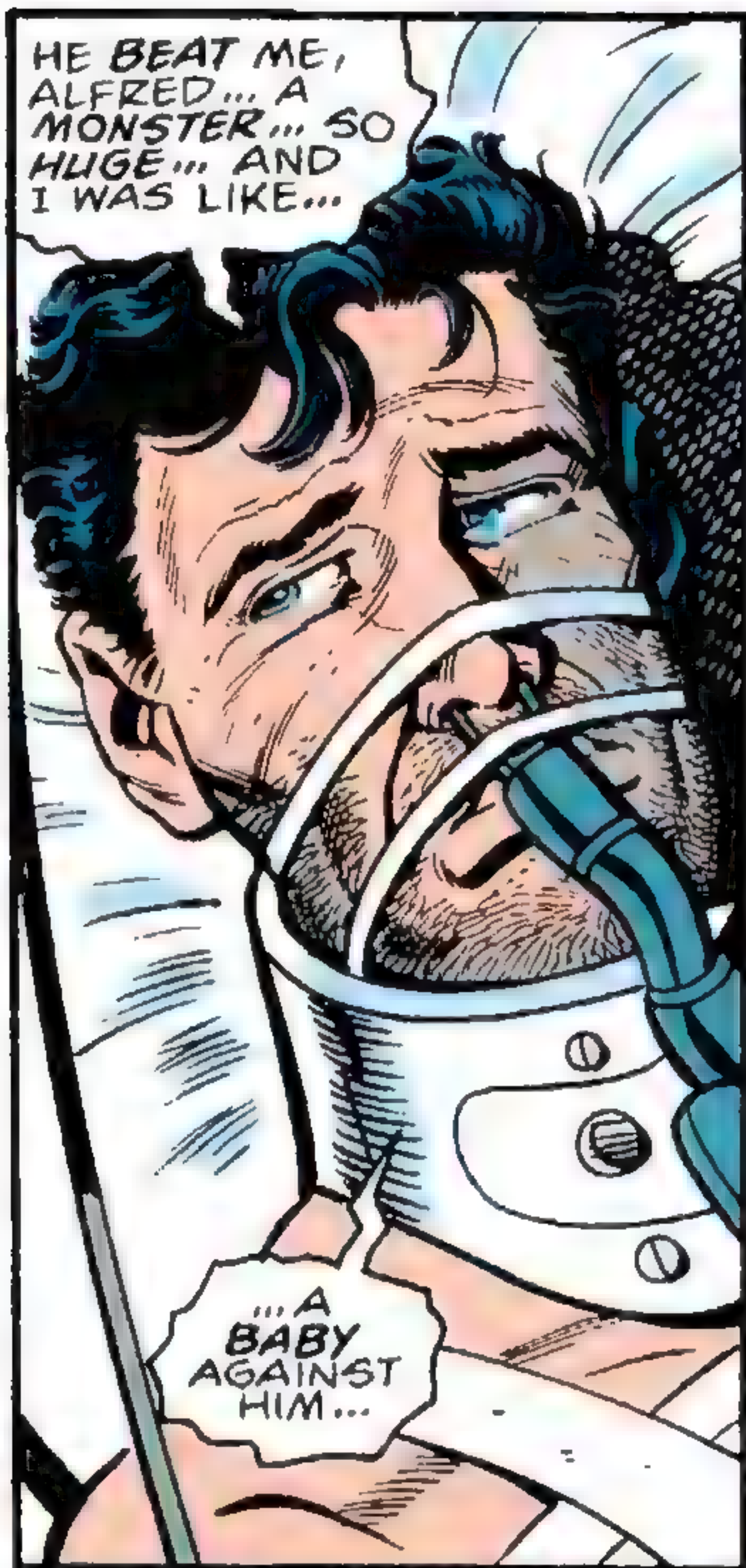
BUT THERE AIN'T NO N-NEED FOR THAT... WE JUST MADE PEACE, CARVED UP ALL ACTION IN THE CITY-- PLENTY FOR EVERYONE...

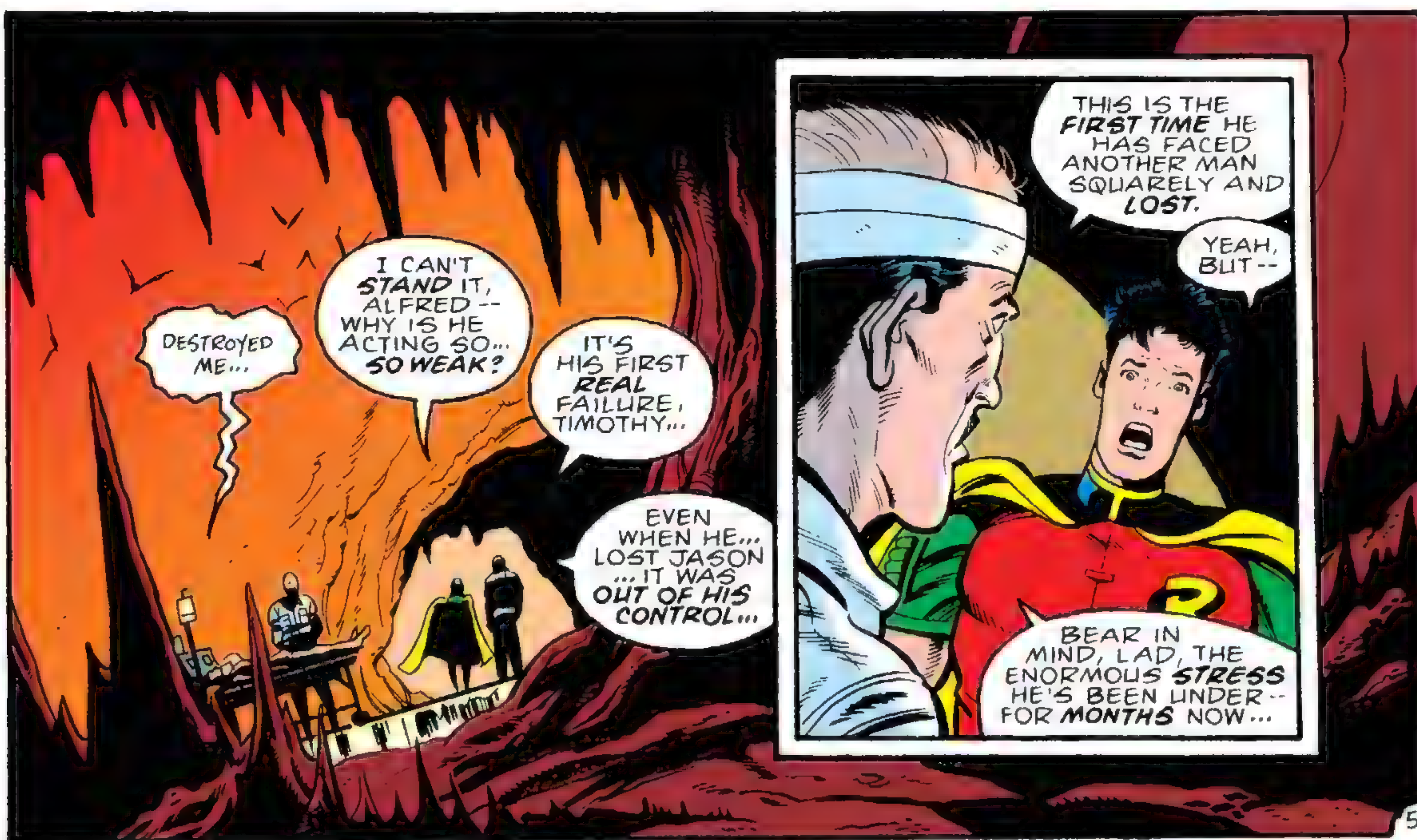
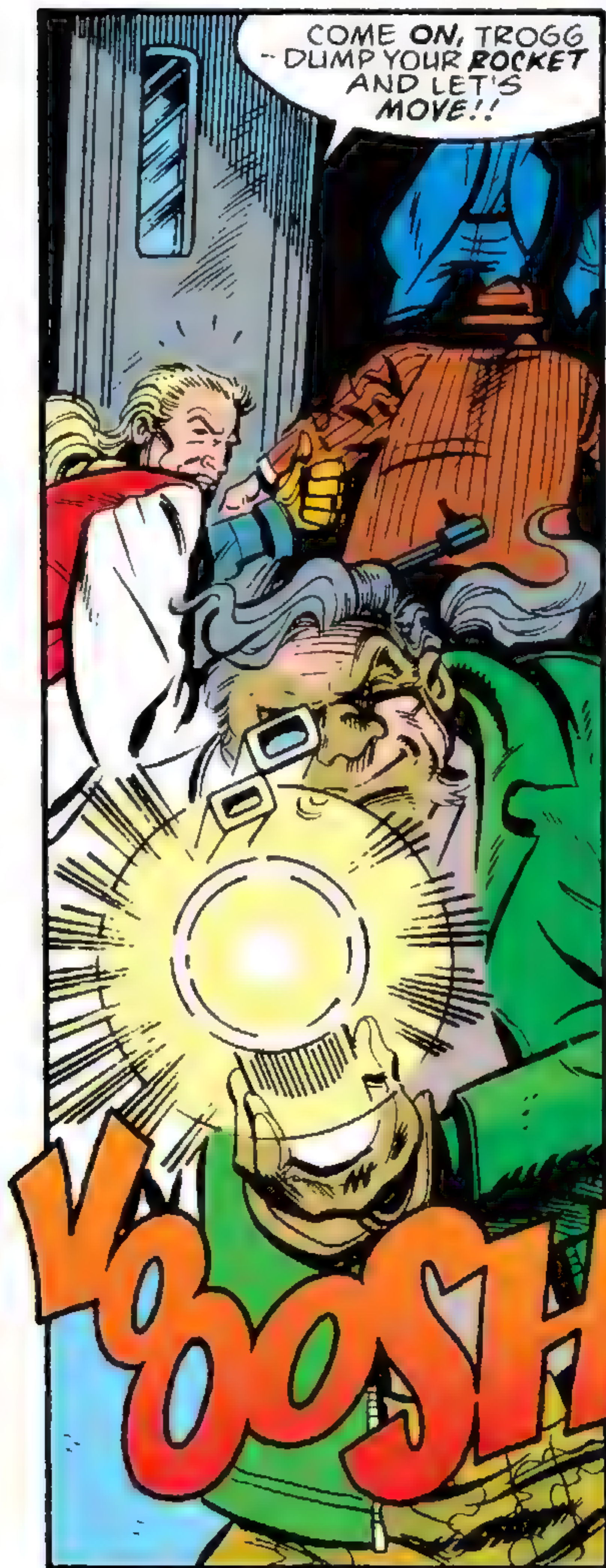


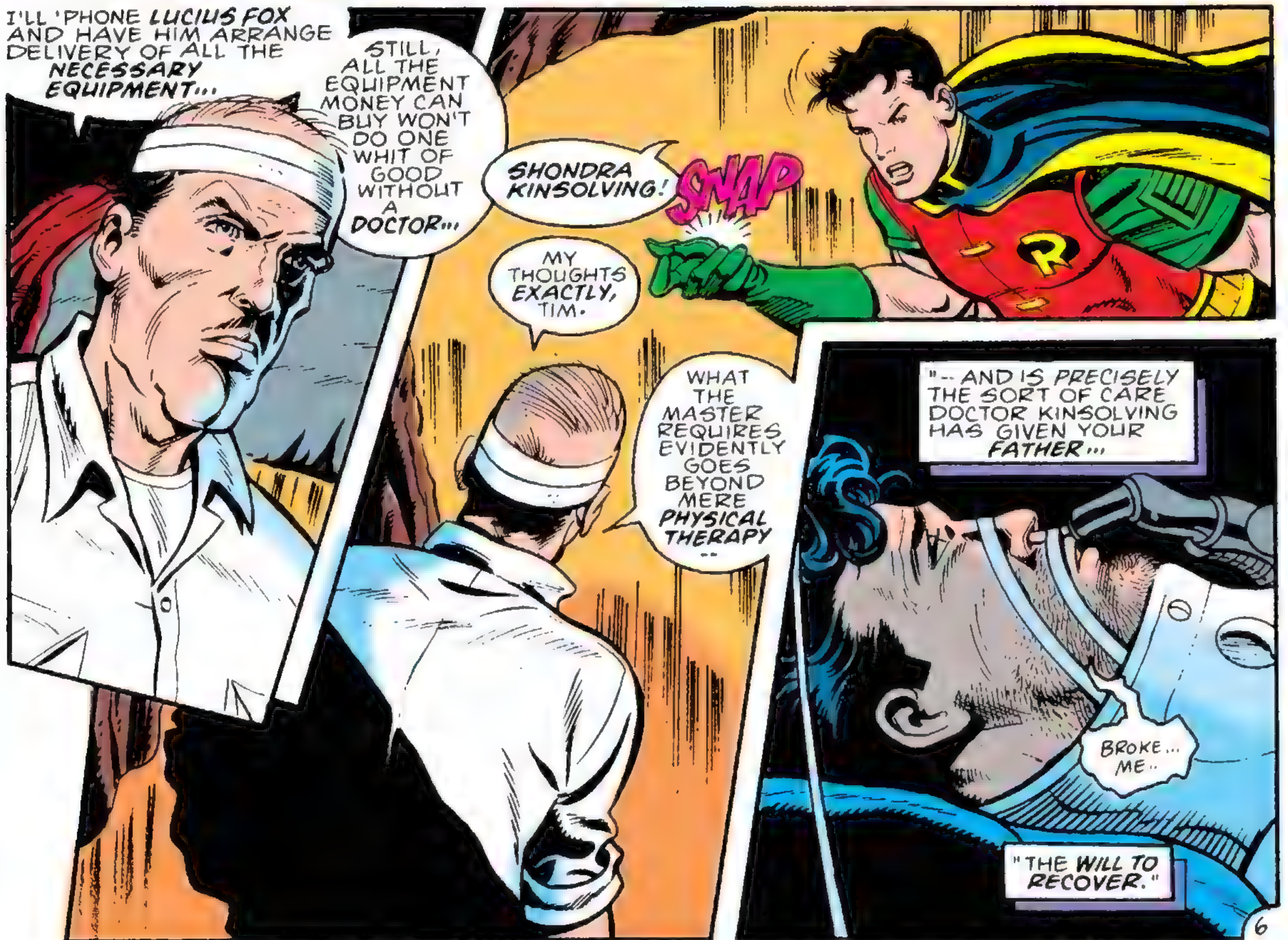
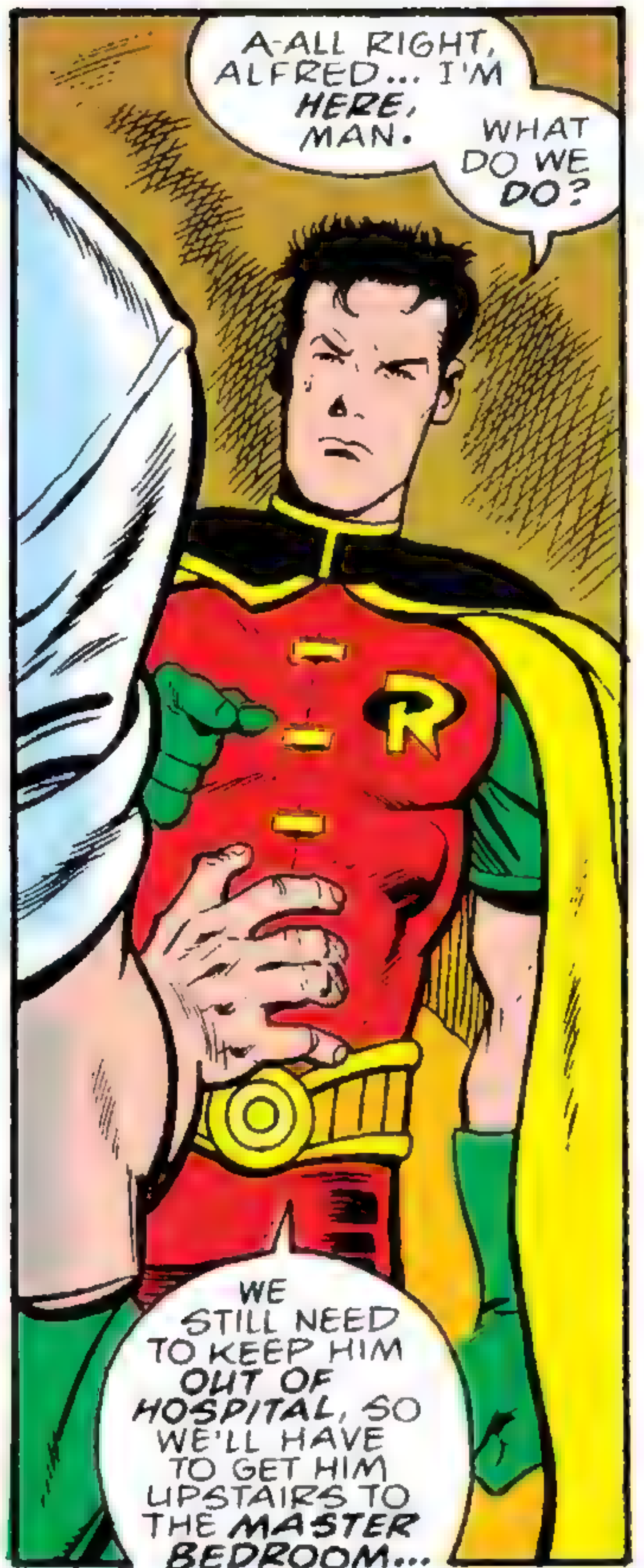
EXCEPT... I WANT IT ALL.

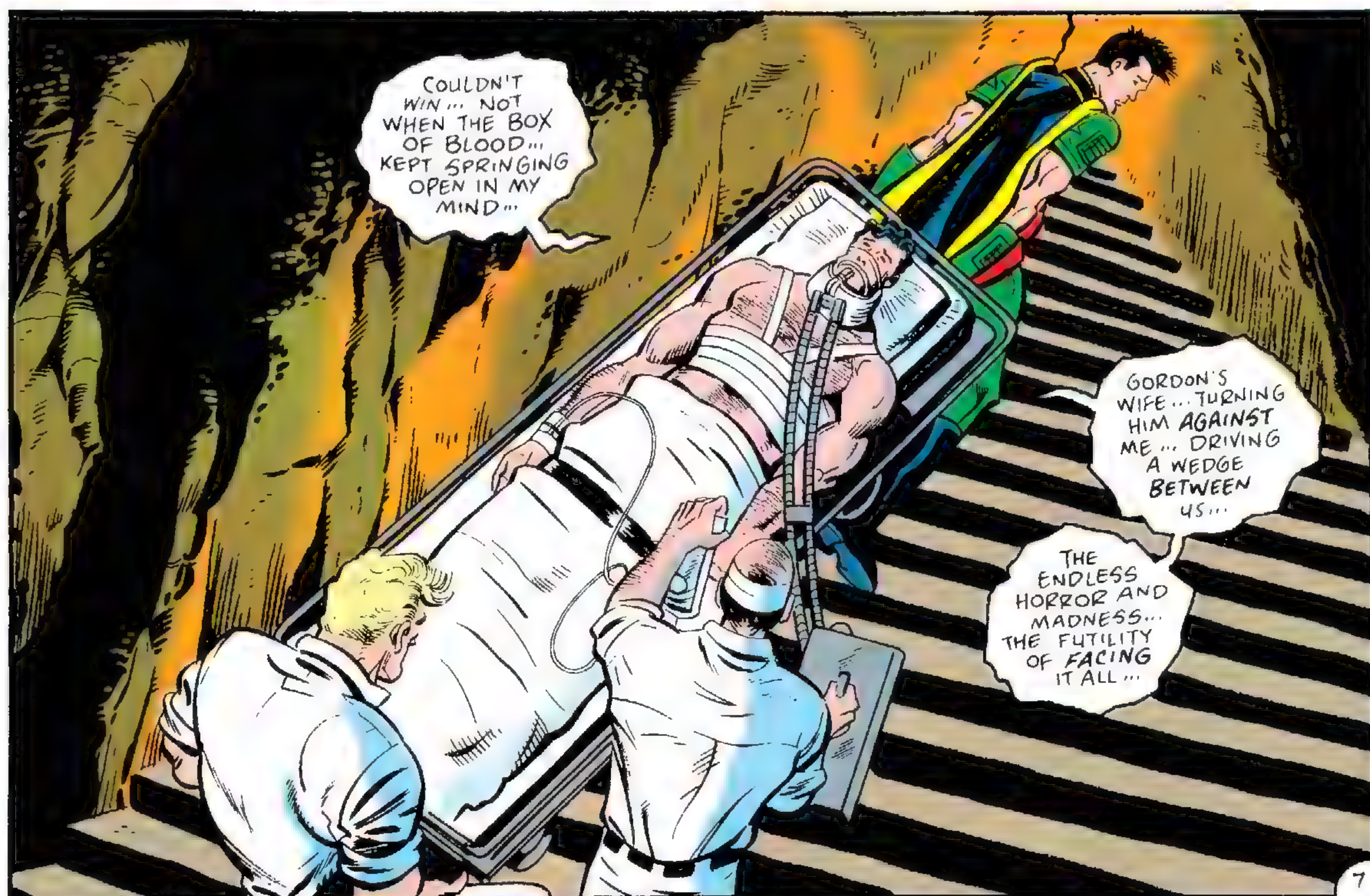
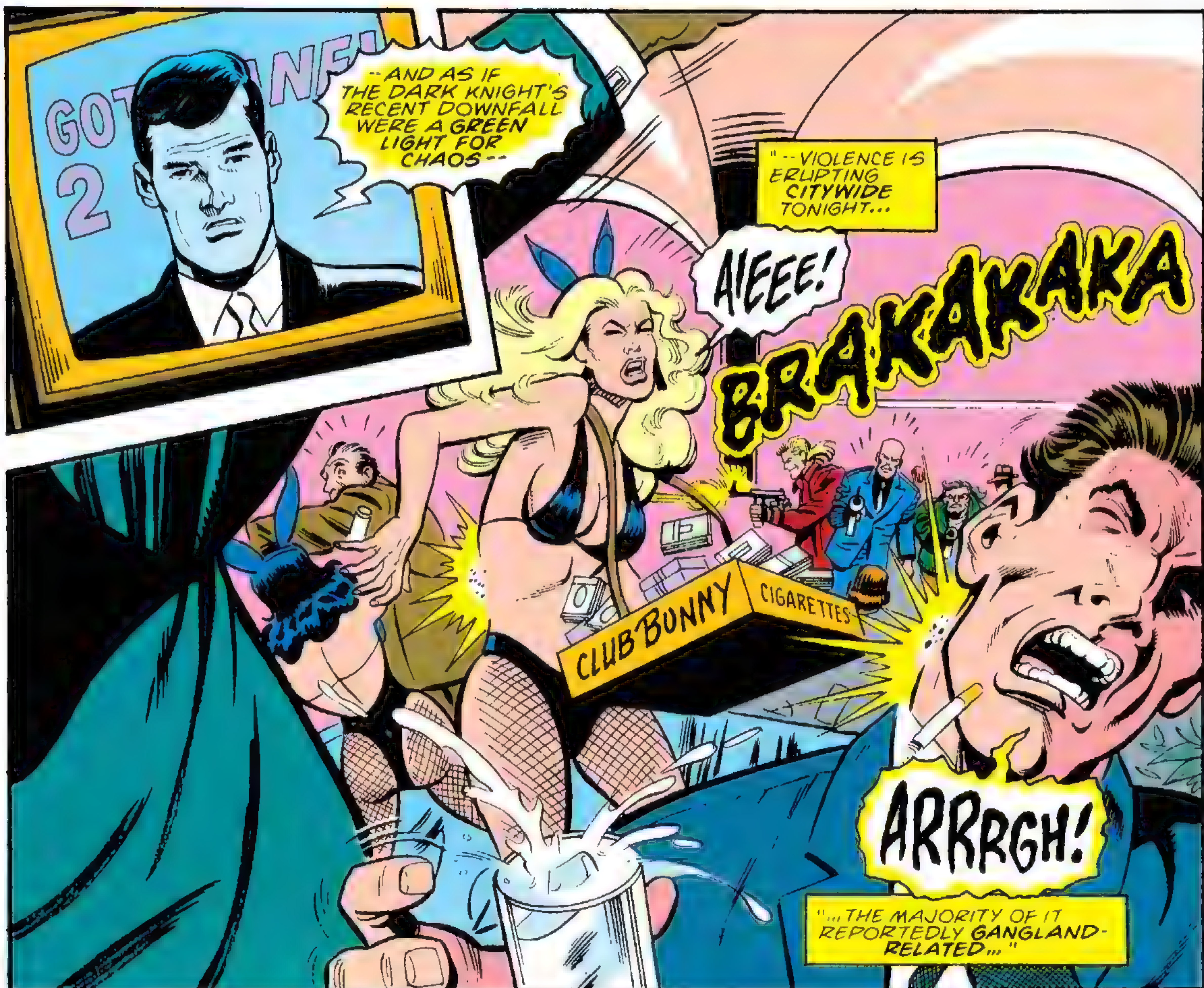
THE OTHERS GO DOWN STARTING NOW.

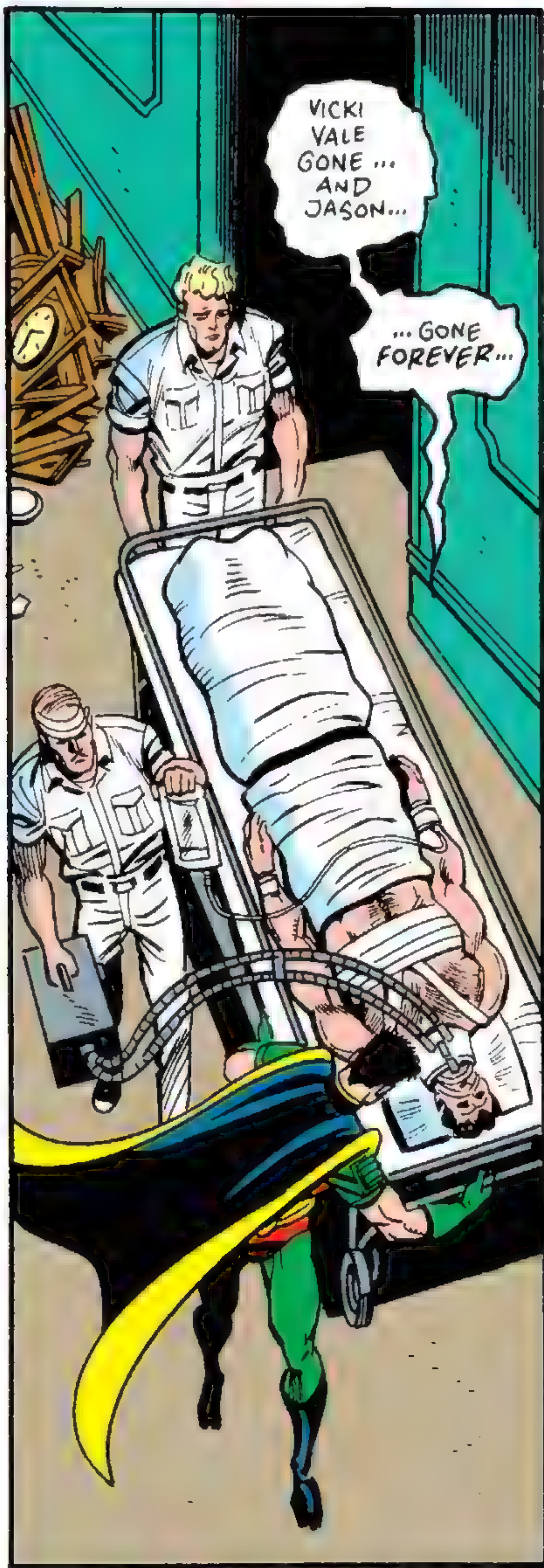
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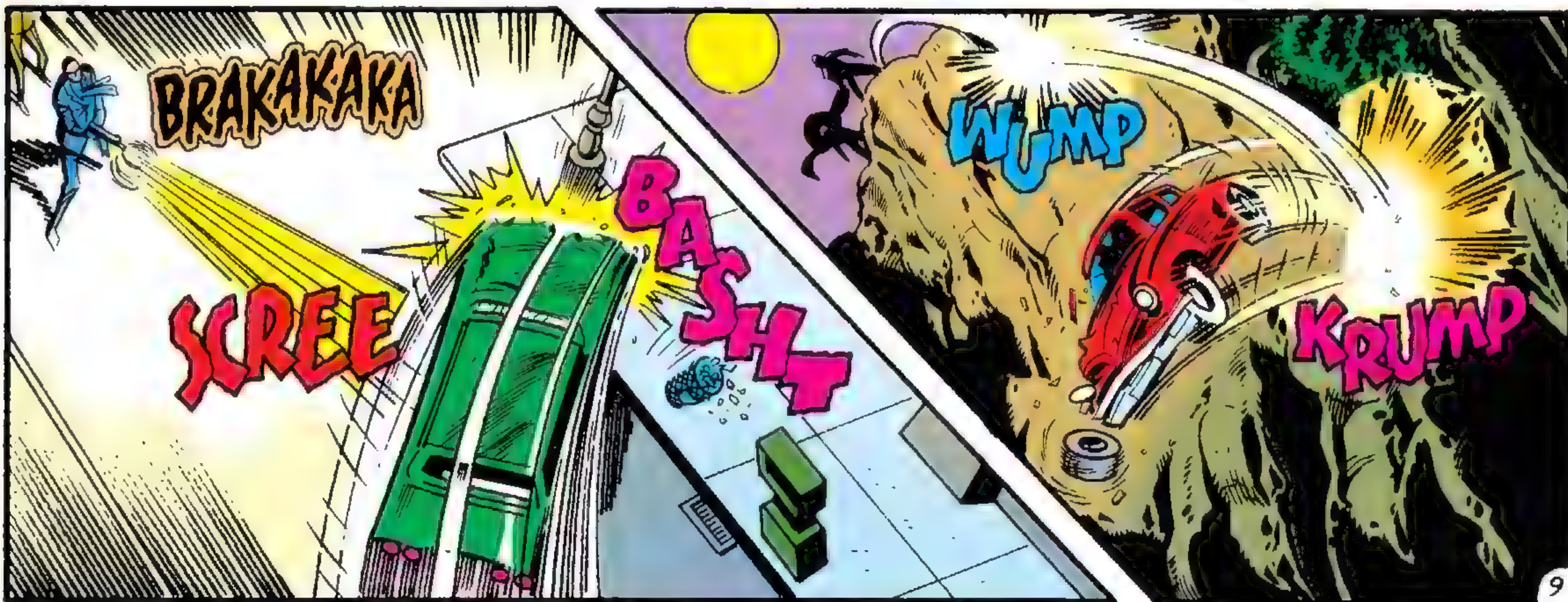
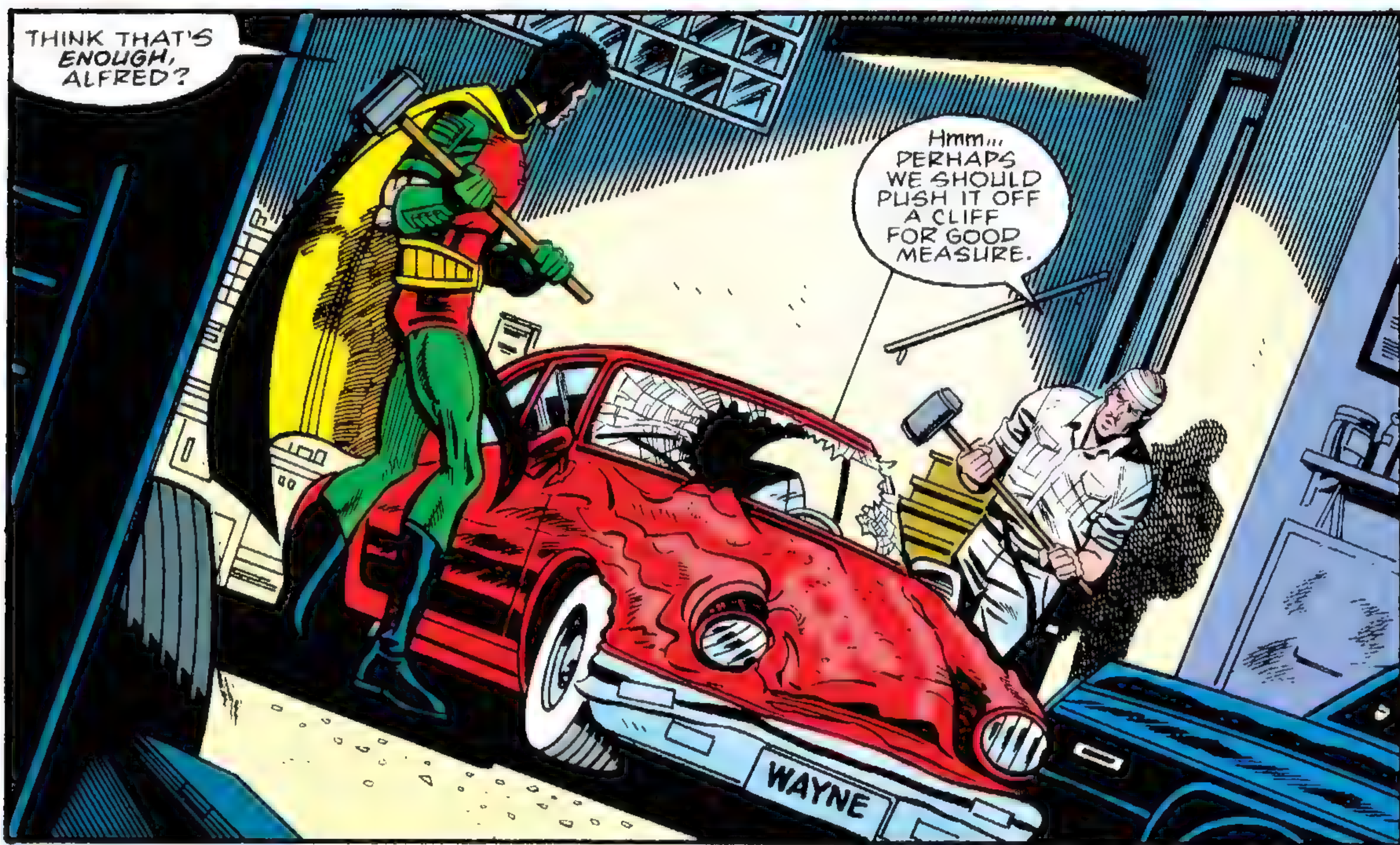
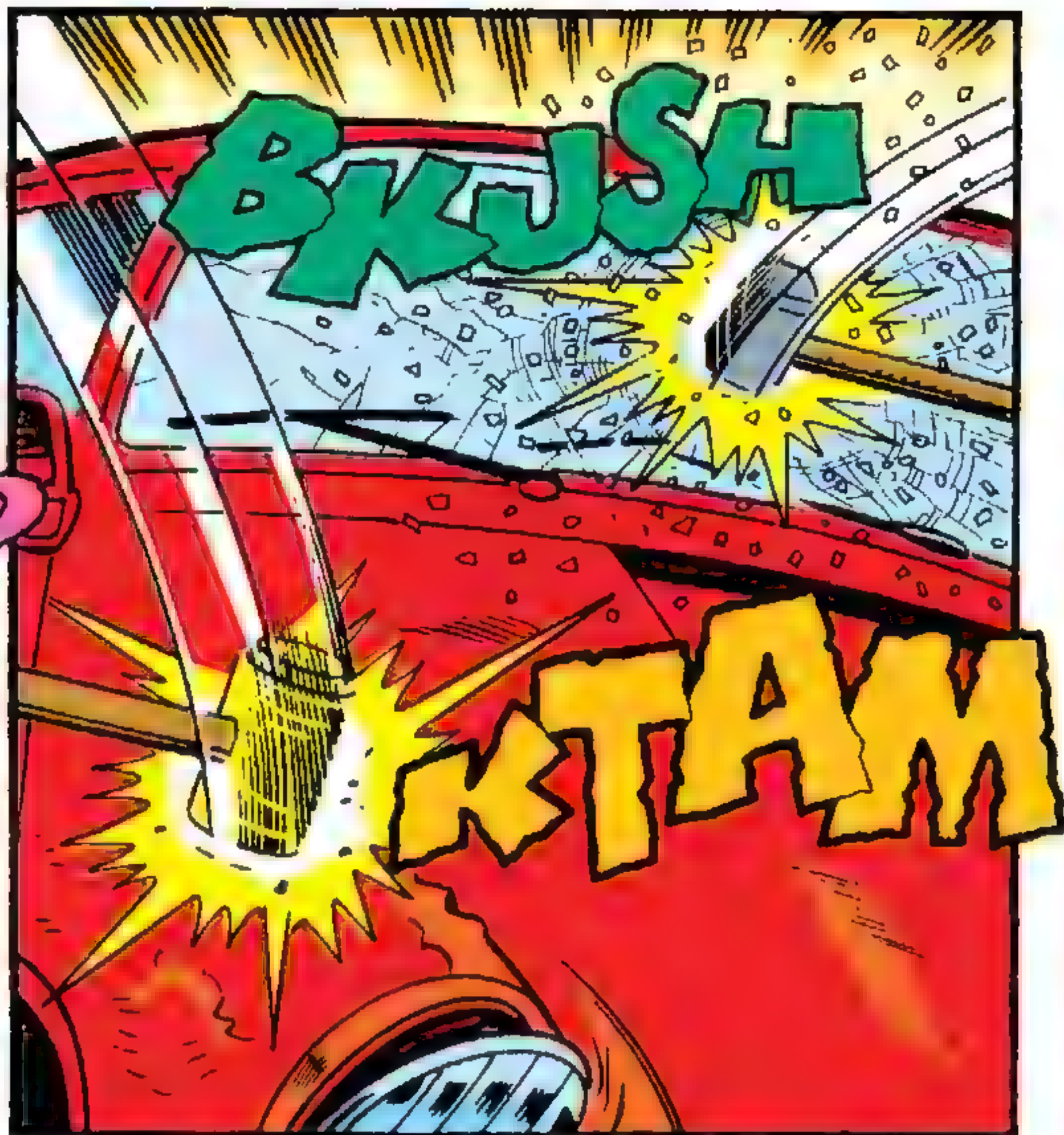
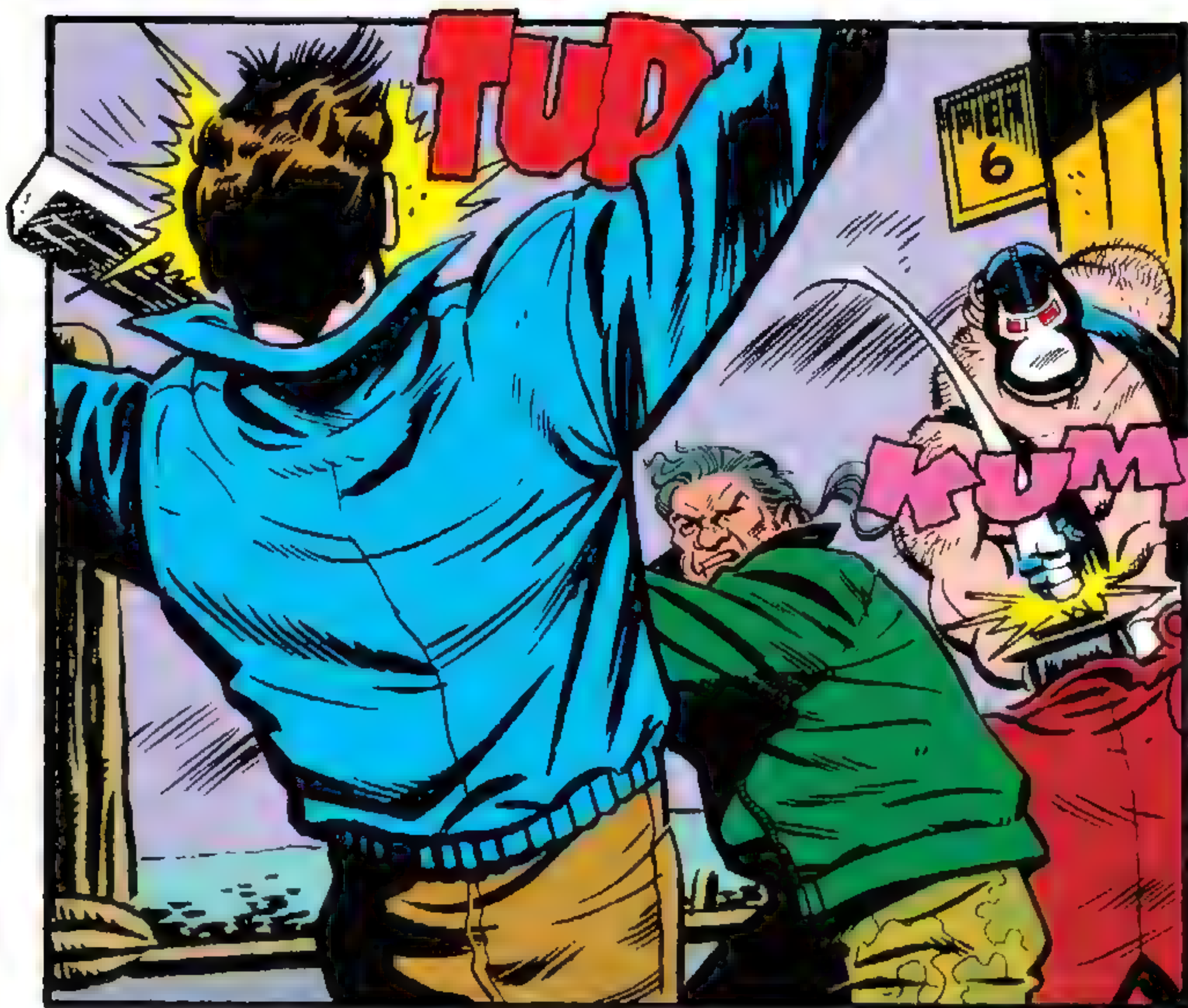


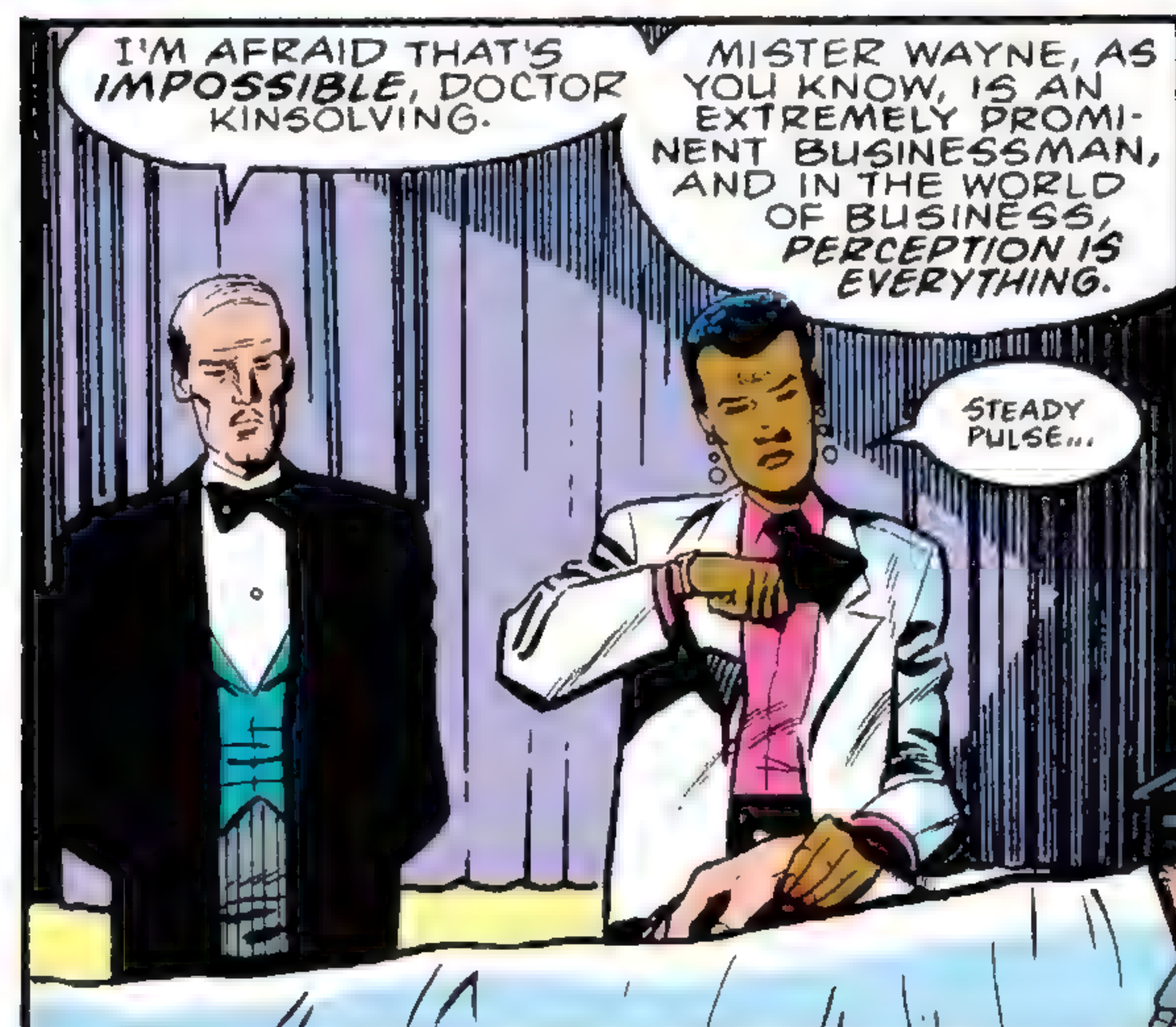
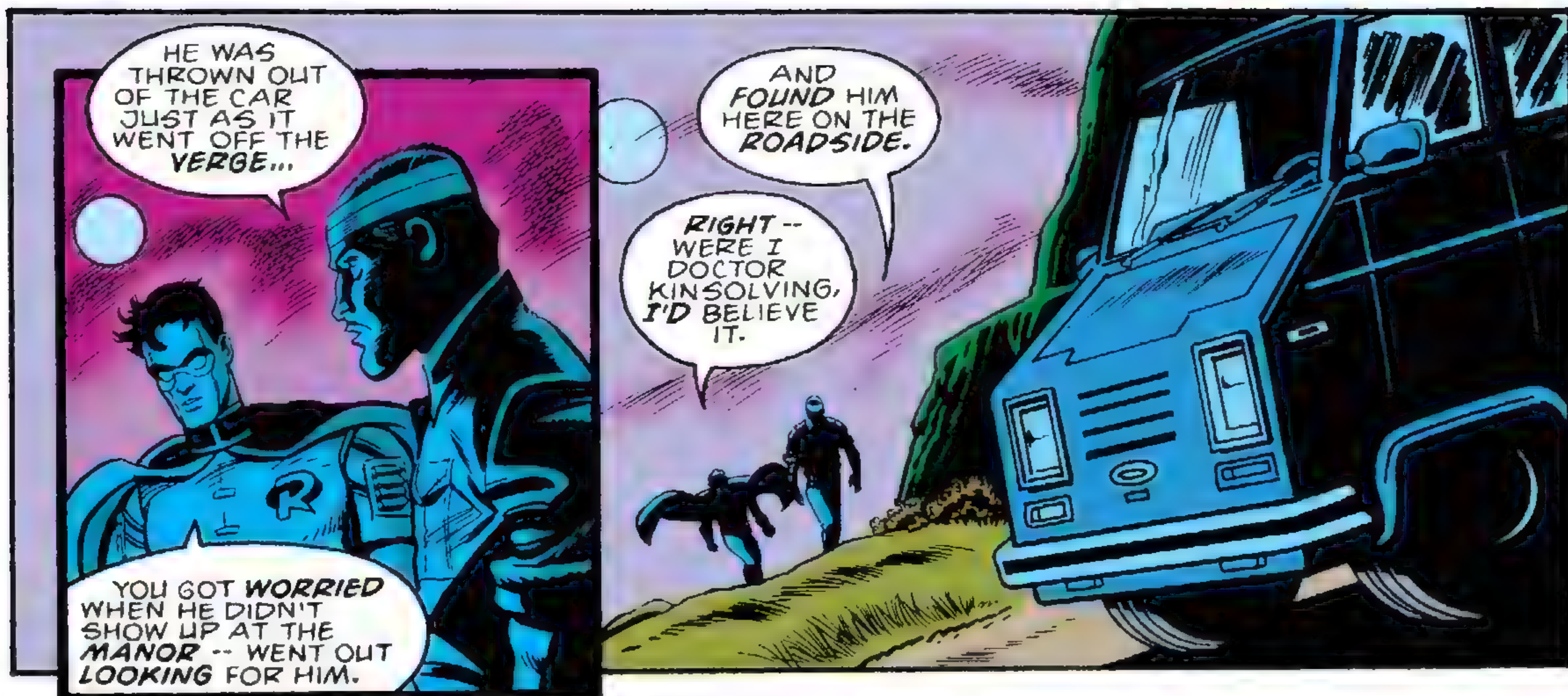


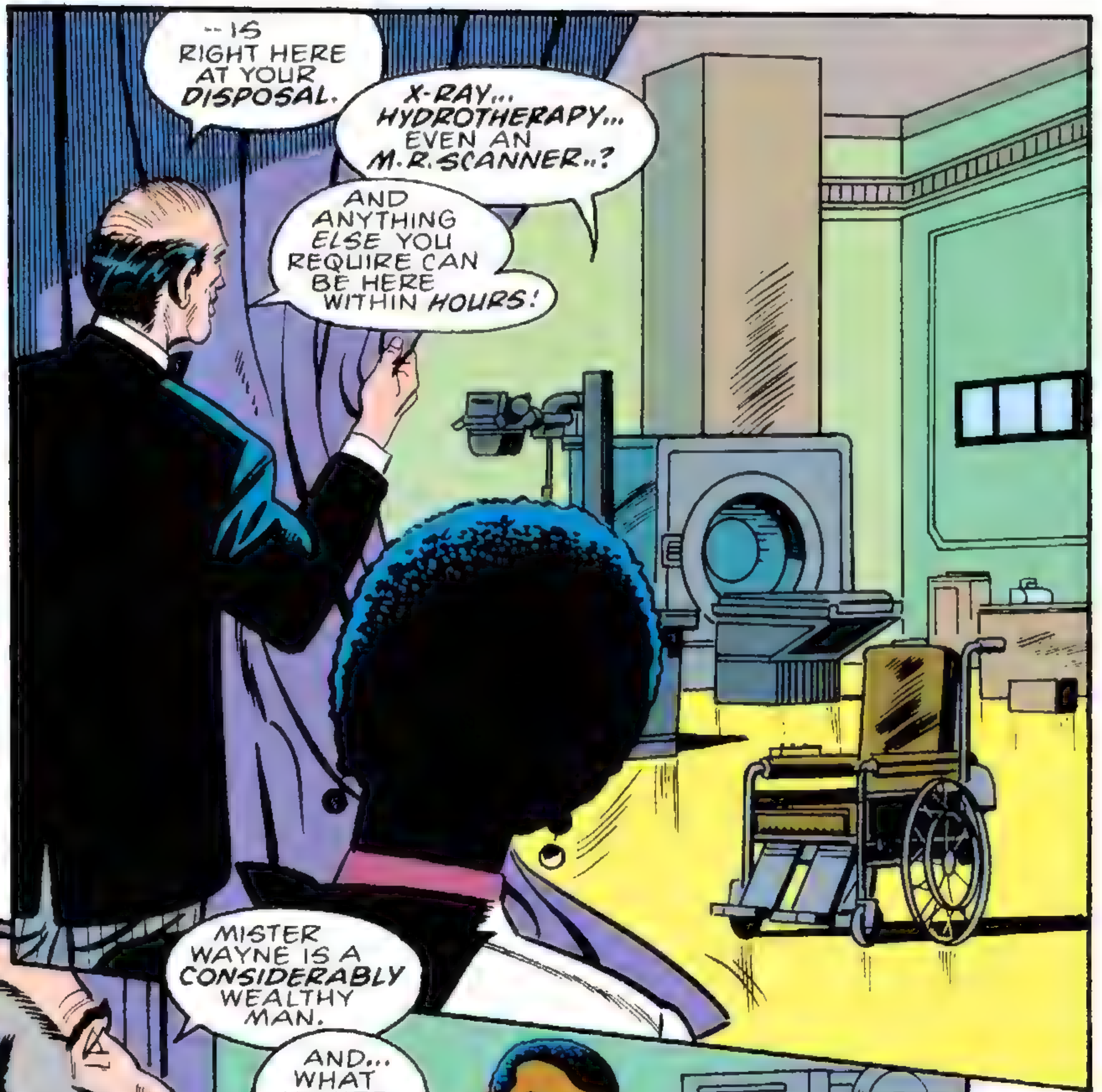






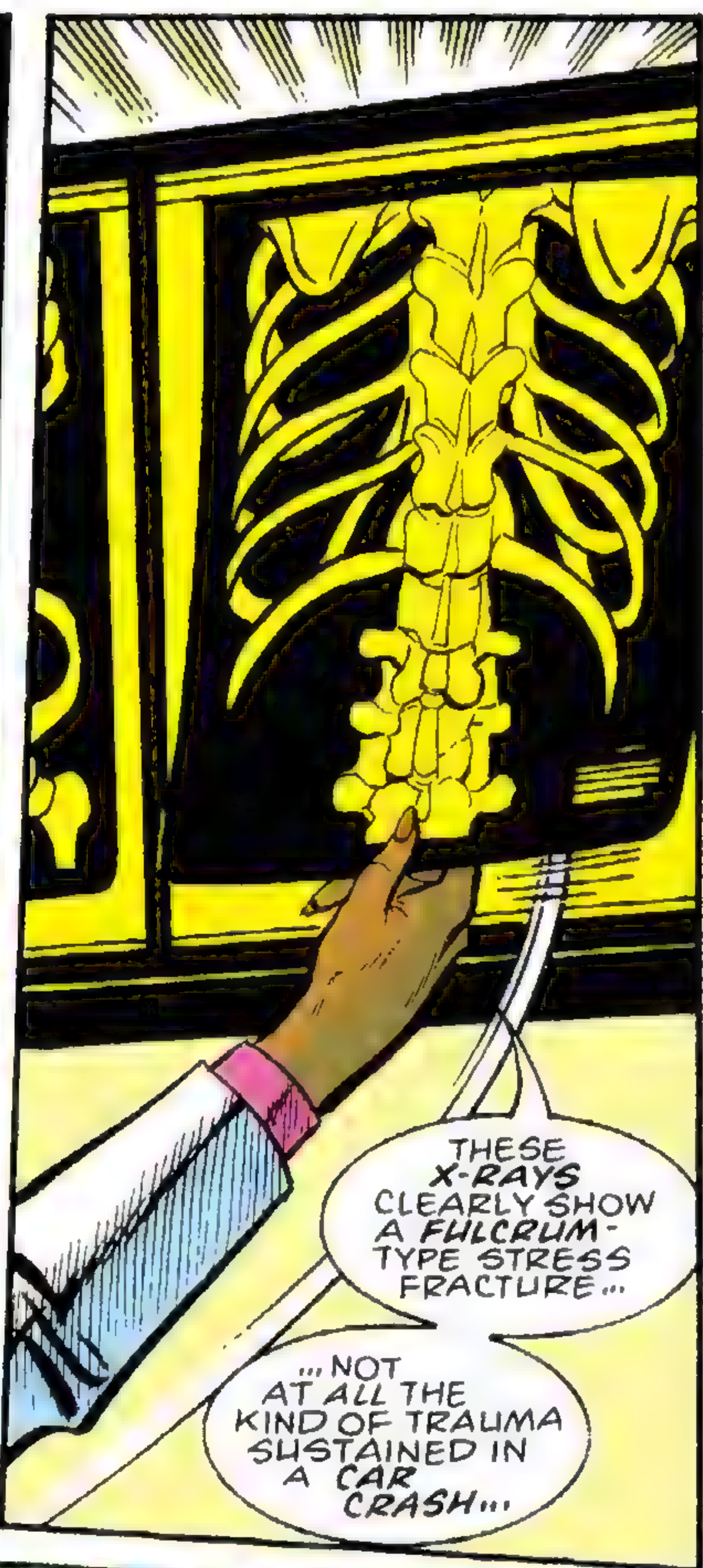


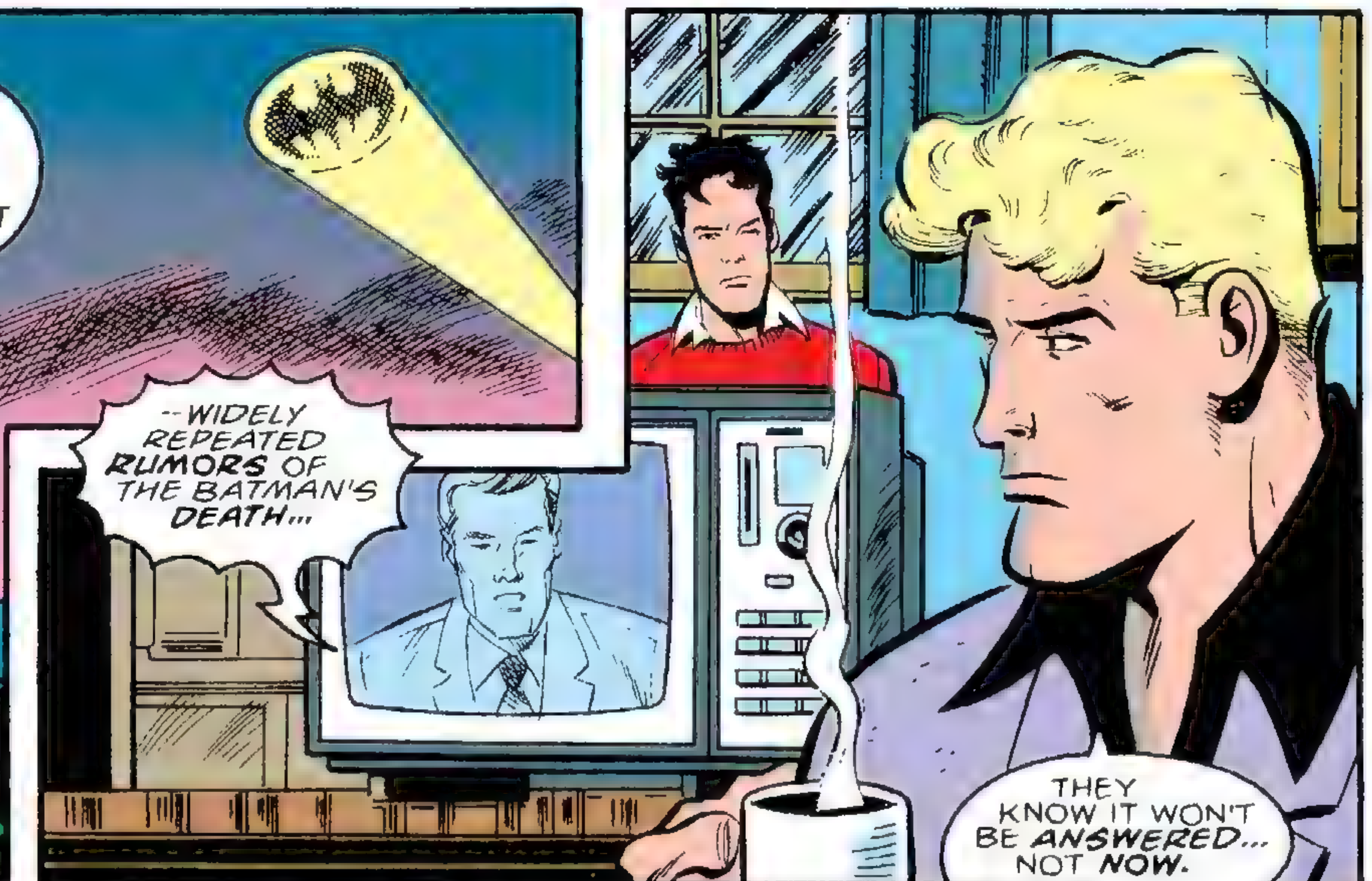
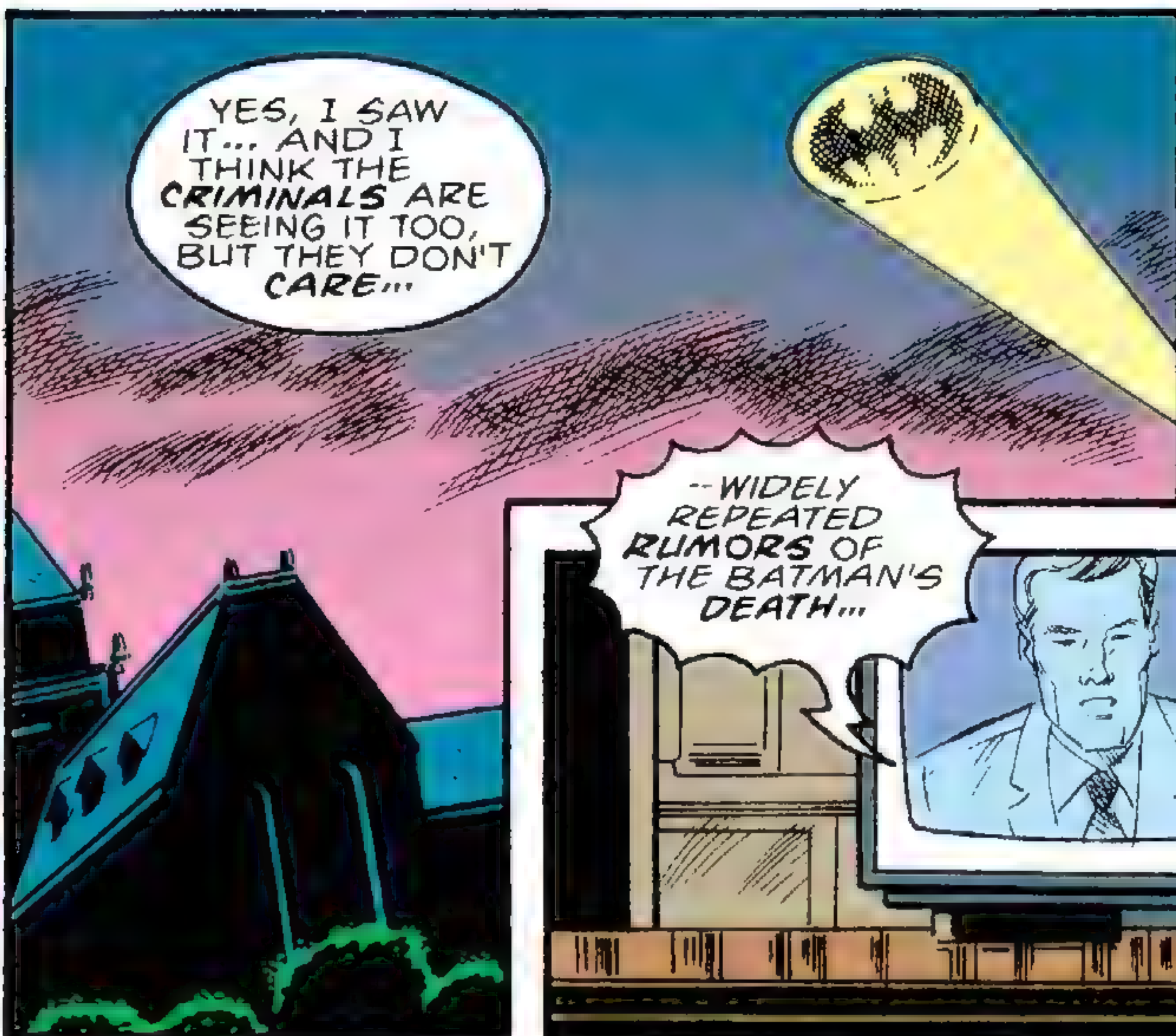
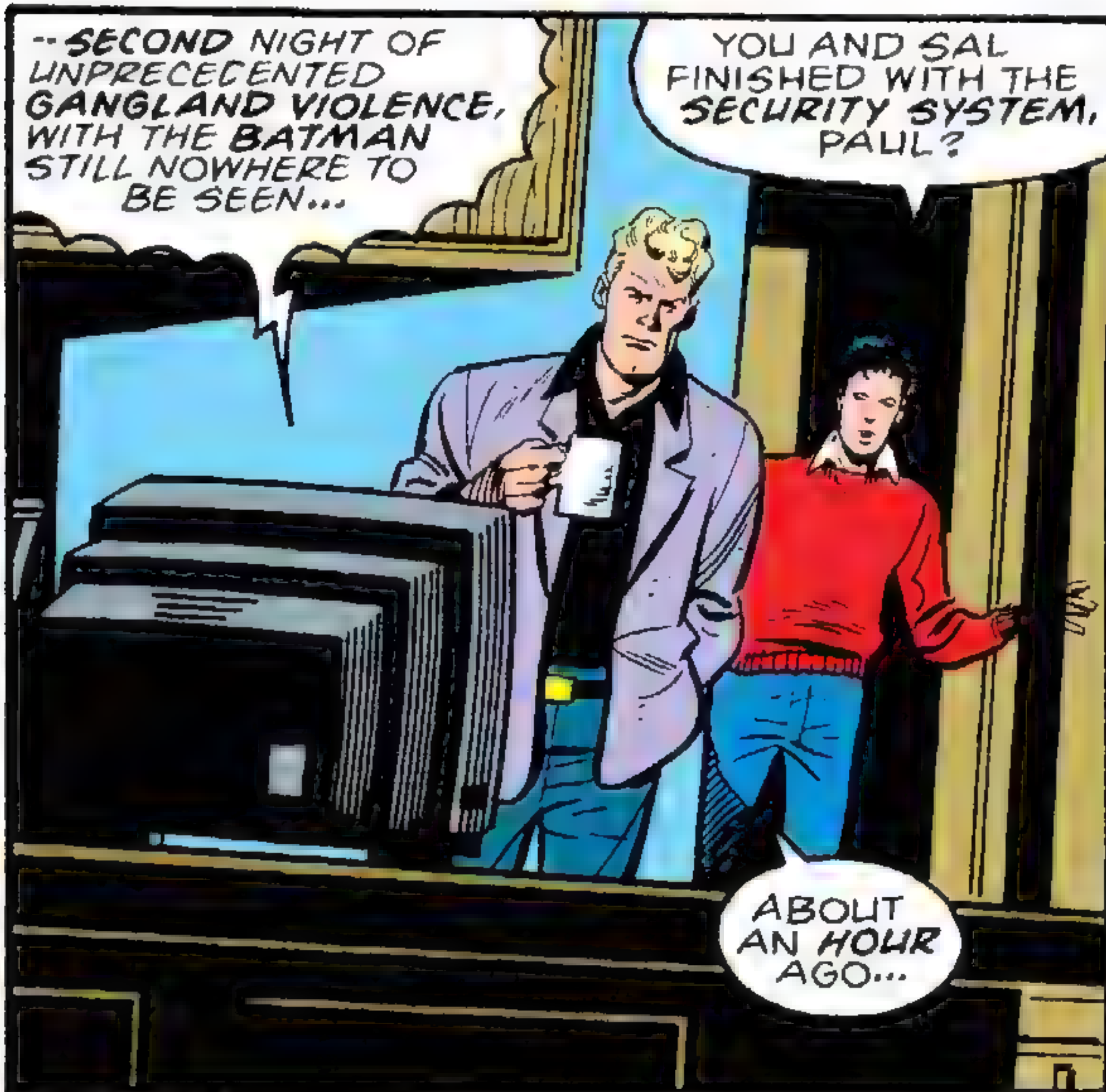


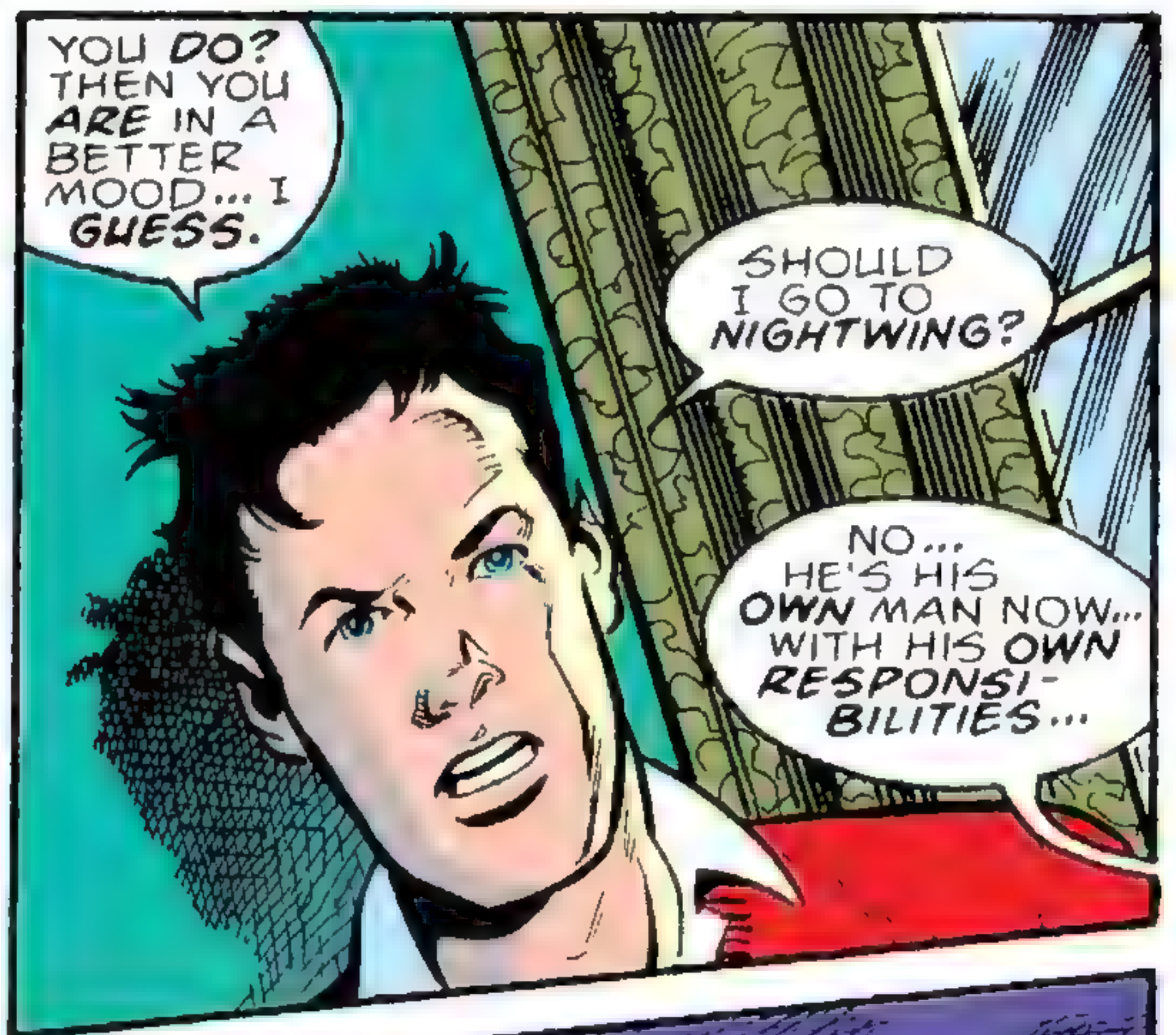
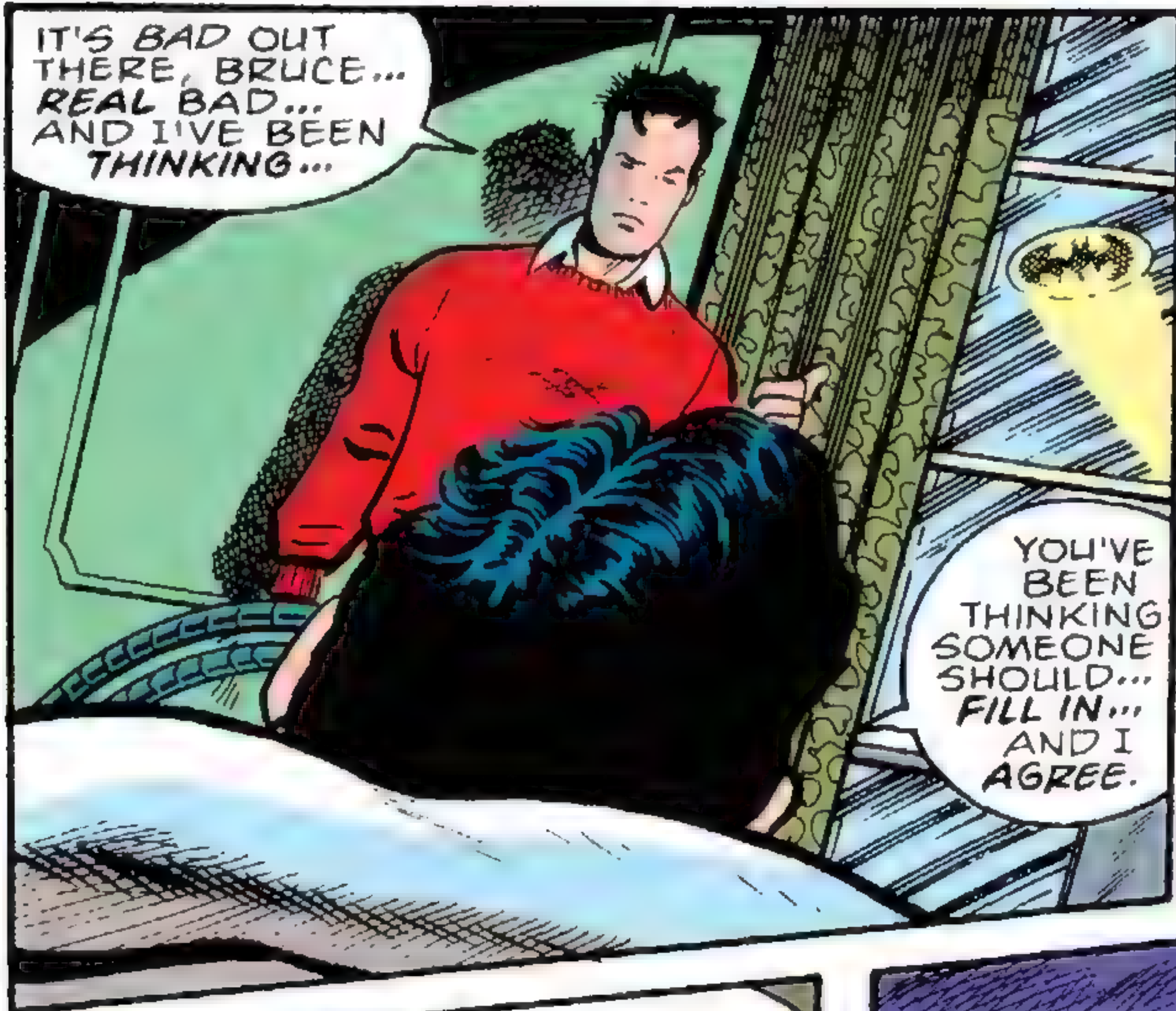


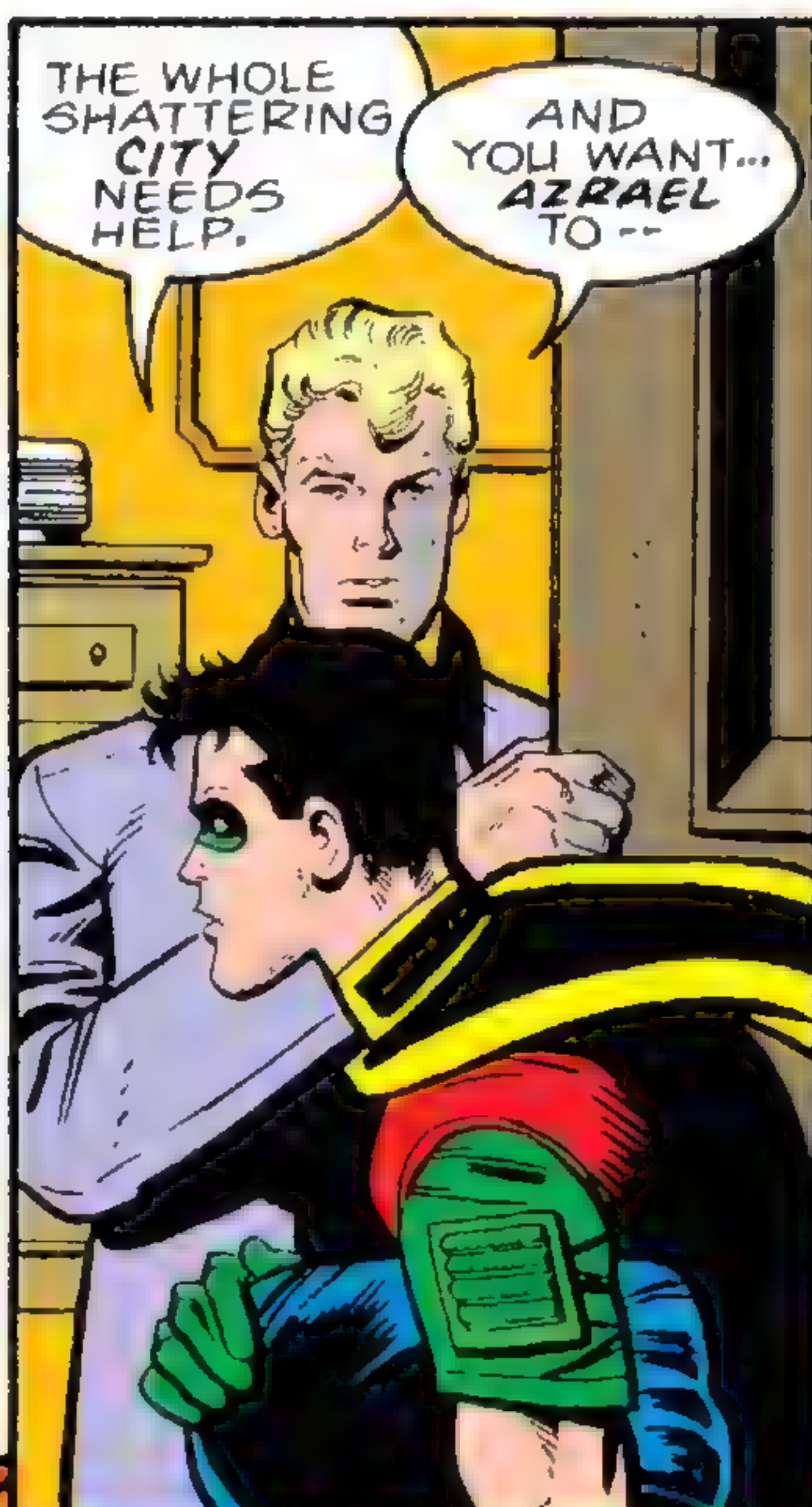
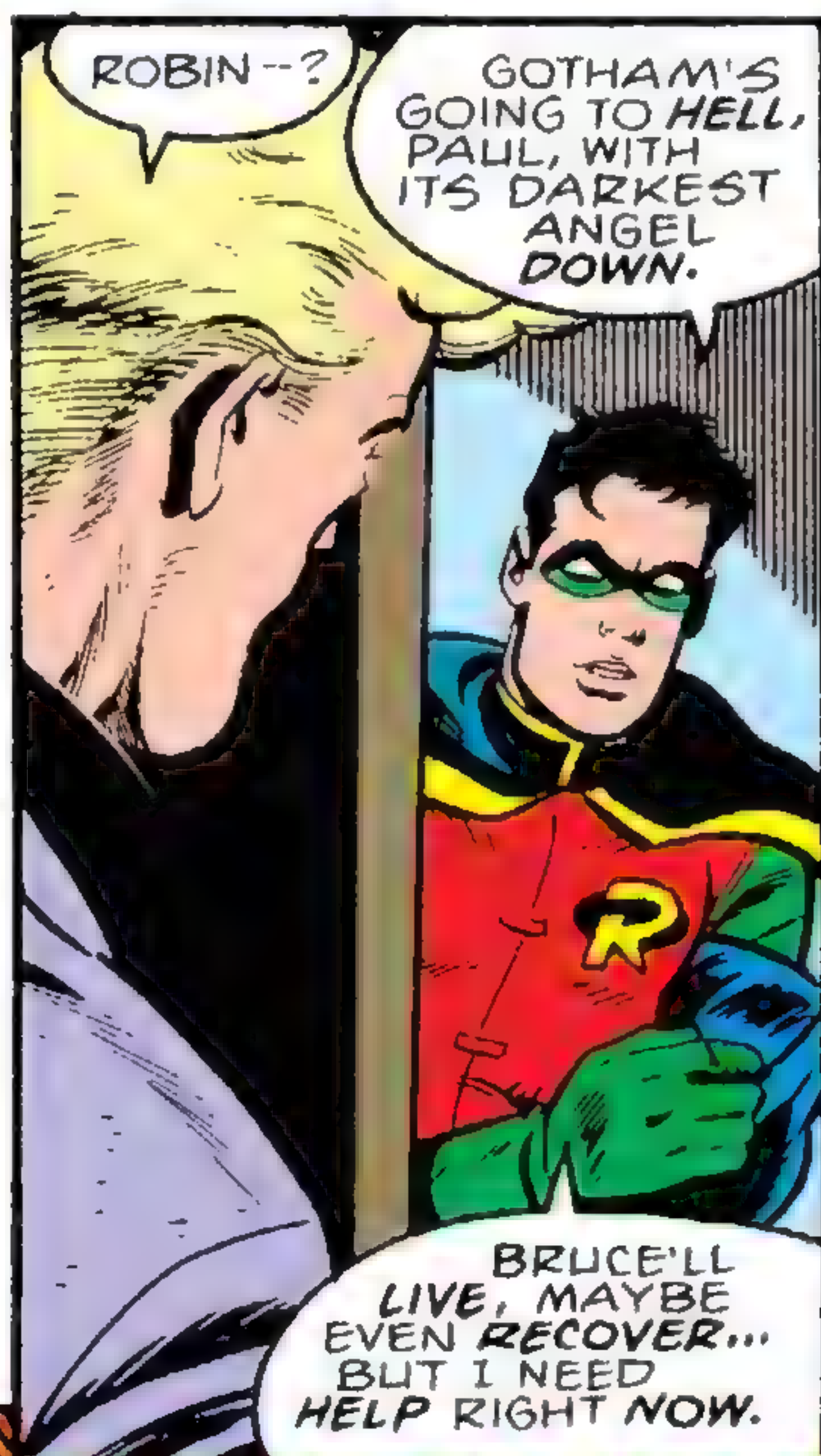


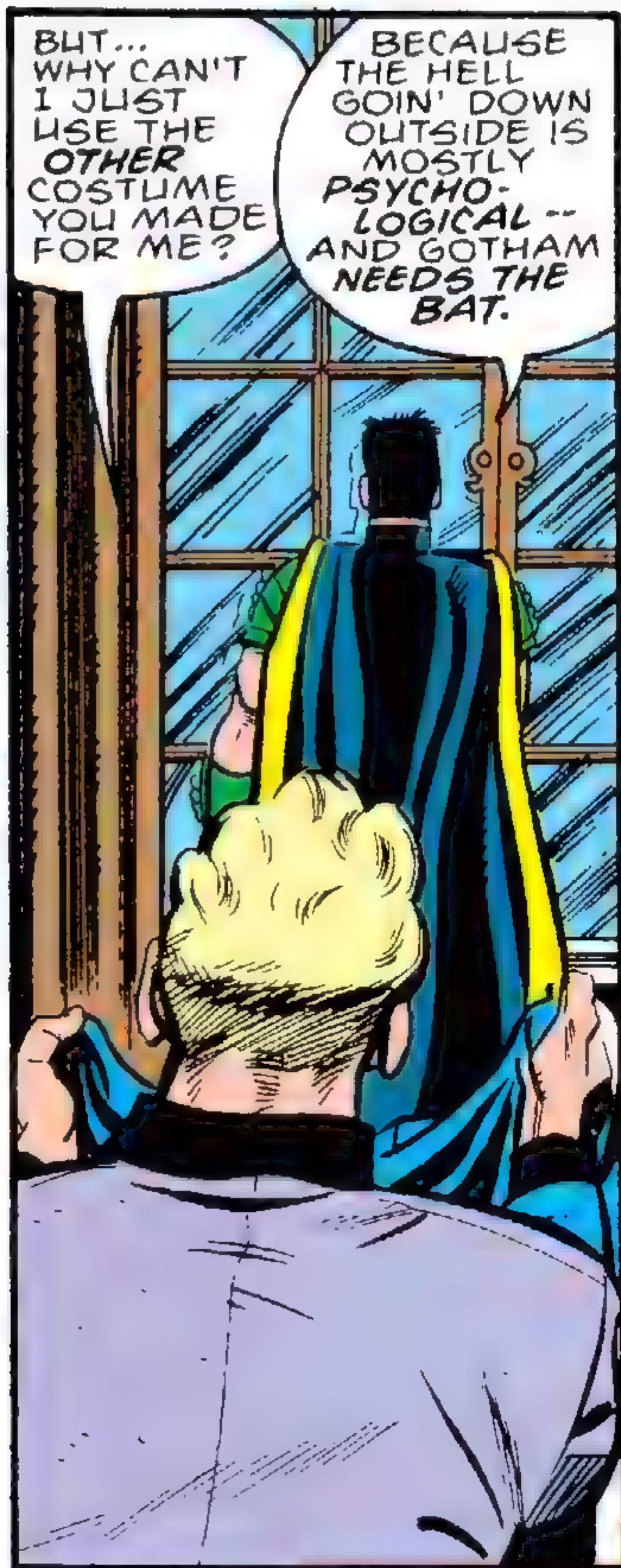




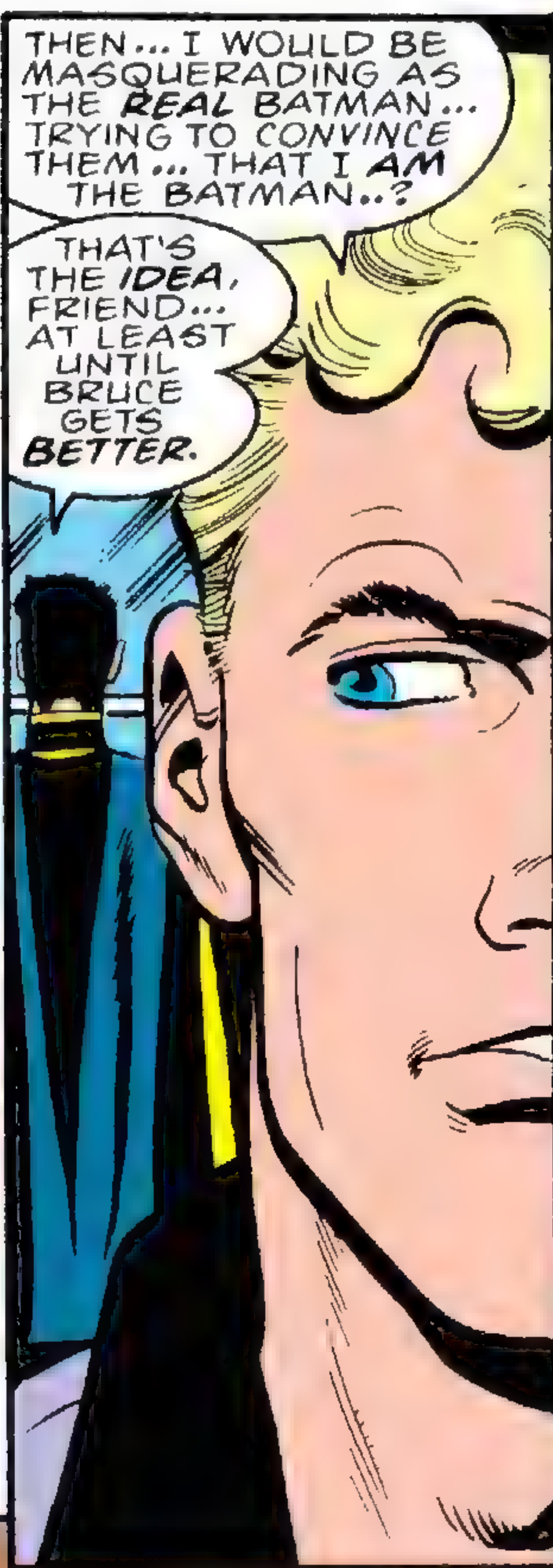




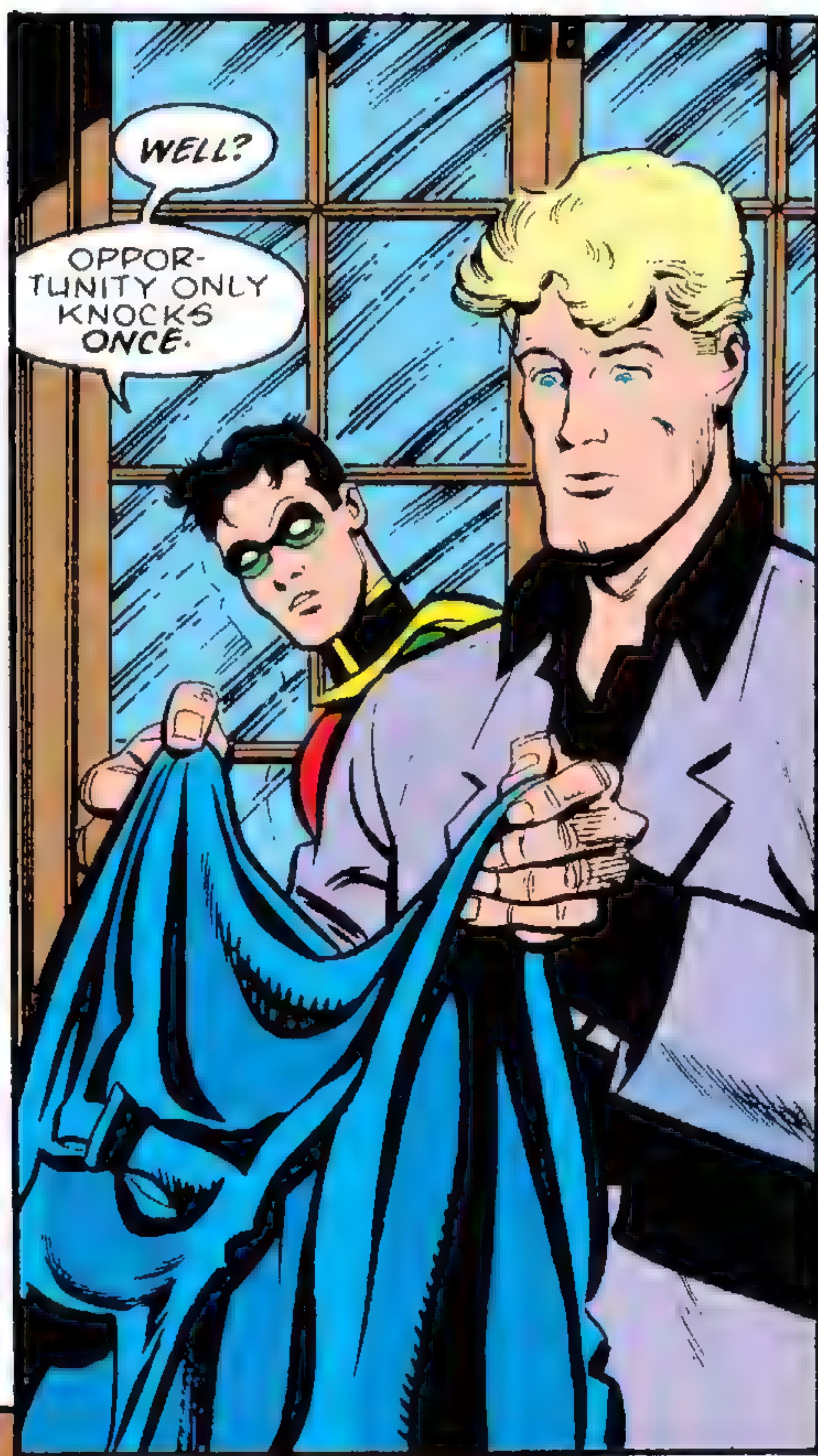




BECAUSE THE HELL GOIN' DOWN OUTSIDE IS MOSTLY PSYCHO-LOGICAL -- AND GOTHAM NEEDS THE BAT.



THAT'S THE IDEA, FRIEND... AT LEAST UNTIL BRUCE GETS BETTER.



WELL?

OPPORTUNITY ONLY KNOCKS ONCE.



YOU THINK I CAN DO IT?

WOULDN'T BE HERE OTHERWISE.

I MEAN... YOU THINK I COULD BE... AS GOOD AS HIM?

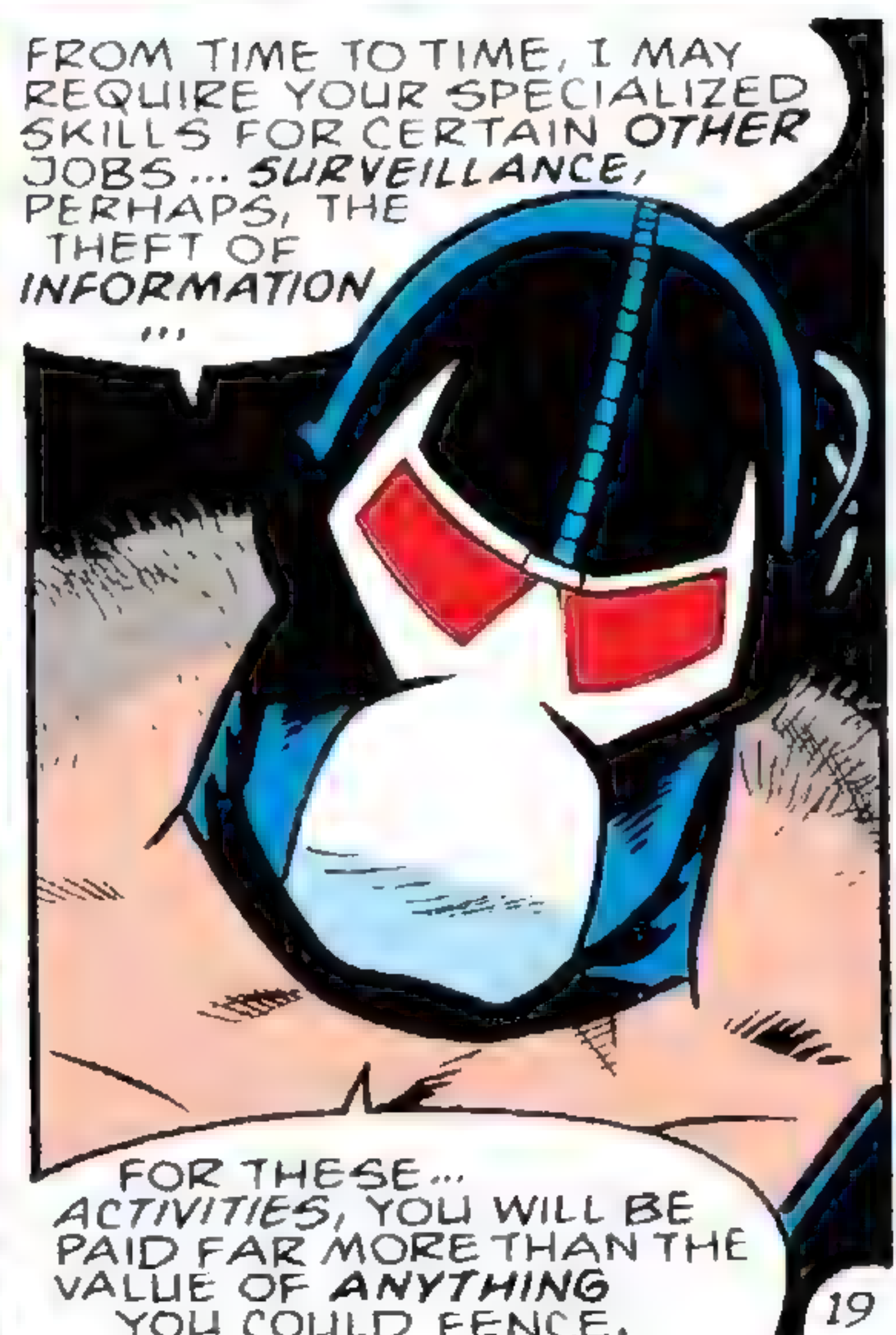
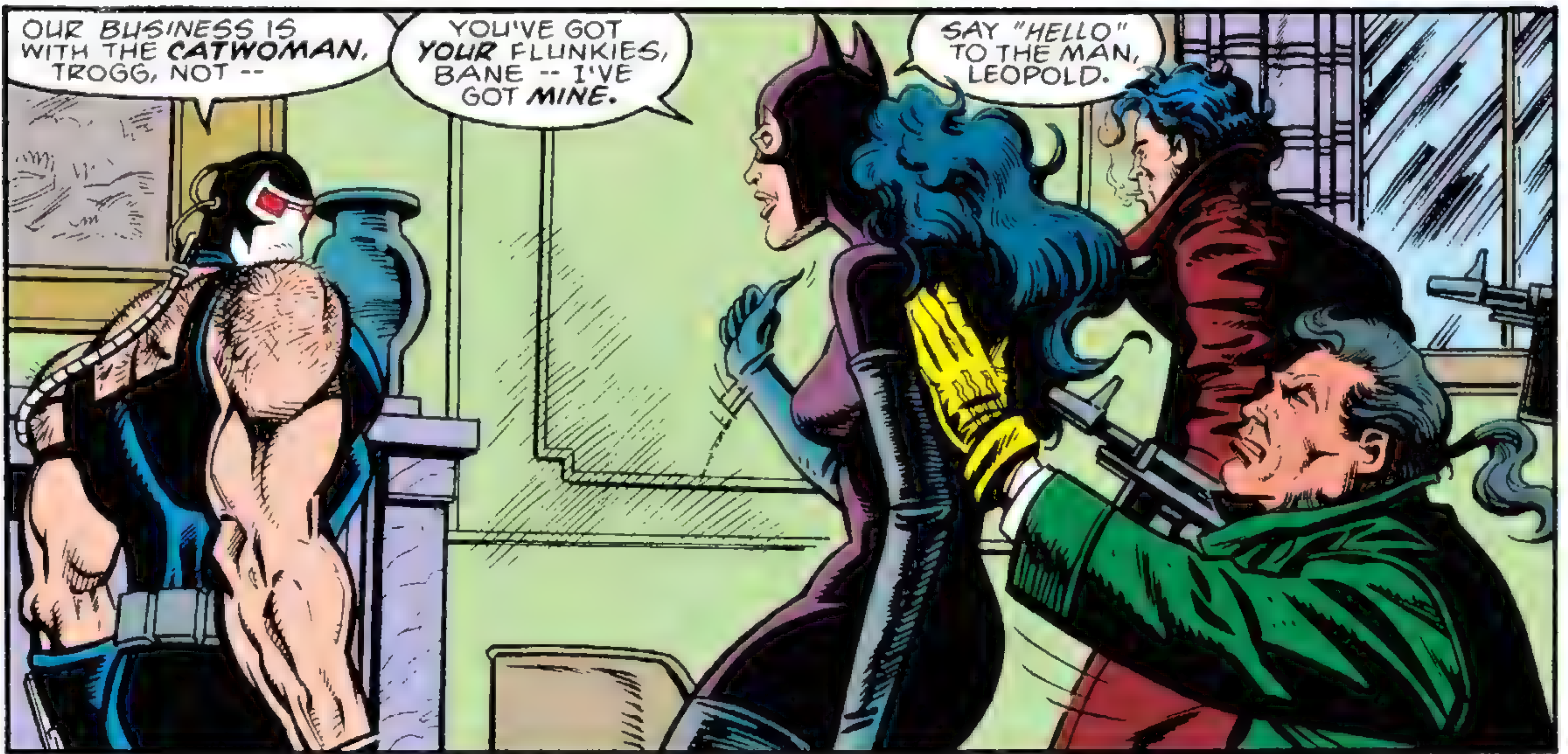
NO ONE'S AS GOOD AS HIM.



YOU'RE WRONG -- I'LL BE BETTER.

BIG WORDS.

JUST DON'T TRY 'EM OUT ON BANE.





LEOPOLD?

HEY...
WORTH A
SHOT.

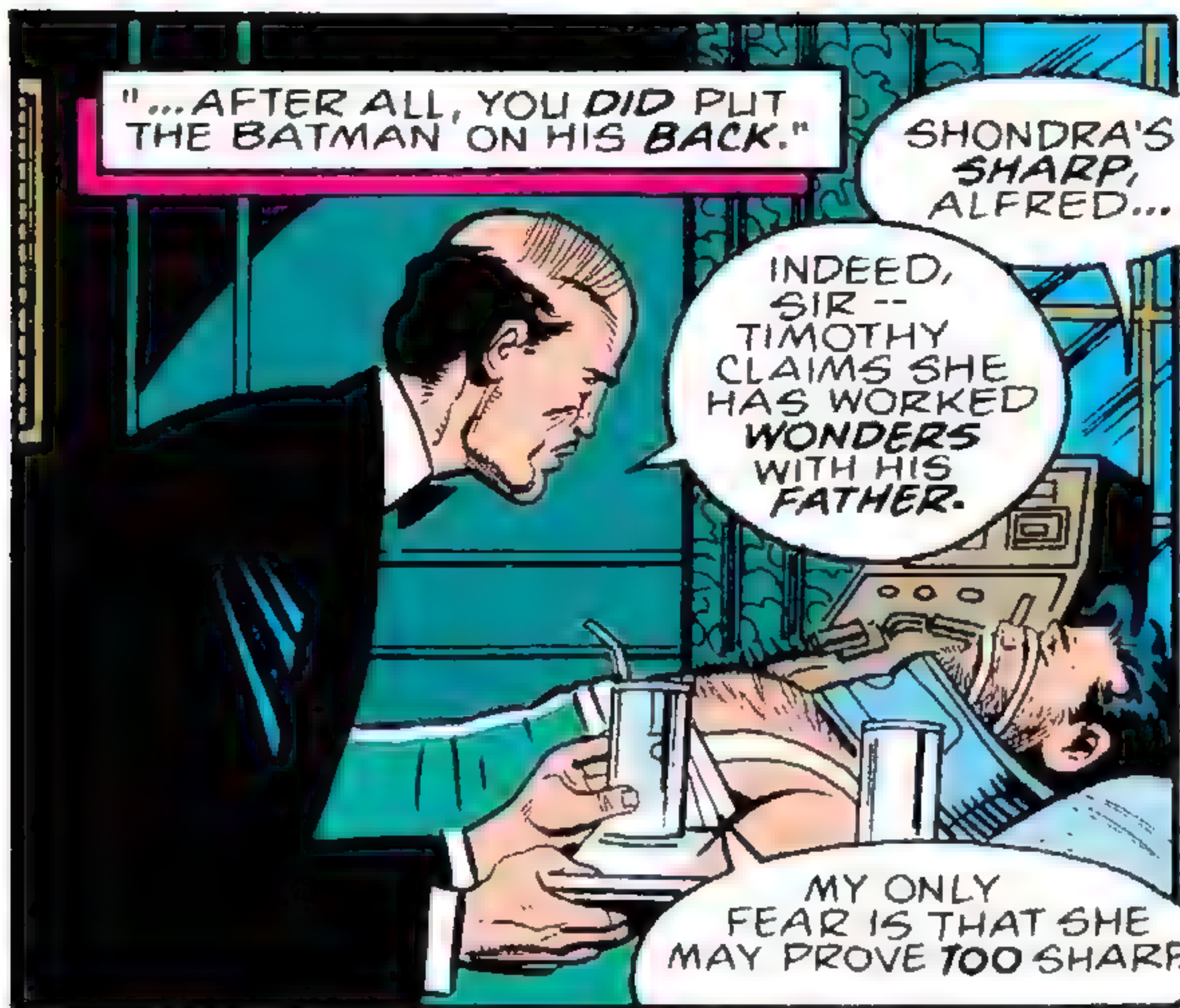
WE'LL
SEE ABOUT
THAT.



THEN
YOU'LL
WORK
FOR
ME?

NEVER.

BUT
I WILL
WORK
WITH
YOU...



"...AFTER ALL, YOU DID PUT
THE BATMAN ON HIS BACK."

SHONDRA'S
SHARP,
ALFRED...

INDEED,
SIR --
TIMOTHY
CLAIMS SHE
HAS WORKED
WONDERS
WITH HIS
FATHER.

MY ONLY
FEAR IS THAT SHE
MAY PROVE TOO SHARP.



I'VE BEEN
THINKING...
MAYBE MY...
MY BREAK-
DOWN HAS
BEEN
MORE
MENTAL
THAN
PHYSICAL...

THE
BURDEN OF
MY **SECRET**...
THE STRESS OF
FACING THE NIGHT
ALONE...



NOTHING BUT
HATE AND VIOLENCE,
NEVER LOVE AND
COMMON CARING...
NO TENDER-
NESS...

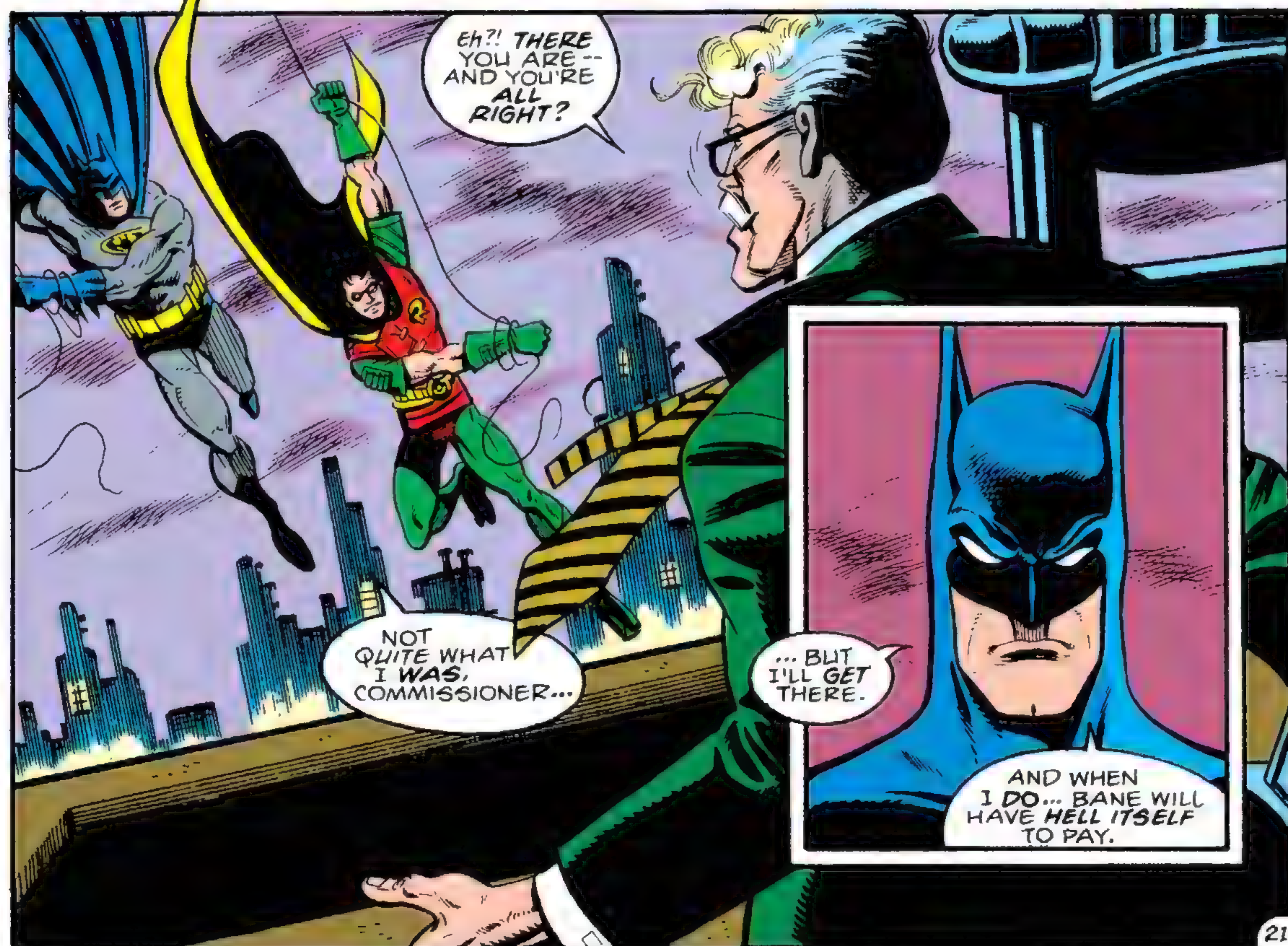
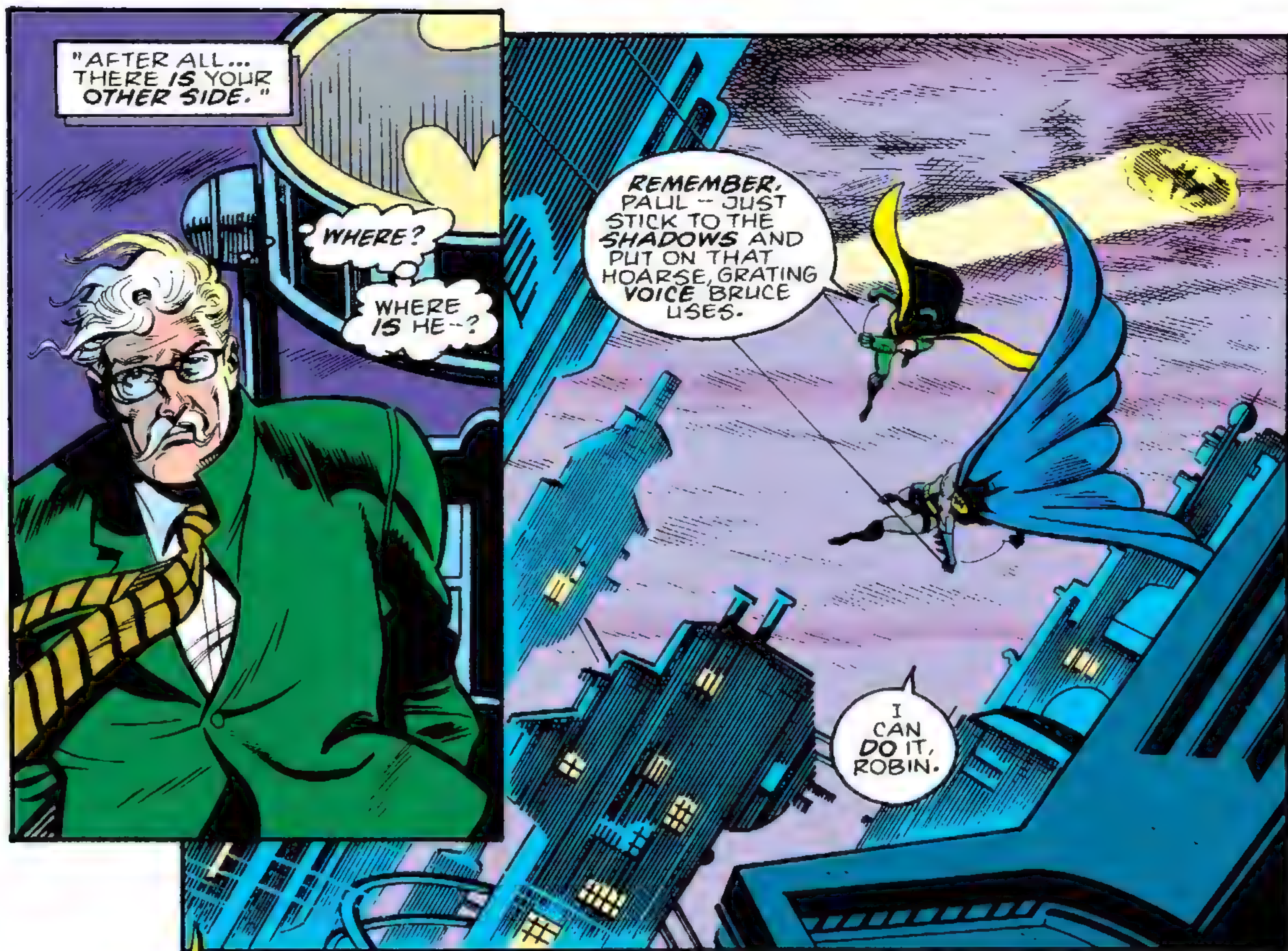
AND WHAT
IF THE ONLY
WAY TO
RECOVER--
MENTALLY
AS WELL AS
PHYSICALLY--
IS TO **TRUST**
SHONDRA
FULLY...



"... SHARE MYSELF
WITH HER... AND
OPEN THE
MYSTERY..."

AH... ALL WELL
AND GOOD, SIR, AS
LONG AS WE'RE
SPEAKING
HYPOTHETICALLY,
AND AS LONG AS
WE DON'T CARRY
IT TOO FAR...

"... IF
YOU CATCH
MY
MEANING."





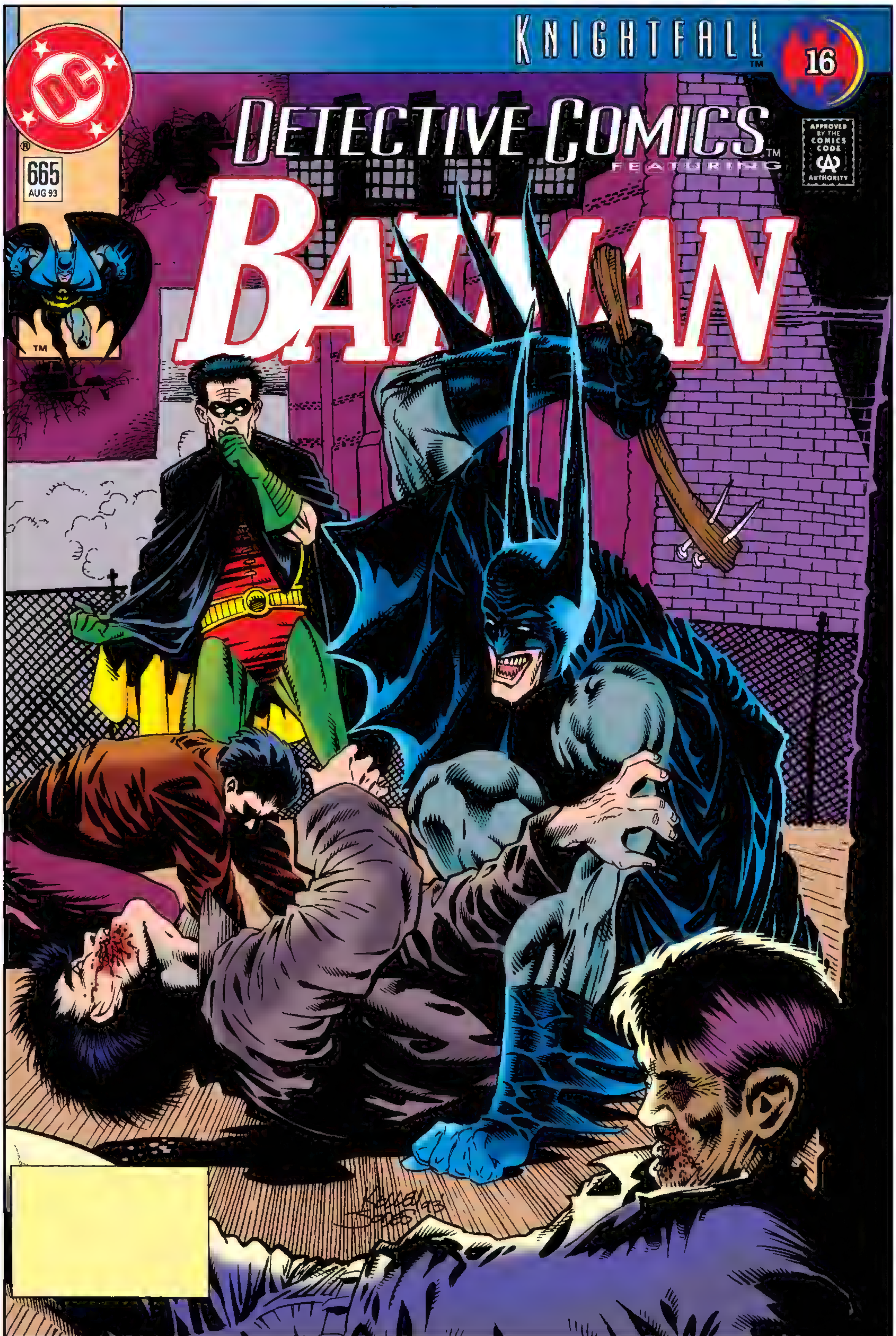
IT'S BEEN A LONG, DANGEROUS DANCE...



... AND MAYBE THE PIPER MUST BE PAID...

MAYBE ALFRED'S WRONG... AND MAYBE...

... I SHOULD TELL SHONDRA... EVERYTHING.



LIGHTNING CHANGES

CHUCK
DIXON
Writer
ADRIENNE
ROY
colorist

GRAHAM
NOLAN
Penciller
JOHN
COSTANZA
letterer

DICK
GIORDANO
inker
SCOTT
PETERSON
editor

BATMAN created by **BOB KANE**

EVERYTHING'S THE SAME
AND EVERYTHING'S DIFFERENT.

BATMAN AND I ARE IN A TIGHT
SPOT, OUTNUMBERED AND
SURROUNDED BY HOODS WE
CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A
BREAK-IN.

BUT THE GUY IN THE
CAPE AND COWL ISN'T
BRUCE WAYNE.



IT'S JEAN PAUL VALLEY, BRUCE'S CHOICE TO STAND IN FOR HIM AS BATMAN UNTIL HE RECOVERS.

IF HE RECOVERS.

NO. CAN'T THINK ABOUT THAT NOW.

NOT WITH THESE CRIMINAL MASTERMINDS TRYING TO TAKE MY HEAD OFF.

IT'S LIKE EVERY HOOD IN GOTHAM WAS SUDDENLY HANDED A LICENSE TO STEAL.

OWWWW!

DOOG!

DOOP!

THE CRIMINAL CLASS HAS GONE ON OVERTIME WITH BATMAN OUT OF ACTION.



OUR PRESENCE ON THE STREET SHOULD CHANGE THAT.

EVEN IF IT ISN'T THE REAL BATMAN.



AND PAUL'S DOING A GOOD JOB FILLING IN.

MAYBE A LITTLE TOO GOOD.

UNNH!

HE'S INTO IT, ALL RIGHT. HE'S QUICK AND TOUGH AND SCARY.

BUT SOMEHOW HE'S SCARY IN ALL THE WRONG WAYS.

SCUM!

4



YOU HAND OVER THAT HAMMER AND YOU HAND IT OVER NOW.

UNLESS YOU WANT TO SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE ON A RESPIRATOR.

STAY BACK, MAN! I'LL HURT YOU, MAN!

HURT ME?

YOU COULD NEVER HURT ME.

OKAY, MAN. YOU GOT IT, OKAY? I'LL GO EASY.

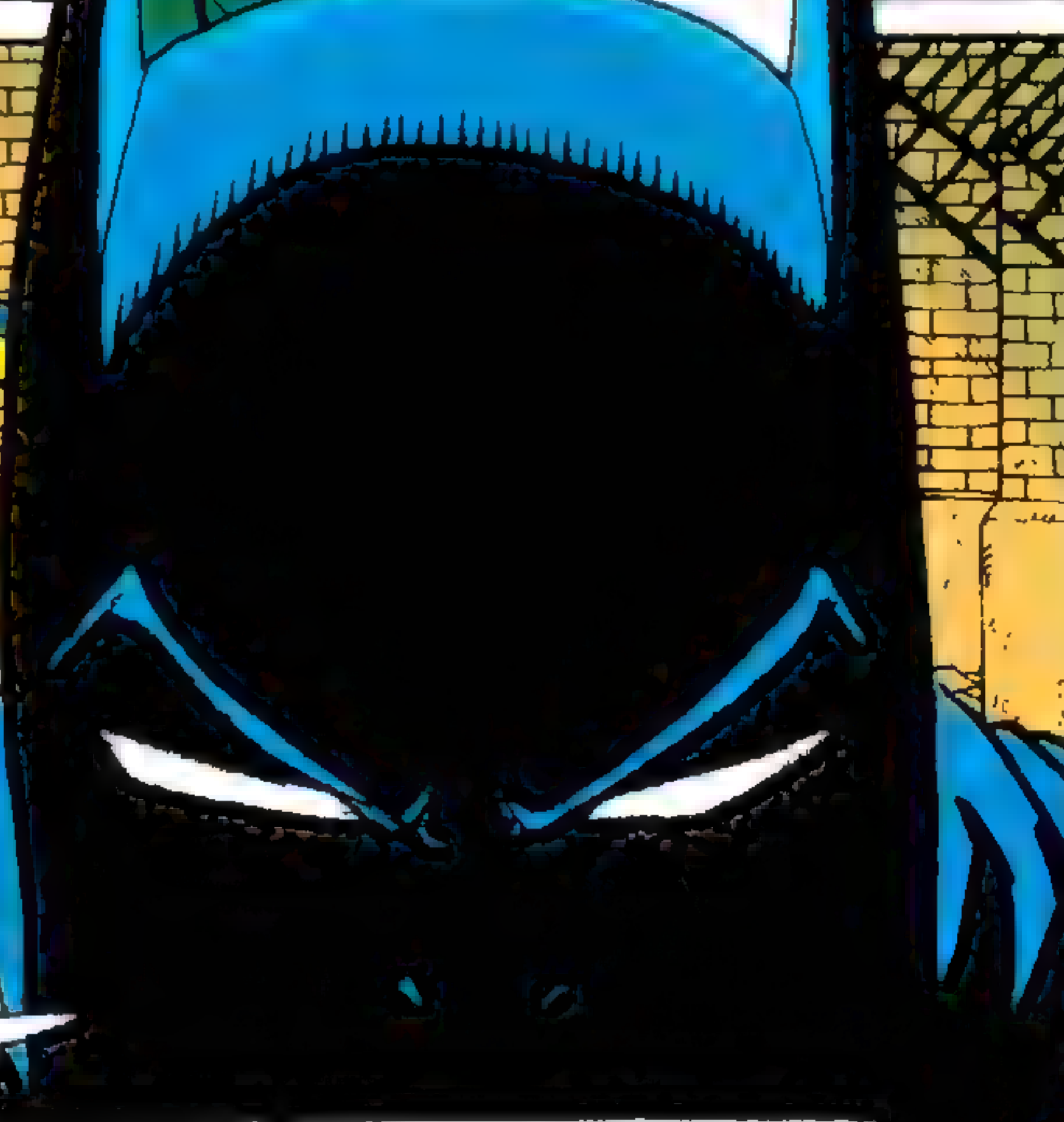
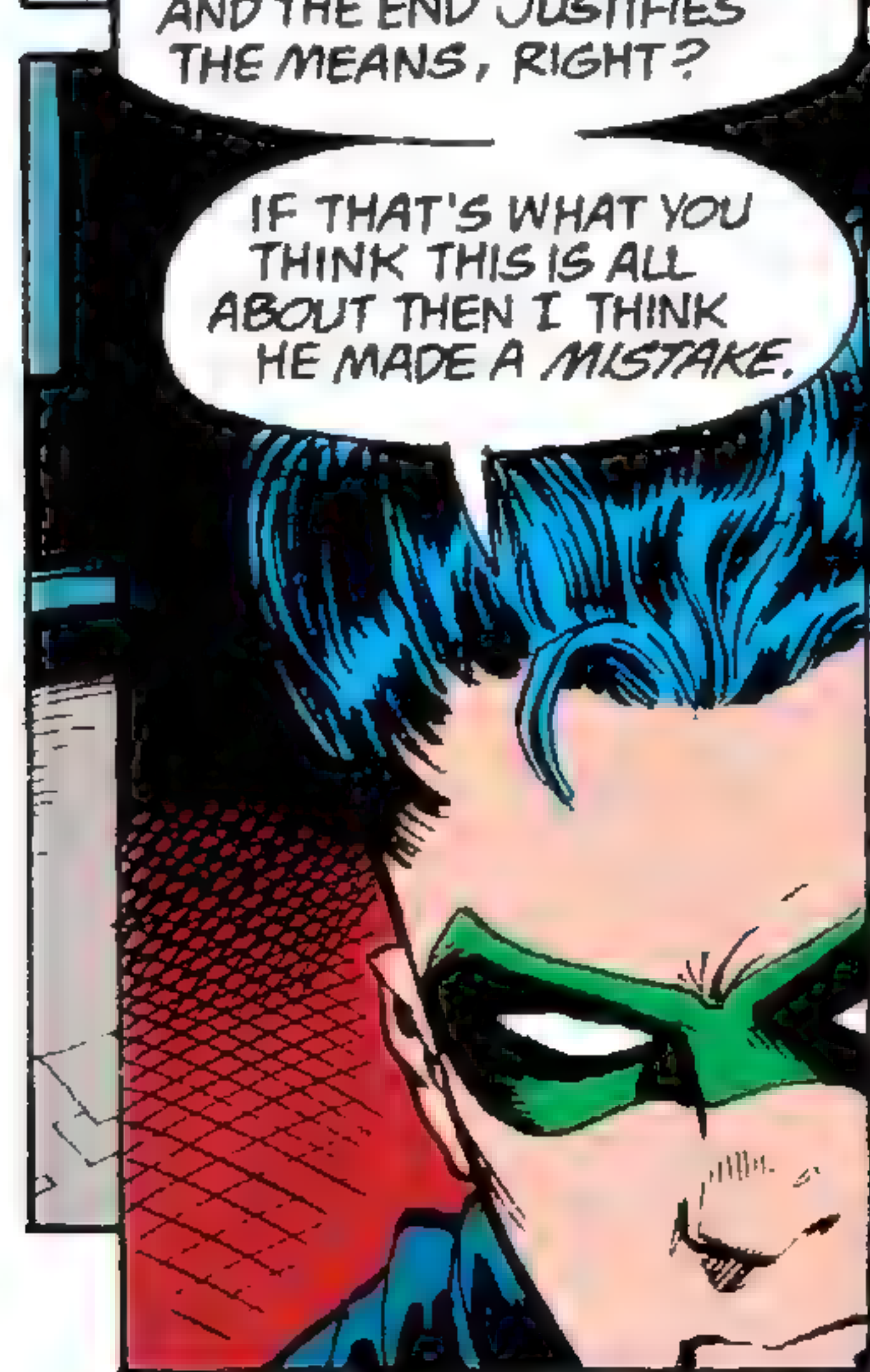
YOU'RE ALL COWARDS. EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU.

WHAT D'YA WANT, MAN?

I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT I WANT.

NO!

HECK, HE'S STARTING TO SCARE ME.



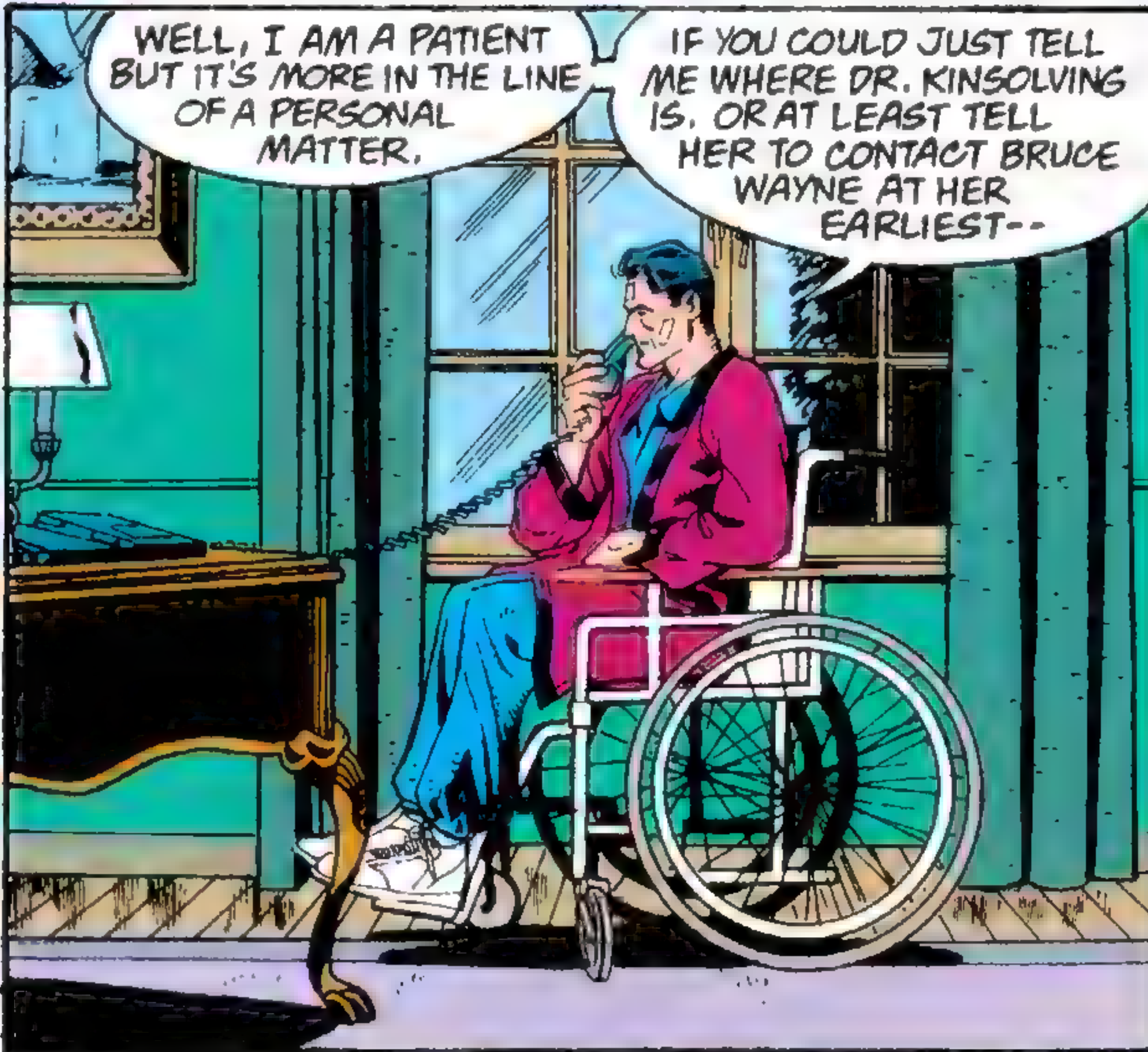
SUDDENLY THERE'S A CHILL IN THE AIR.





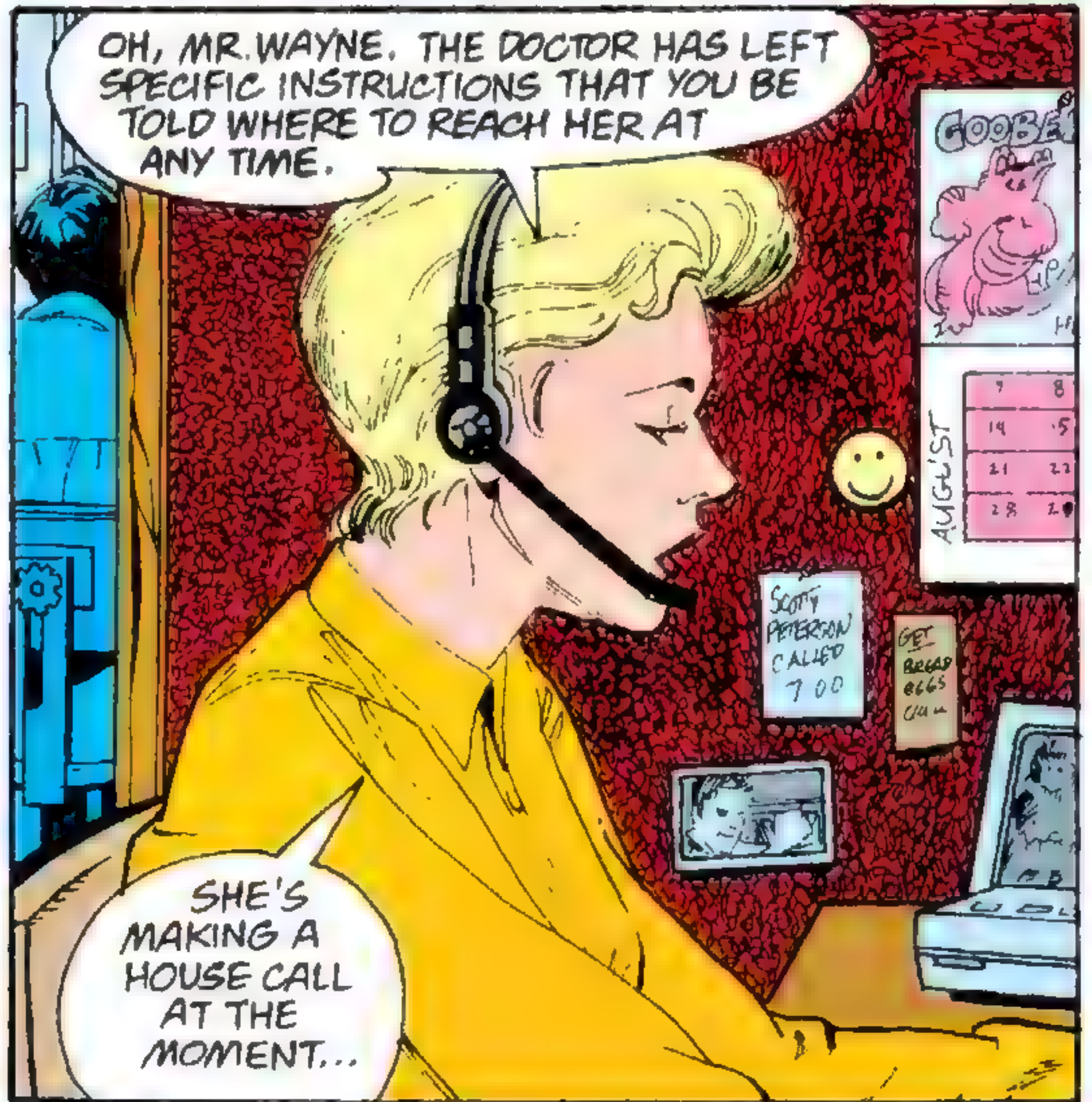
AND THE NIGHT GETS
A LITTLE DARKER.

AND COULD
YOU TELL ME
WHERE SHE'S
GONE?



WELL, I AM A PATIENT
BUT IT'S MORE IN THE LINE
OF A PERSONAL
MATTER.

IF YOU COULD JUST TELL
ME WHERE DR. KINSOLVING
IS, OR AT LEAST TELL
HER TO CONTACT BRUCE
WAYNE AT HER
EARLIEST--



OH, MR. WAYNE. THE DOCTOR HAS LEFT
SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS THAT YOU BE
TOLD WHERE TO REACH HER AT
ANY TIME.

SHE'S
MAKING A
HOUSE CALL
AT THE
MOMENT...



...OVER IN
BRISTOL.
THE PATIENT
IS A MR.
J. DRAKE.

JACK DRAKE,
TIM'S FATHER.
THAT'S NEXT
DOOR.

THANK YOU
VERY MUCH. HAVE
A GOOD
EVENING.



JACK HAS BEEN A PATIENT OF
SHONDRA'S SINCE HE REVIVED
FROM HIS COMA. I COULD
GET ALFRED TO DRIVE
ME OVER.



BUT THIS IS THE FIRST
DECENT SLEEP HE'S
HAD IN DAYS.

LET HIM BE.



JACK, I'D SAY YOU'VE MADE SOME PROGRESS.

I ONLY WISH YOU COULD MARK MY IMPROVEMENT WITHOUT CHECKING YOUR NOTES, DR. KINSOLVING.

WELL, ANY CHANGES IN YOUR STATUS HAVE TO BE MEASURED IN INCHES. YOU KNOW THAT.



MORE MOBILITY IN YOUR LEFT ARM. MORE FEELING IN YOUR LOWER EXTREMITIES.

SOME DAYS IT JUST SEEMS SO... IMPOSSIBLE.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, JACK.



CONVENTIONAL MEDICAL SCIENCE SAYS THAT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE THE ADVANCES YOU'VE MADE SO FAR.

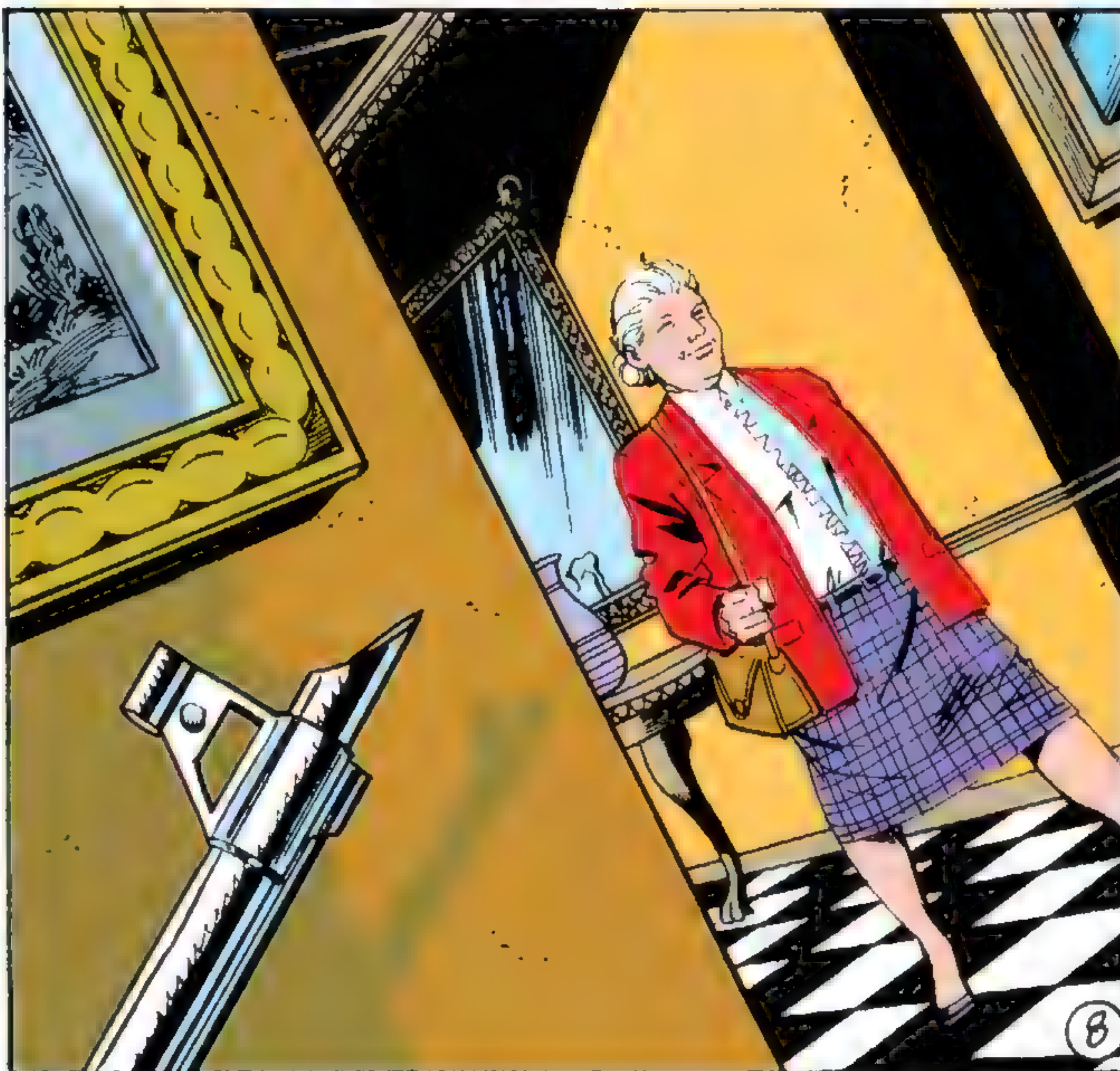
THAT'S THE BASIS OF MY ENTIRE PRACTICE; THE GAP BETWEEN SCIENCE AND THE HUMAN WILL.

EXCUSE ME...



EXCUSE ME, MR. DRAKE. I WAS GOIN' TO THE MOVIES LIKE I SAID. ANYTHING Y'NEED BEFORE I LEAVE?

NO, MRS. MCILVAINE. ENJOY YOURSELF.





NEVER FELT SUCH
CONFLICTING EMOTIONS.
DREAD AND RELIEF ALL
MINGLED.

DREAD OF WHAT
SHONDRA'S REACTION
MIGHT BE TO MY TELLING
HER THAT I'M BATMAN.
RELIEF THAT IT'S
FINALLY ALL OVER.

THE DOUBLE
LIFE. THE LYING.
THE--

THAT SMELL.
CIGARETTE
SMOKE.



SOMEONE
CONCEALED IN THE
TREES. NO GOOD
REASON WHY
ANYONE SHOULD
BE ON THE
GROUNDS.



ESPECIALLY
SOMEONE WHO'S
ARMED.

THIS ISN'T
RANDOM. THIS
HAS TO BE THE
WORK OF...



"...BANE."

DRUGS. SMUGGLING. GAMBLING. EXTORTION. CAR THEFT. BANK BURGLARY.

FROM THE HIGHEST ROLLER TO THE LOWEST STREET PUNK. OUT OF EVERY DOLLAR TAKEN IN WE GET FIFTY CENTS.

FROM CREST POINT TO SOMERSET. IT IS ALL MINE. MY INFLUENCE AND POWER ARE FELT IN EVERY CORNER OF GOTHAM.

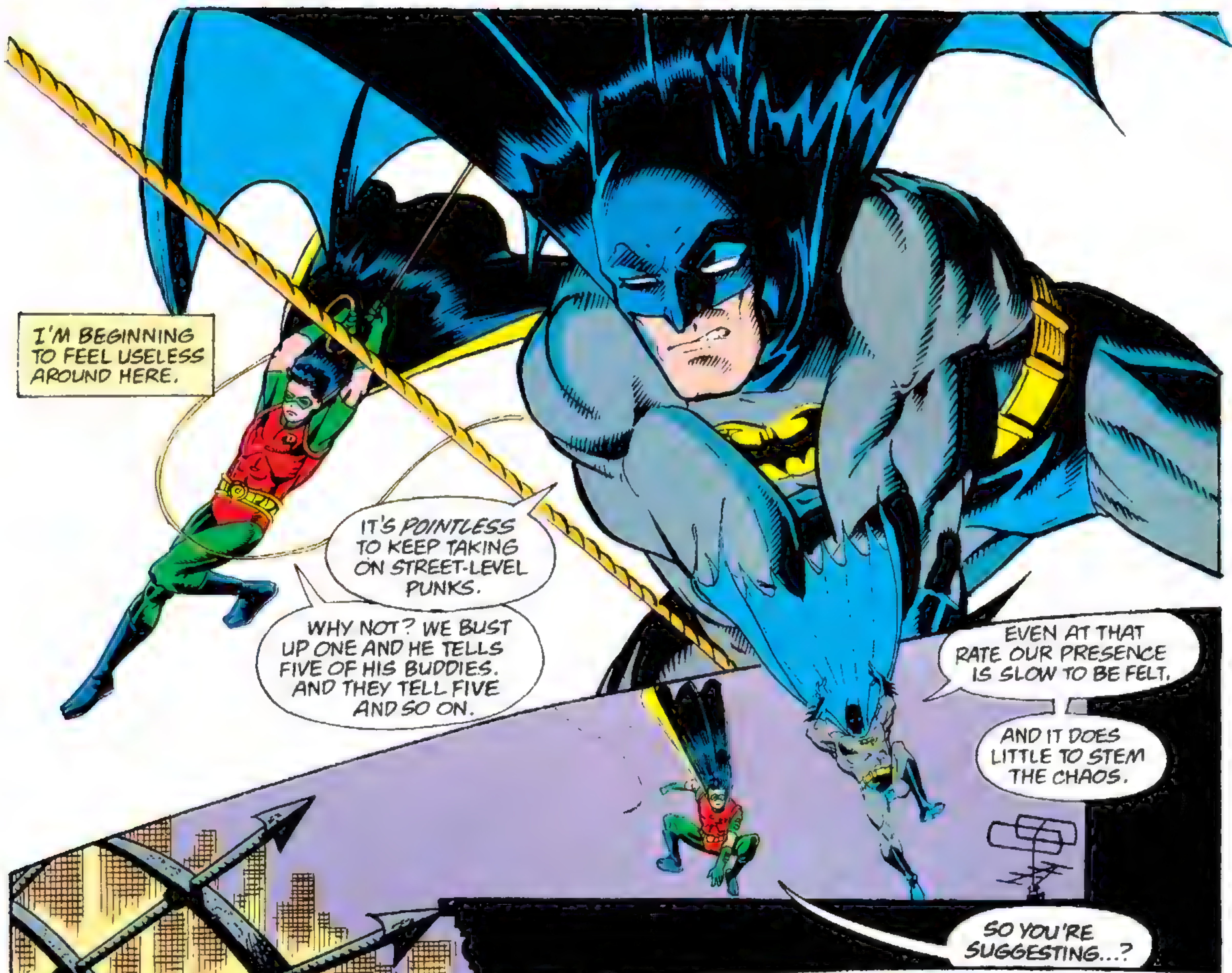
THE UNIONS, BANE. WE STILL DON'T HAVE A GRIP ON THEM.

CONSTRUCTION, TRUCKING AND TRADE UNIONS ARE THE MOST LUCRATIVE RACKETS. THE MEN WHO CONTROL THEM HOLD ON TO THEM DEARLY.

IT WILL TAKE A LOT OF MUSCLE TO TAKE THEM AND MORE TO HOLD THEM.

WE HAVE ALREADY DRIVEN A WEDGE INTO THEIR ORGANIZATION.

THEY WILL DRIVE IT DEEPER, MY FRIENDS. YOU WILL SEE.



I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL USELESS AROUND HERE.

IT'S POINTLESS TO KEEP TAKING ON STREET-LEVEL PUNKS.

WHY NOT? WE BUST UP ONE AND HE TELLS FIVE OF HIS BUDDIES. AND THEY TELL FIVE AND SO ON.

EVEN AT THAT RATE OUR PRESENCE IS SLOW TO BE FELT.

AND IT DOES LITTLE TO STEM THE CHAOS.

SO YOU'RE SUGGESTING...?



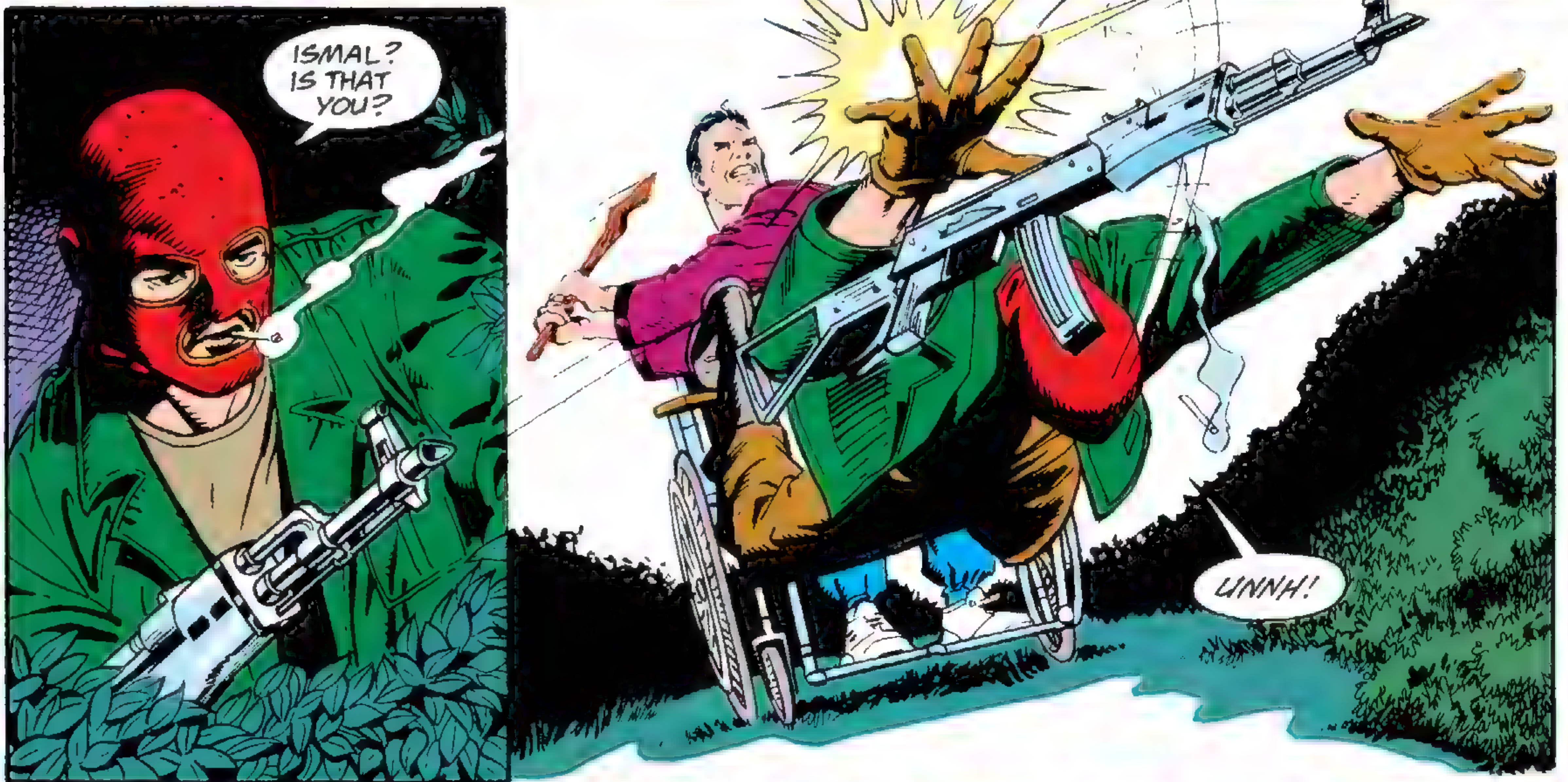
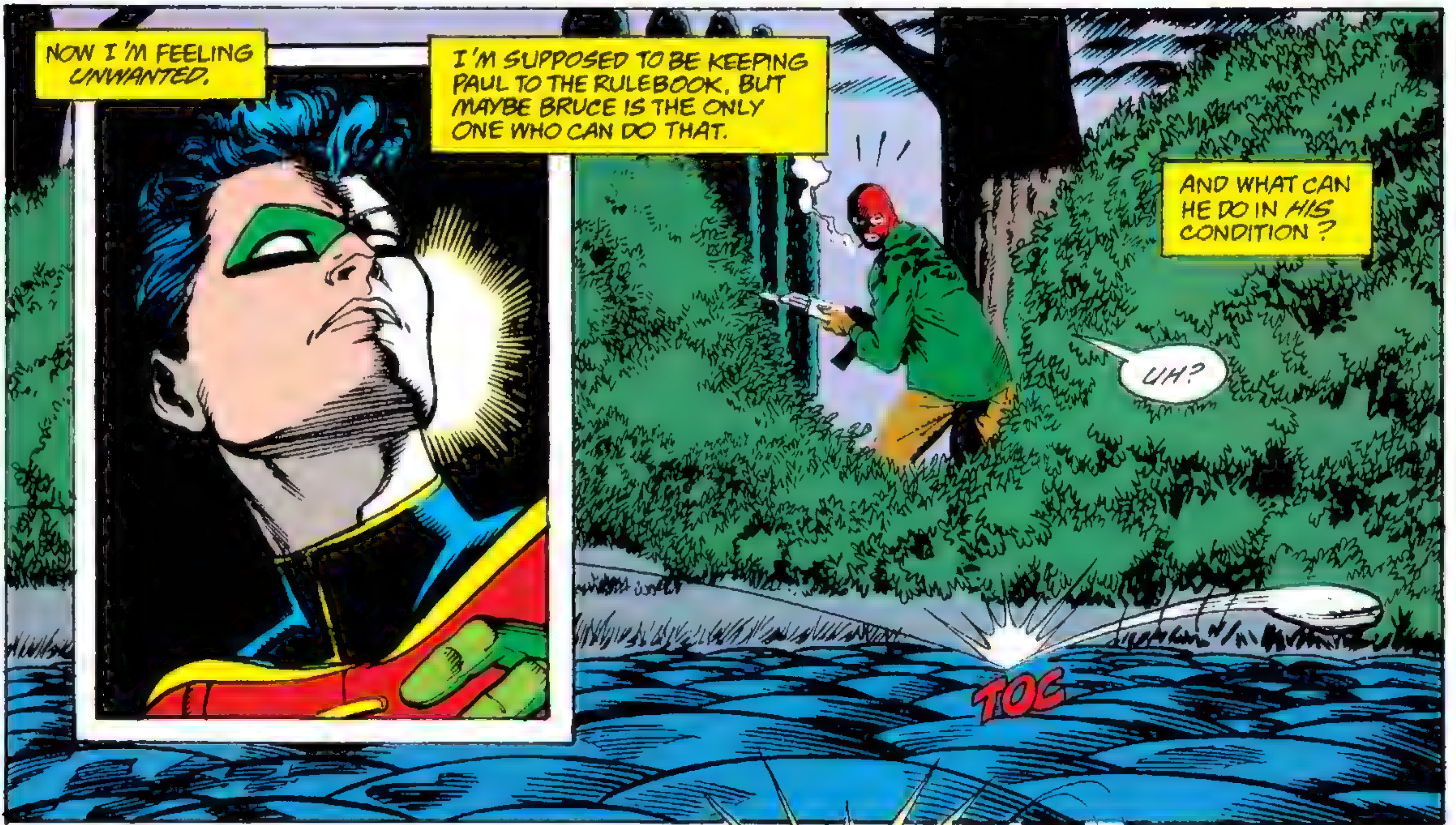
START AT THE TOP AND WORK DOWN.

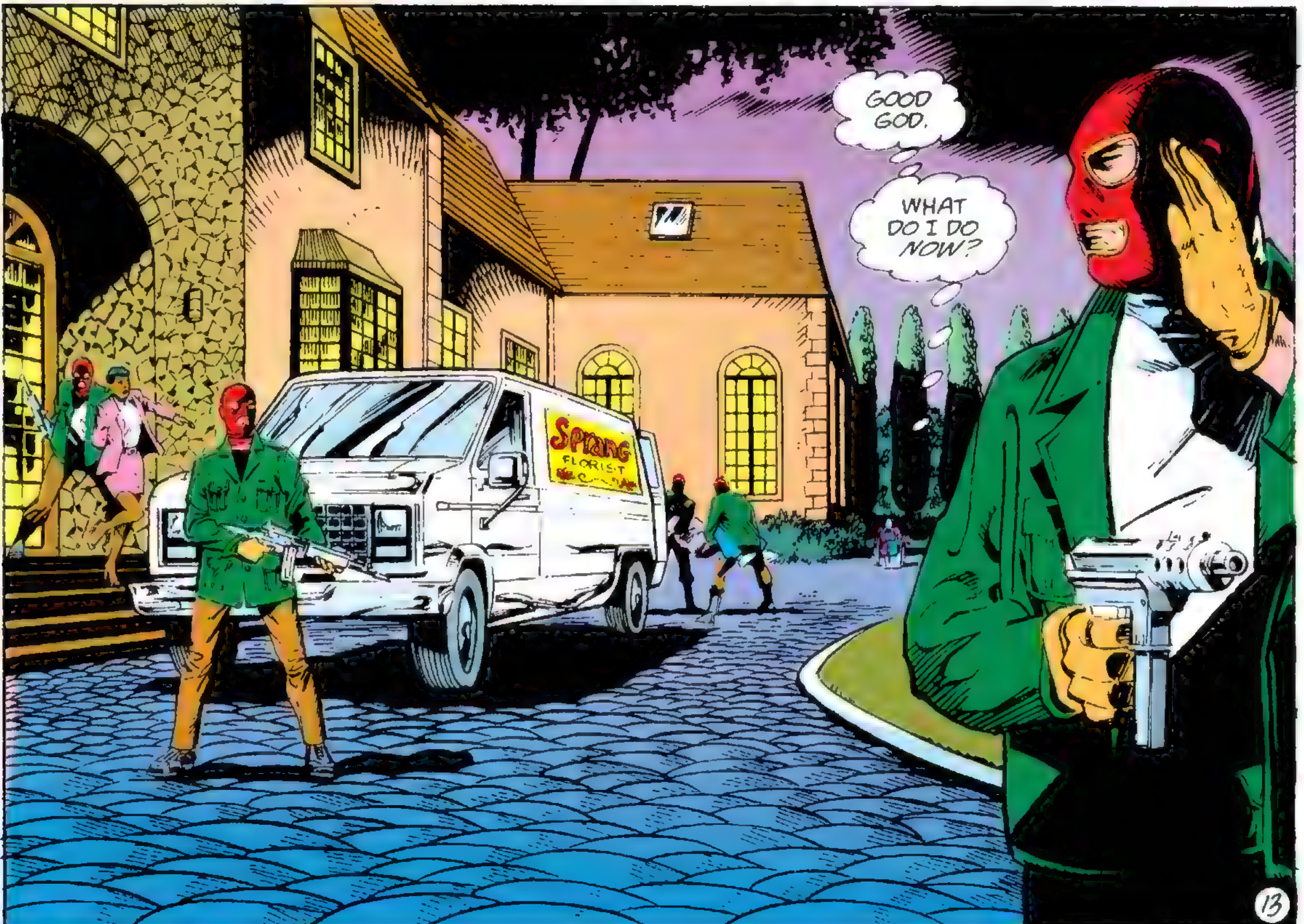
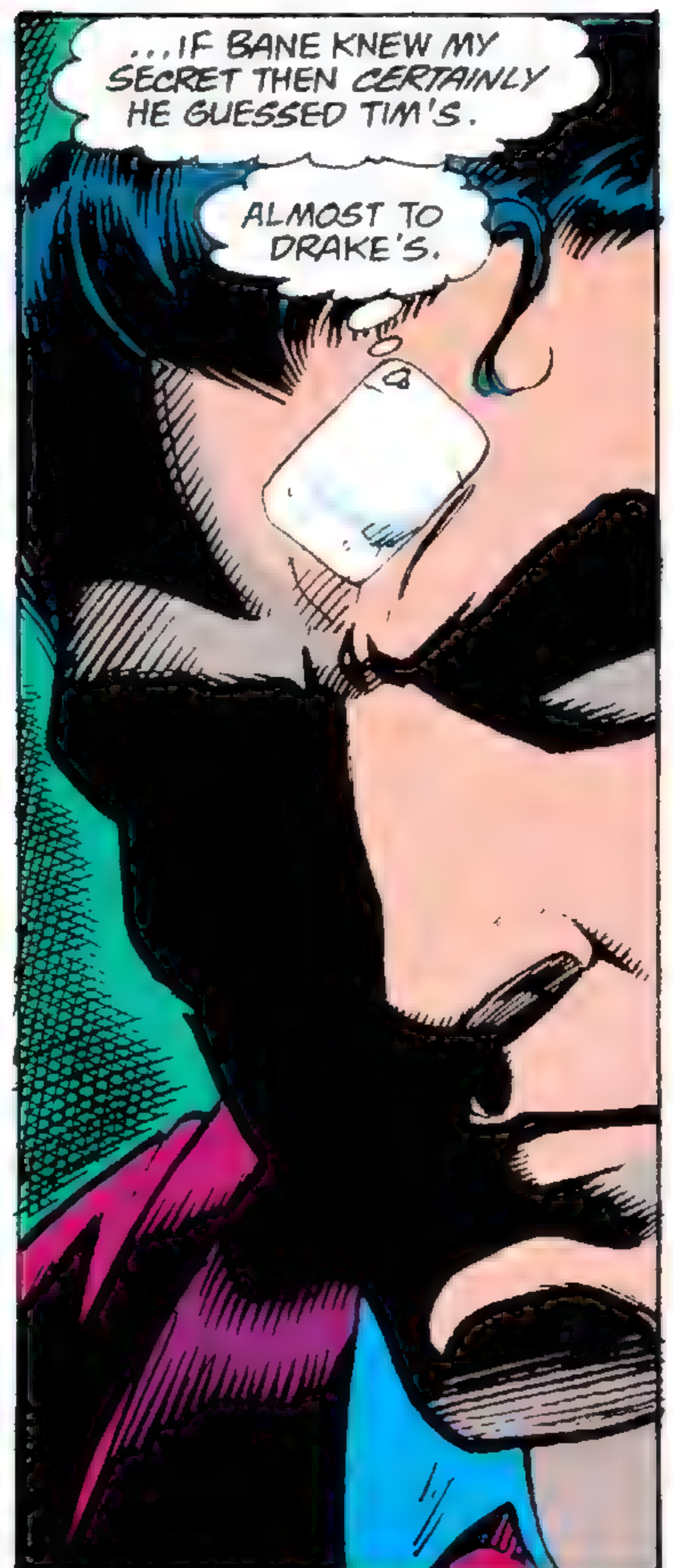
I HAVE MY OWN INFORMANTS AND THEY TELL ME THAT THE SKYROOM ATOP GOTHAM-DOME IS A FAVORITE HAUNT OF THE CITY'S PRIME MOBSTERS.

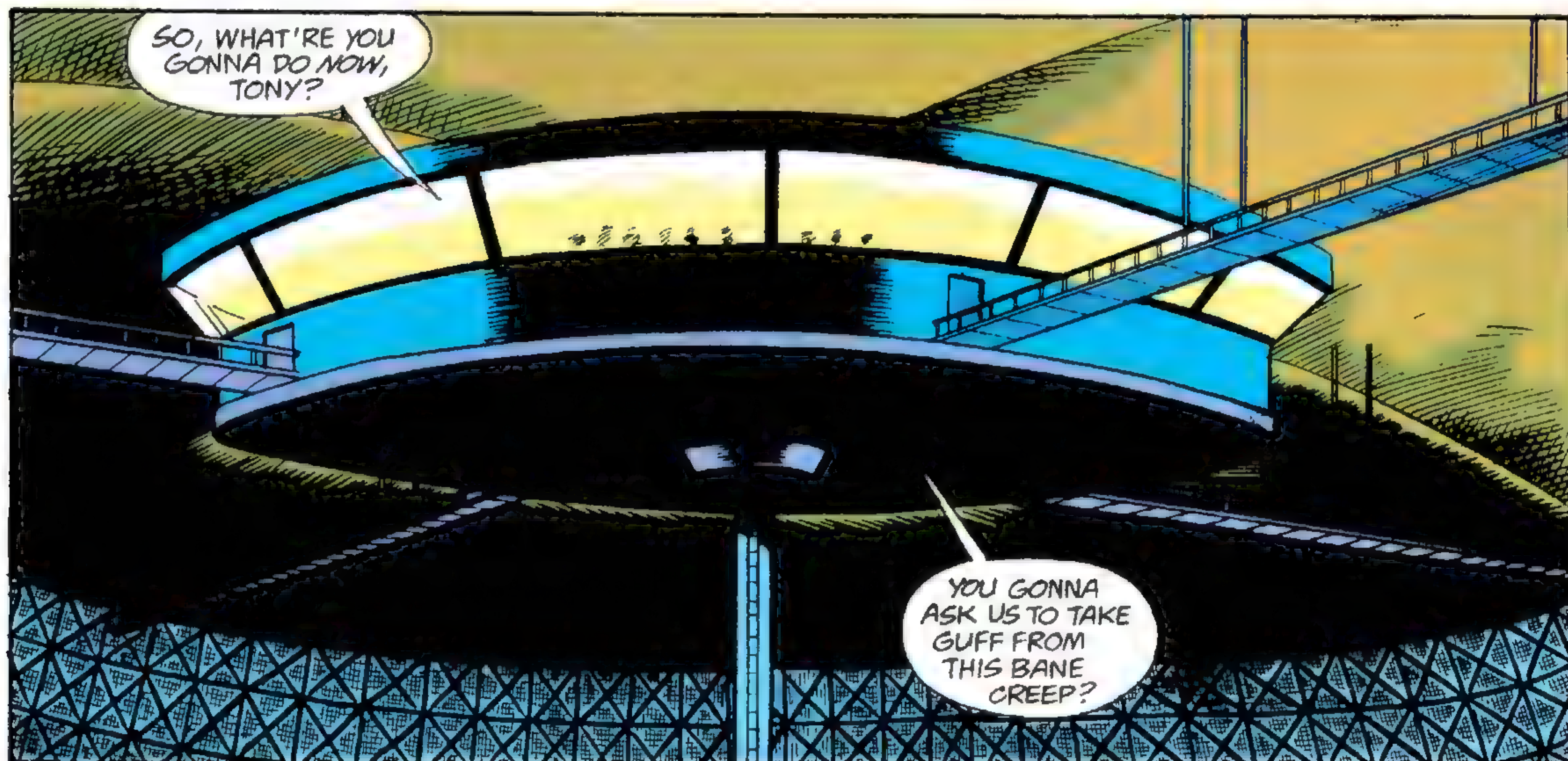
BANE IS THE PRIME MOVER IN GOTHAM THESE DAYS AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO STAY AWAY FROM HIM.



YOU DO AS YOU WANT. I'M GOING TO THE TOP OF THE DOME.











THIS SITUATION IS GOING TO BE HARD TO CONTROL.

SHONDRA!

WE DO NOT NEED WITNESSES! GET RID OF HIM!

NO!



DON'T HURT HIM! YOU DON'T WANT HIM, YOU WANT US!



YOU CAN'T TAKE THEM! I WON'T LET YOU!

AND WHAT WILL YOU DO TO ME, EH?

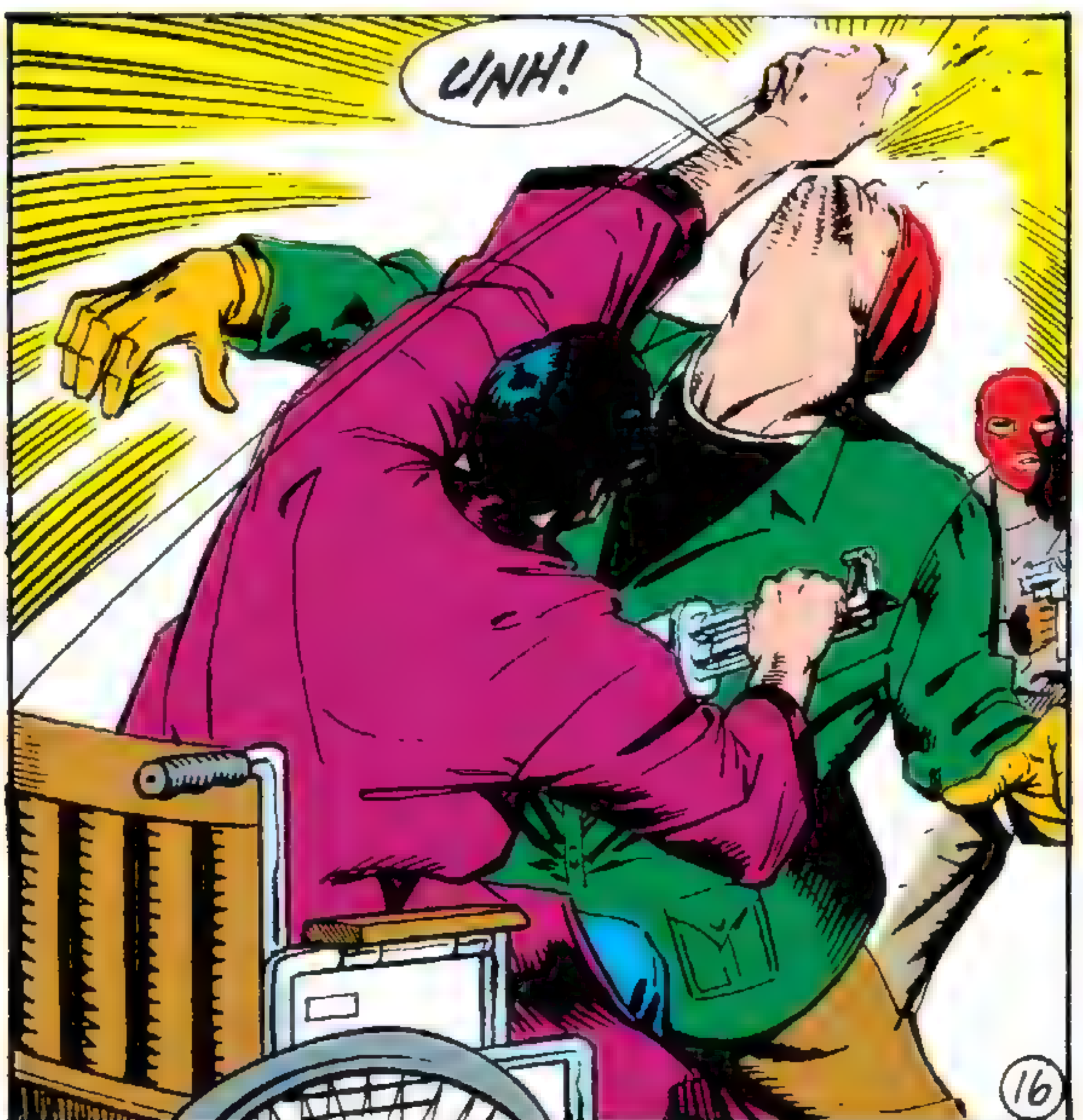
OUT OF THE WAY, TAZ. I'LL KILL HIM!



YOU GOING TO ROLL OVER MY FOOT WITH YOUR CHAIR, EH?

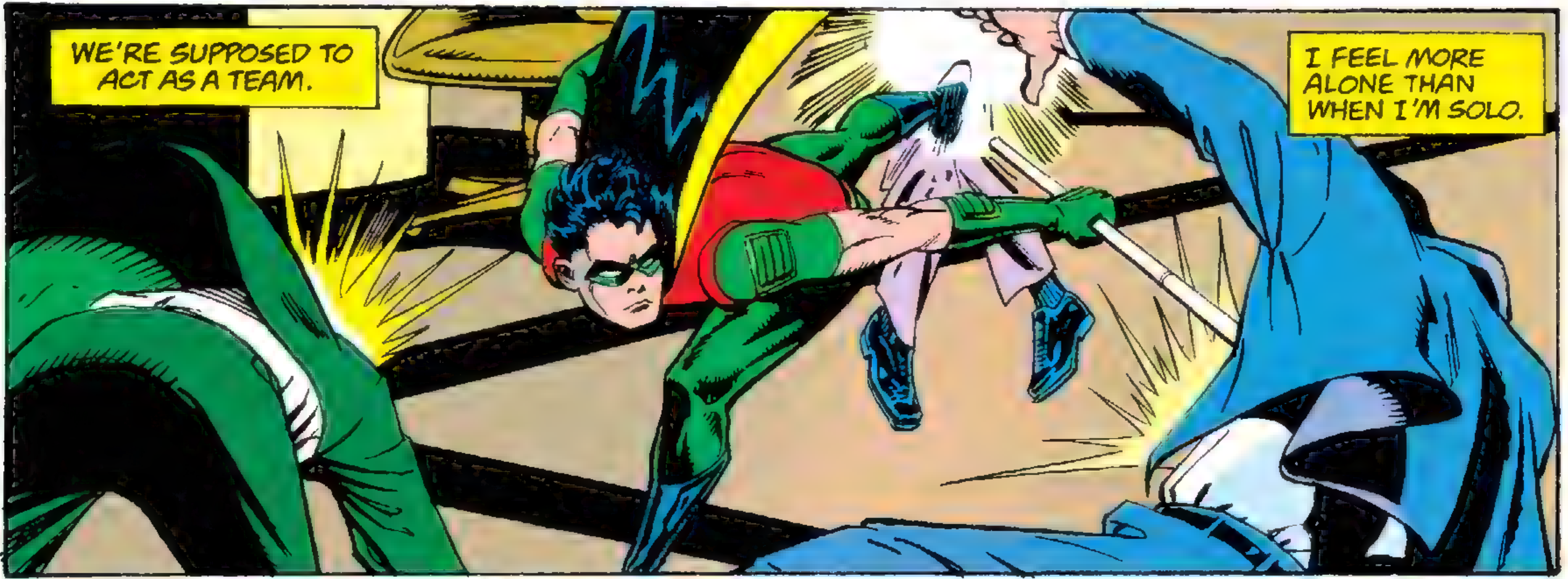
HEY!

LET ME GET A CLEAR SHOT AT HIM!



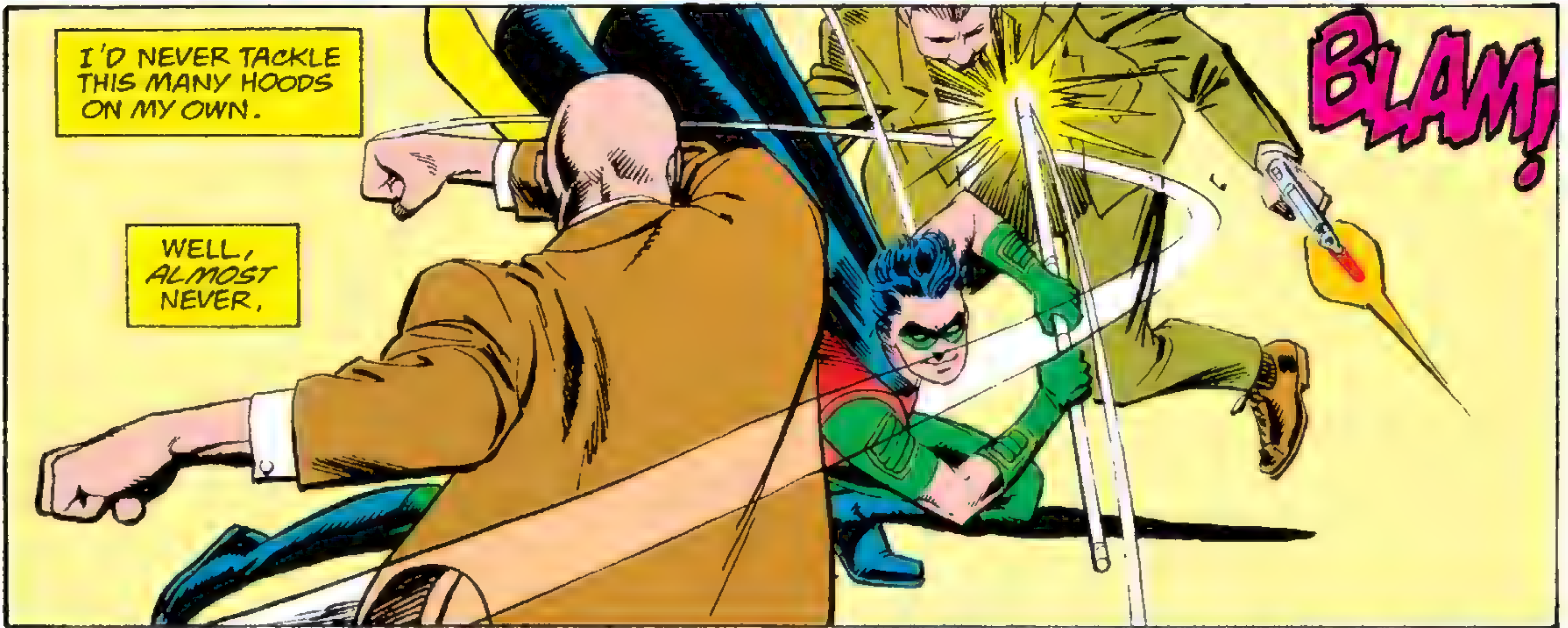
UNH!

16



WE'RE SUPPOSED TO ACT AS A TEAM.

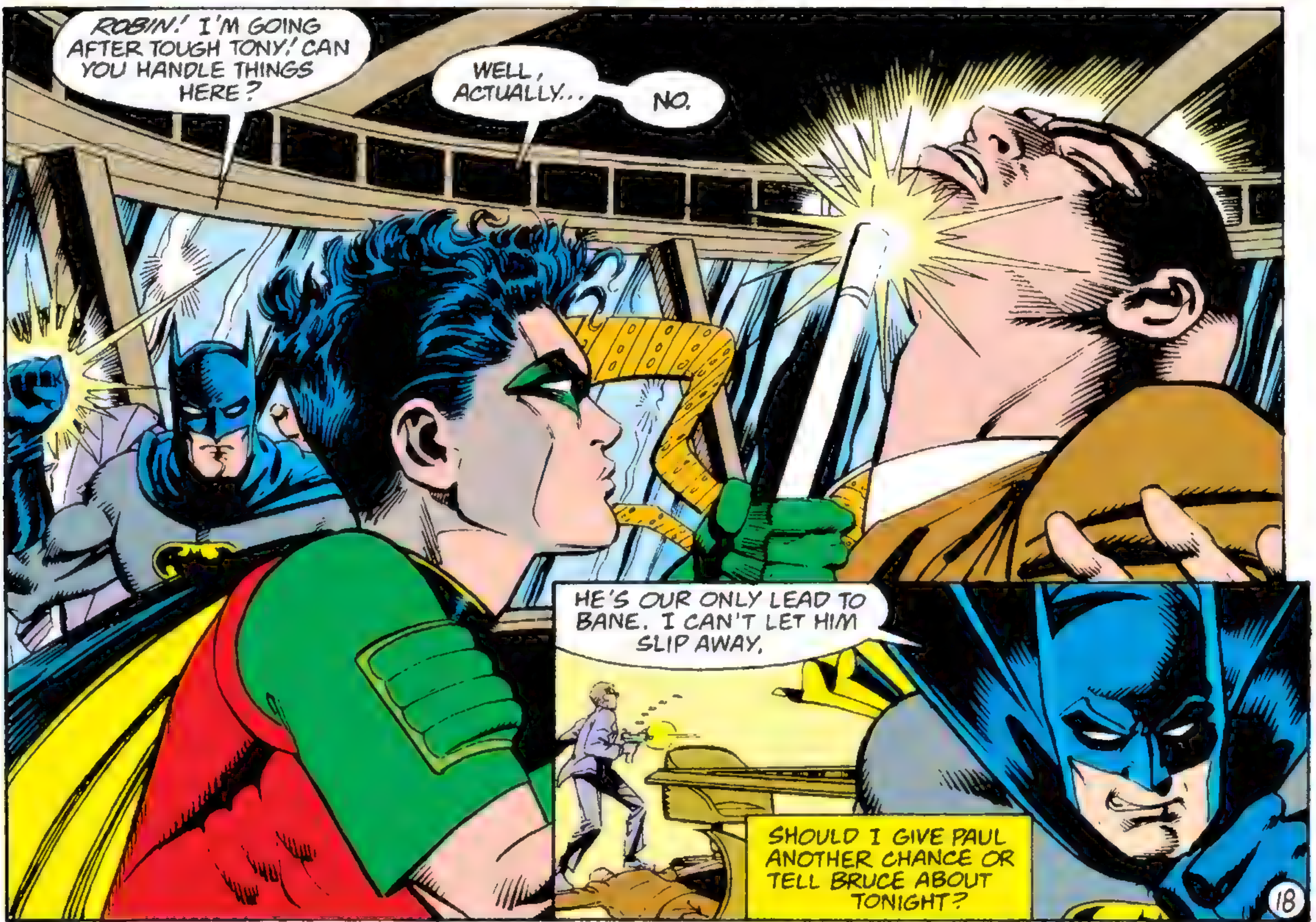
I FEEL MORE ALONE THAN WHEN I'M SOLO.



I'D NEVER TACKLE THIS MANY HOODS ON MY OWN.

WELL, ALMOST NEVER.

BLAM!



ROBIN! I'M GOING AFTER TOUGH TONY! CAN YOU HANDLE THINGS HERE?

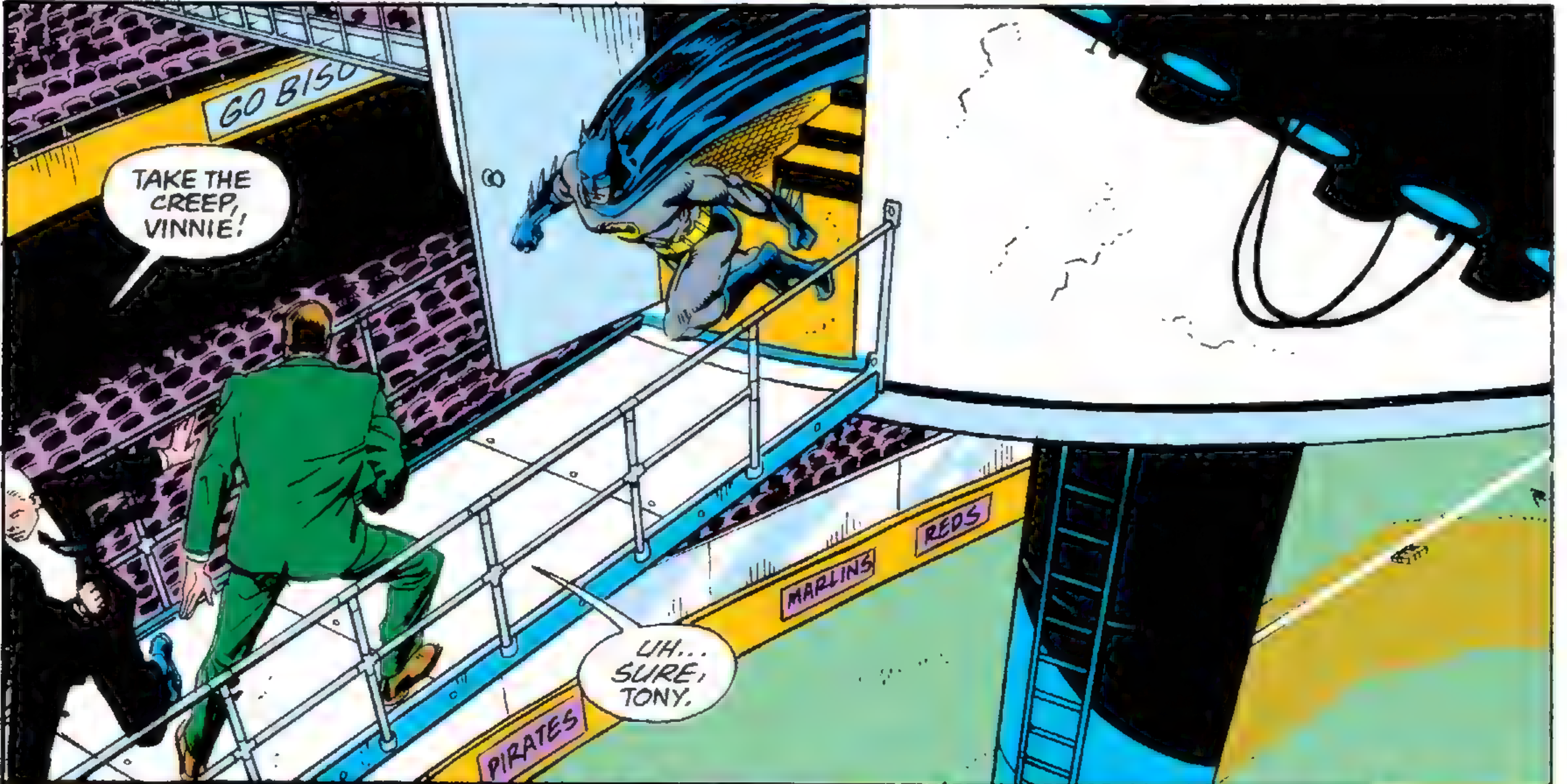
WELL, ACTUALLY...

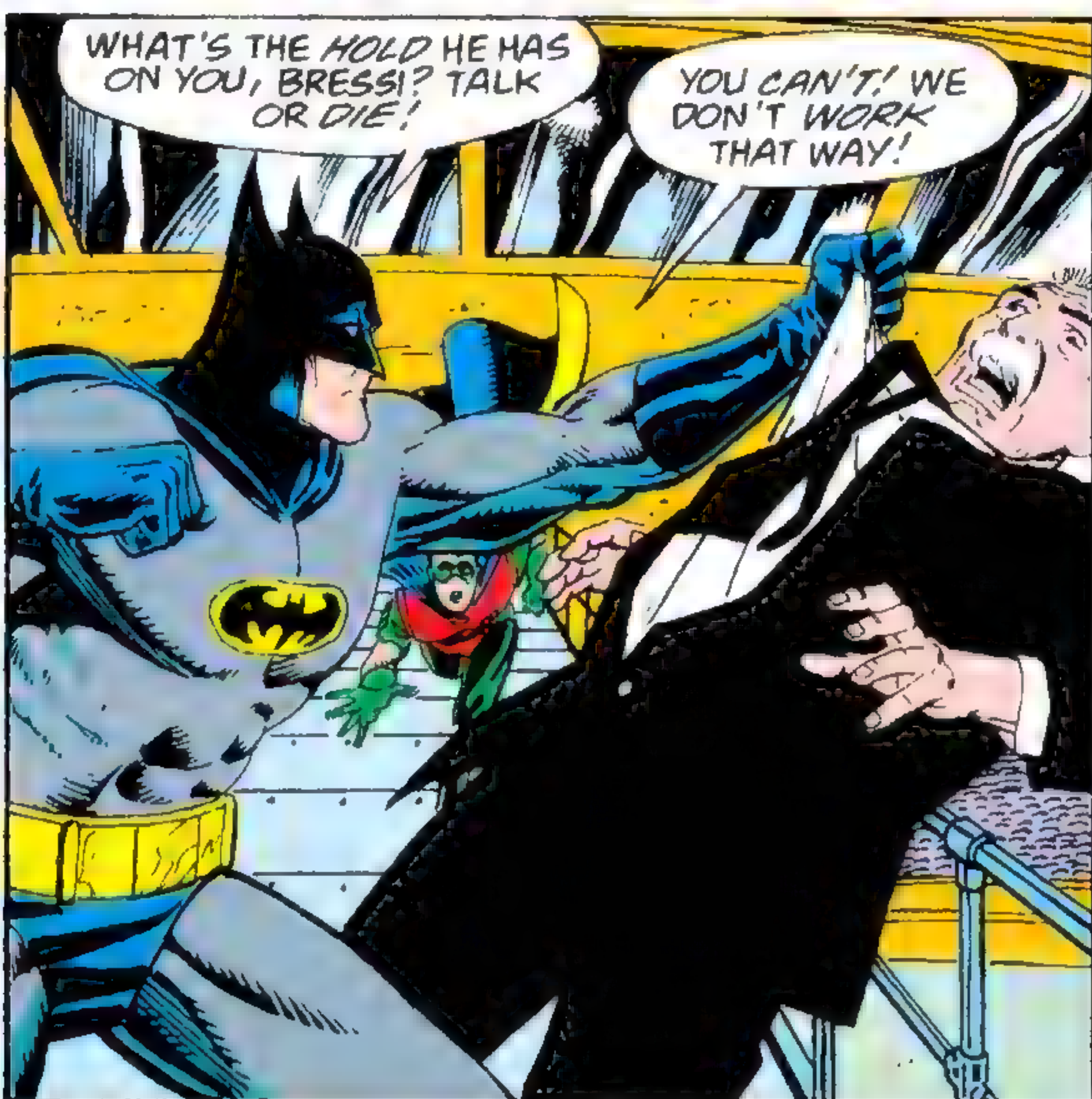
NO.

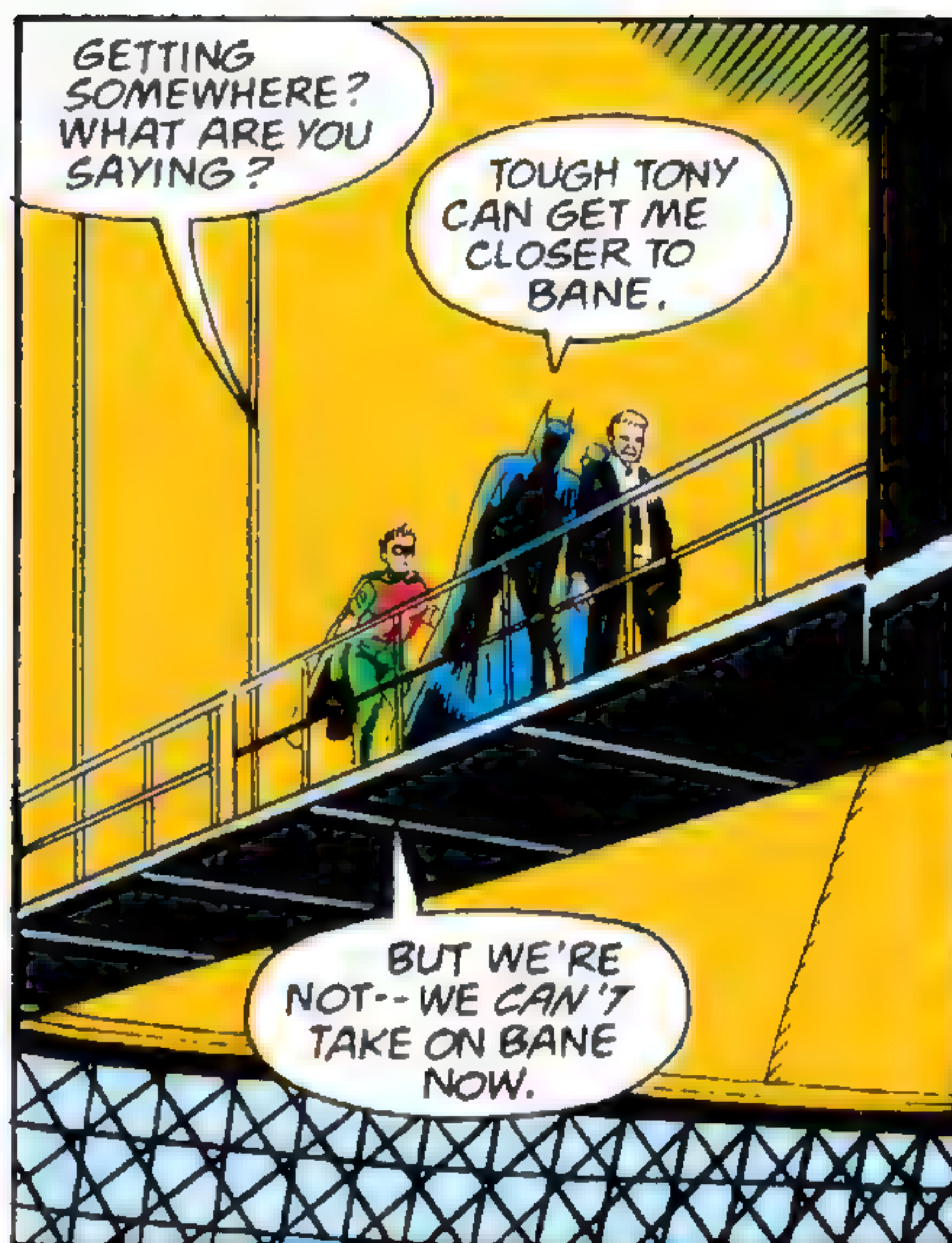
HE'S OUR ONLY LEAD TO BANE. I CAN'T LET HIM SLIP AWAY.

SHOULD I GIVE PAUL ANOTHER CHANCE OR TELL BRUCE ABOUT TONIGHT?









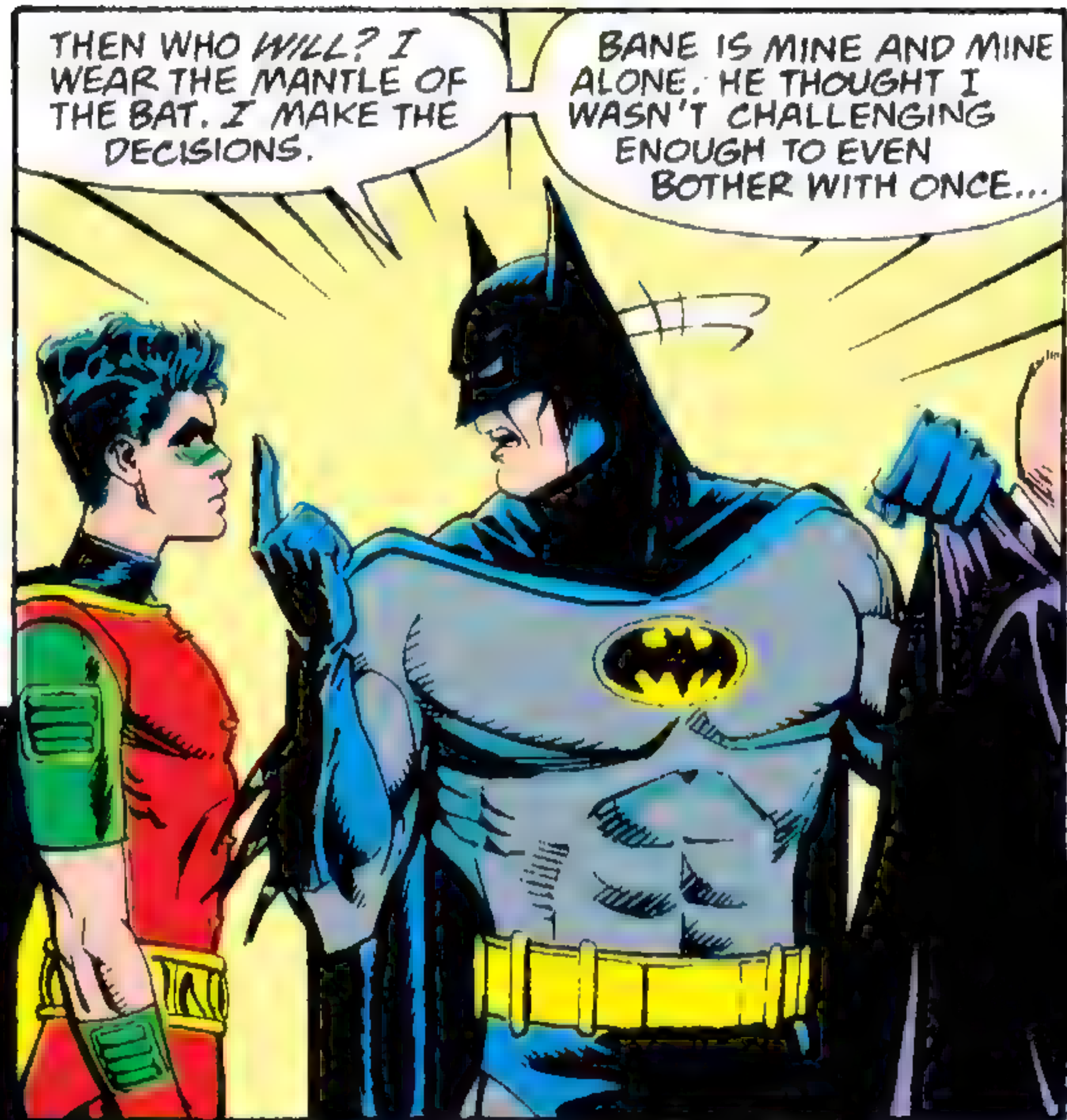
GETTING SOMEWHERE? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

TOUGH TONY CAN GET ME CLOSER TO BANE.

BUT WE'RE NOT-- WE CAN'T TAKE ON BANE NOW.

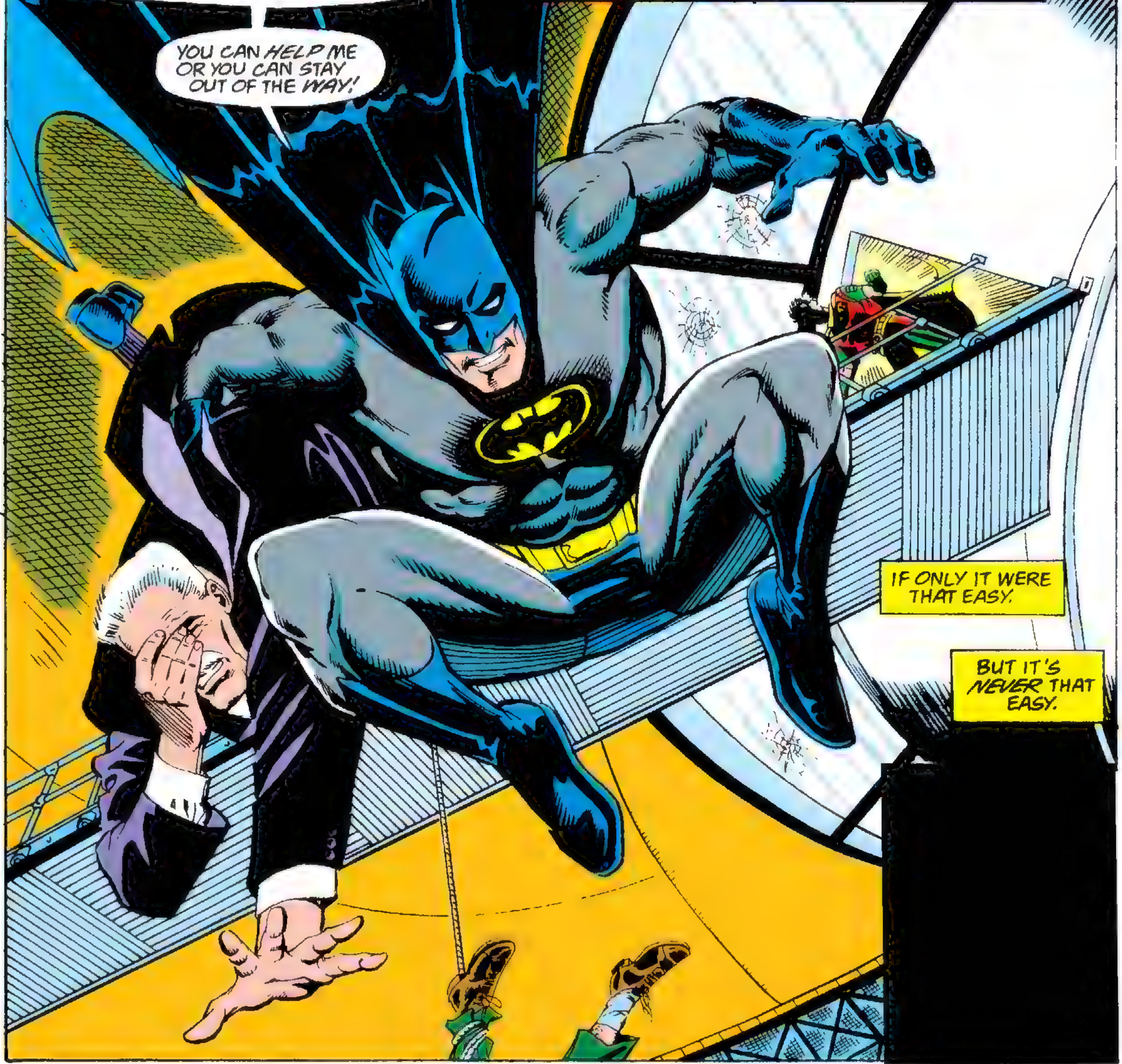
I'LL SHOW HIM HE WAS WRONG TO UNDERESTIMATE ME!

YOU CAN HELP ME OR YOU CAN STAY OUT OF THE WAY!



THEN WHO WILL? I WEAR THE MANTLE OF THE BAT. I MAKE THE DECISIONS.

BANE IS MINE AND MINE ALONE. HE THOUGHT I WASN'T CHALLENGING ENOUGH TO EVEN BOTHER WITH ONCE...



IF ONLY IT WERE THAT EASY.

BUT IT'S NEVER THAT EASY.



NO 16 EARLY SEP 93
PART ONE OF THREE

KNIGHTFALL



B A T M A N

SHADOW OF THE BAT

THE GOD OF FEAR

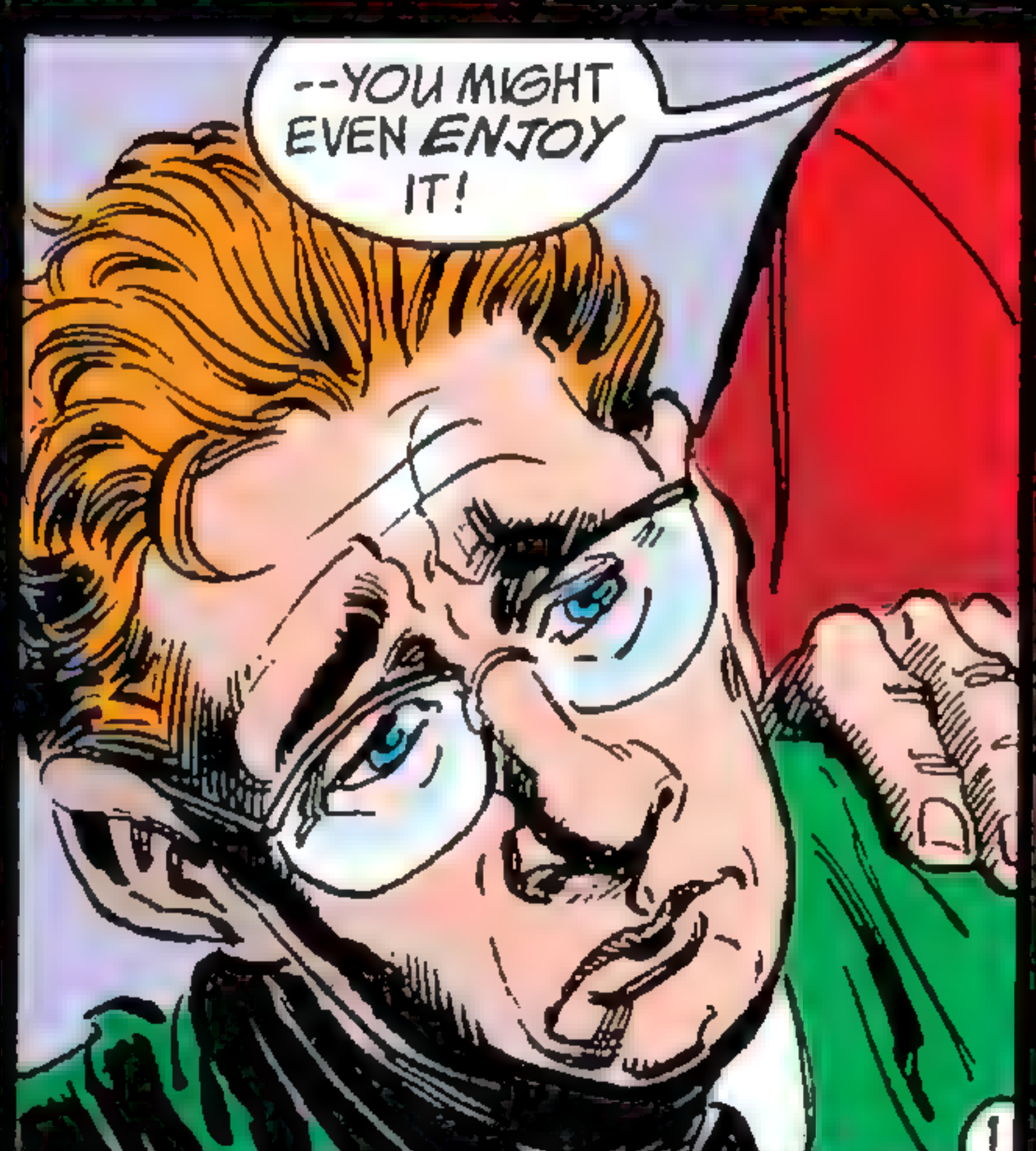
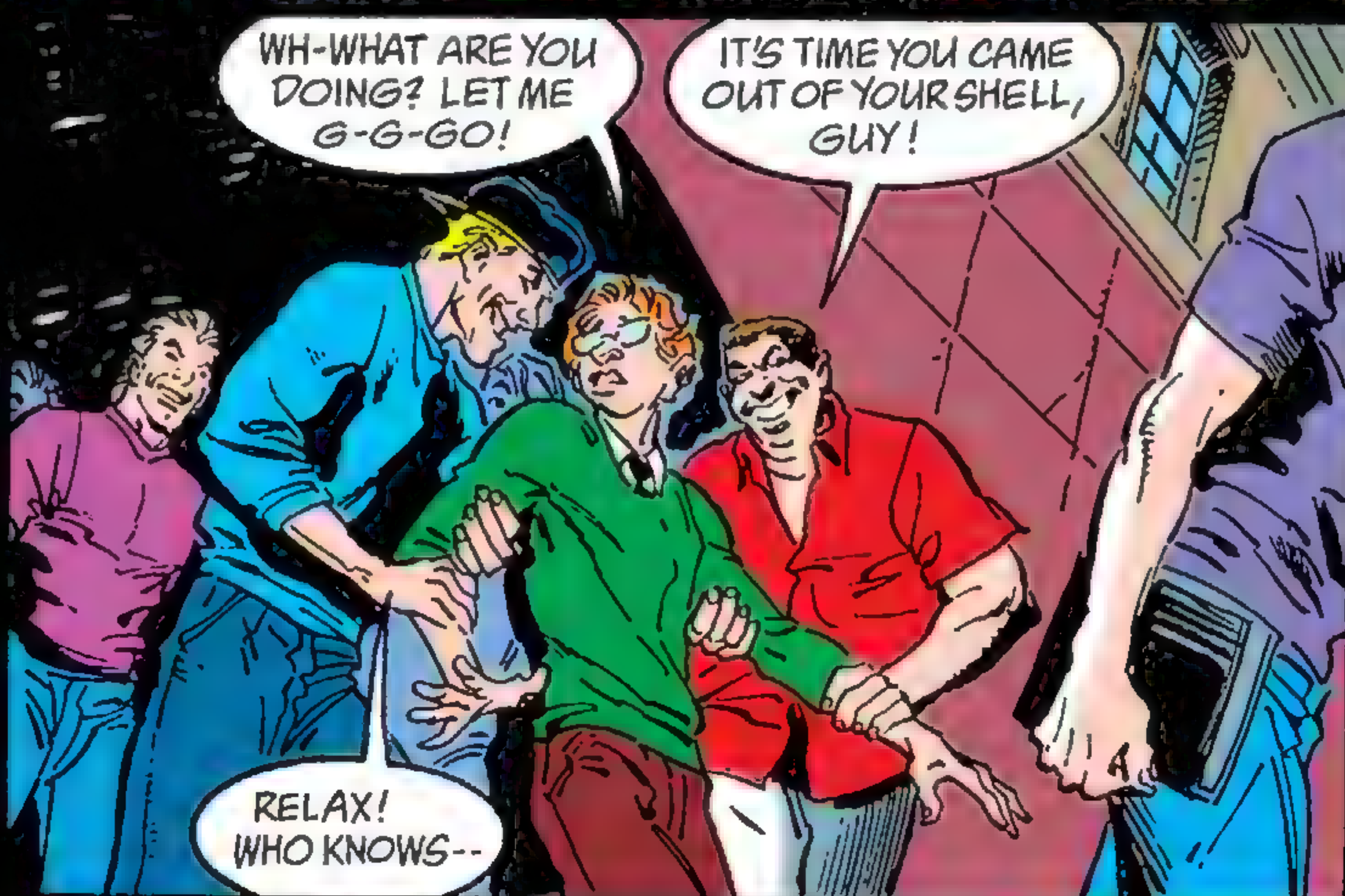
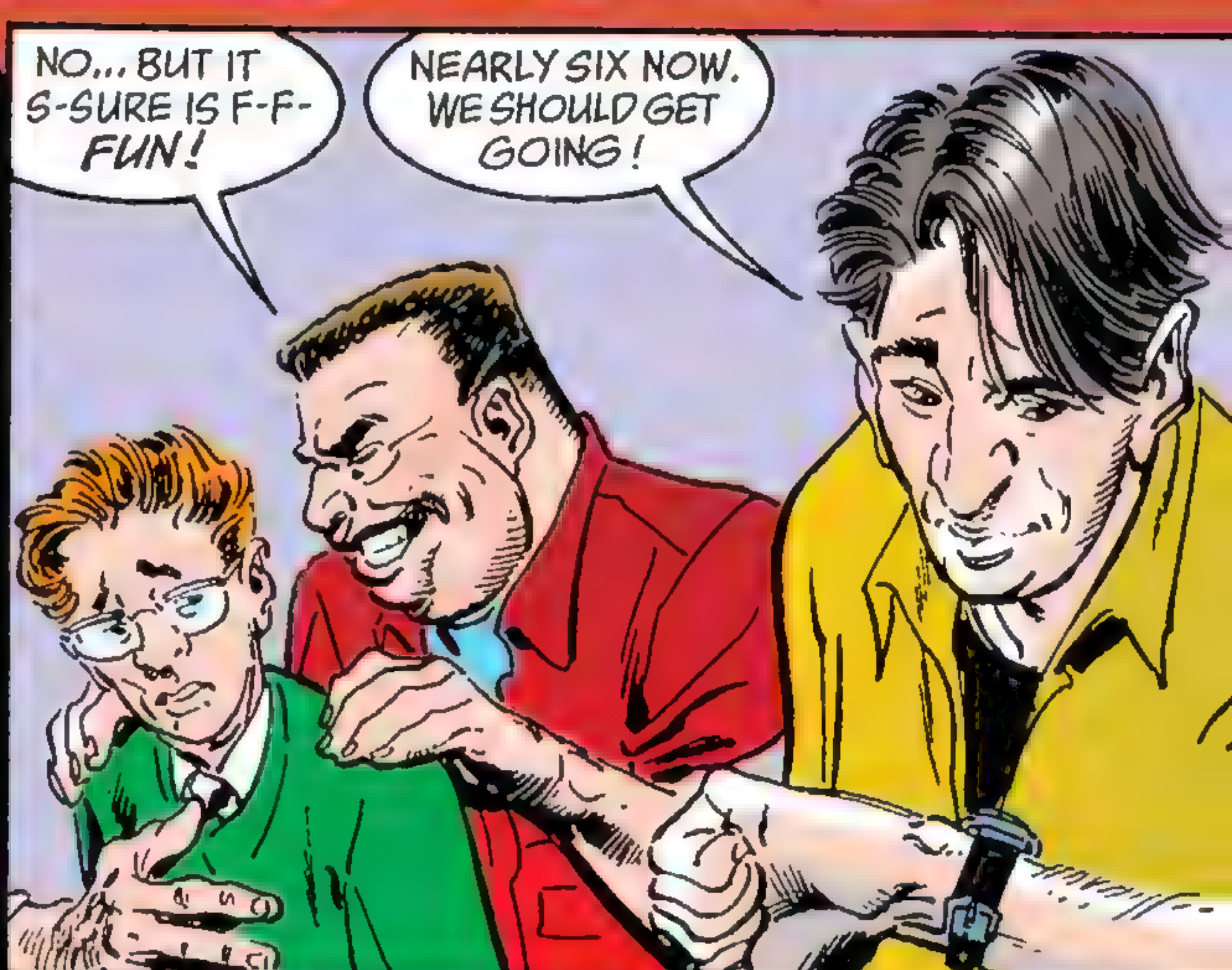
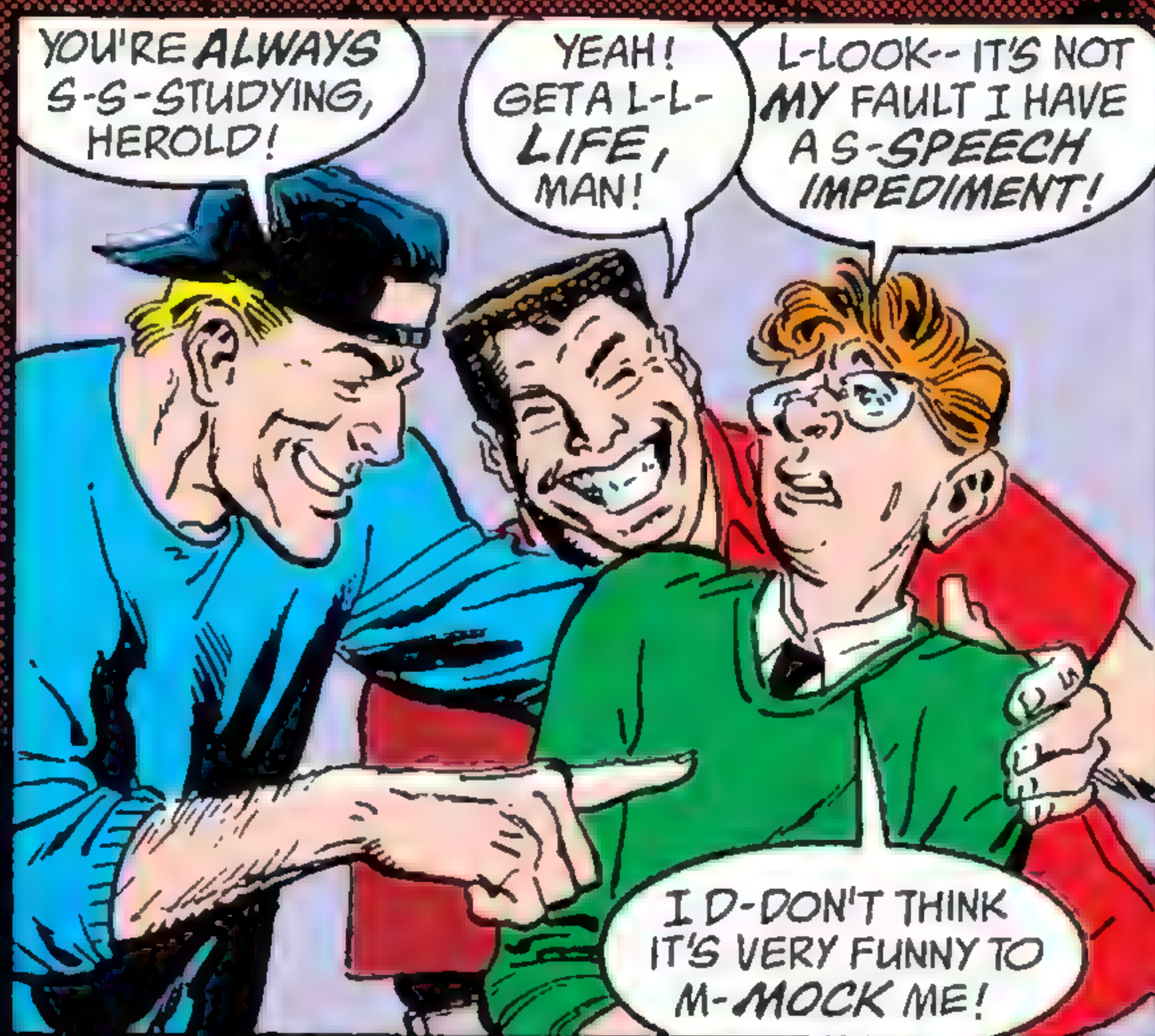
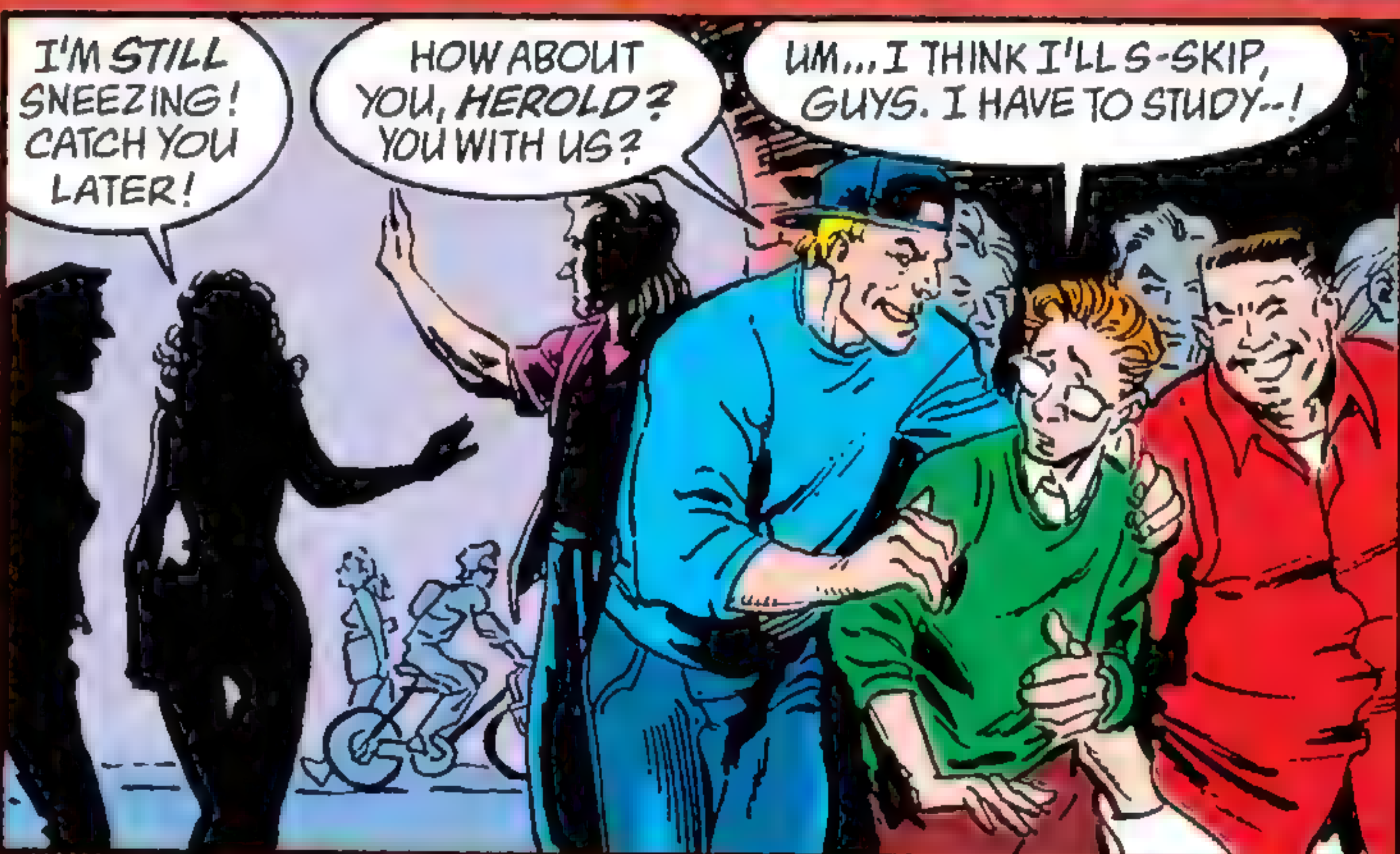
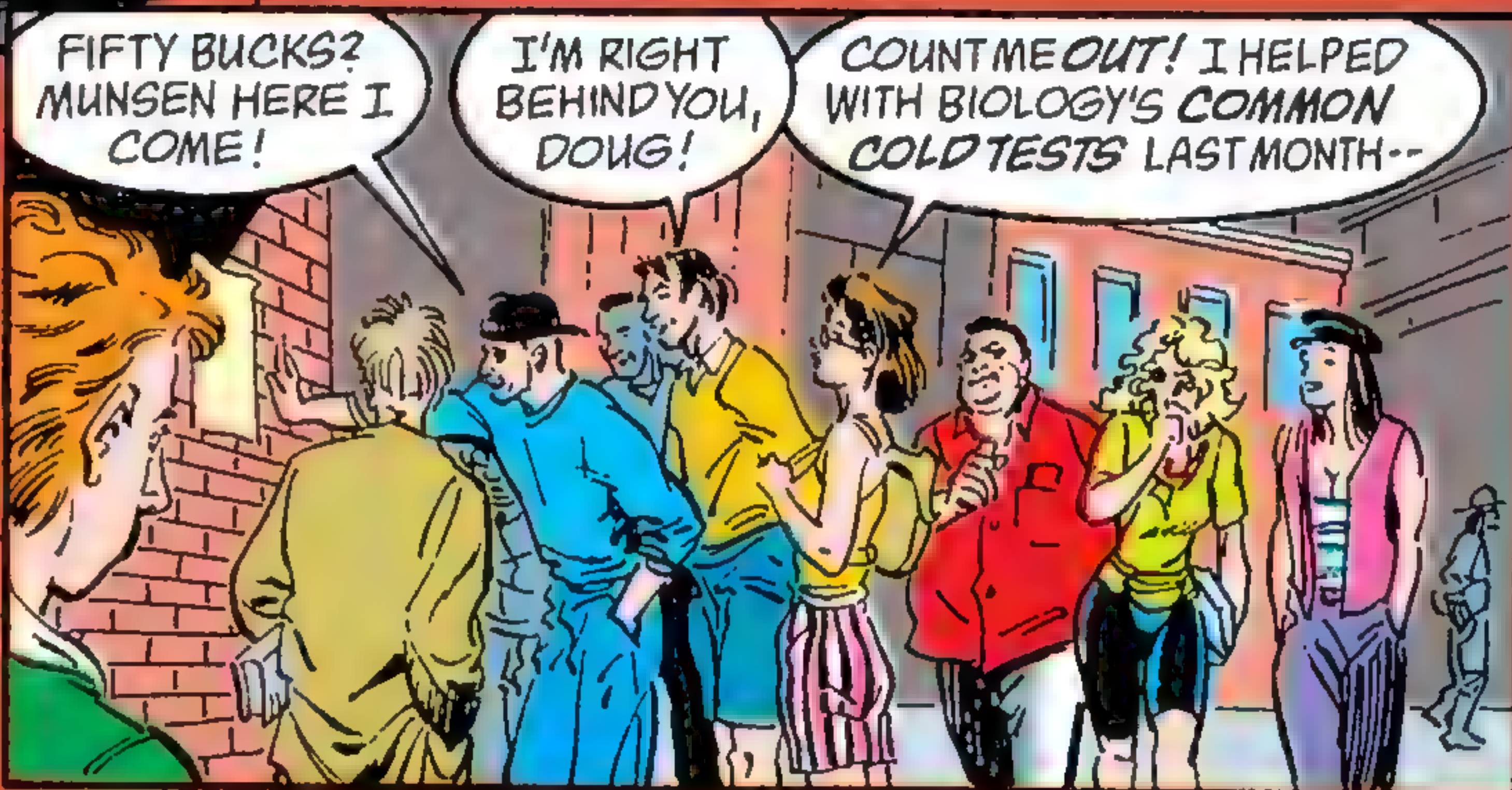
BY GRANT, BLEVINS & MANLEY



STUDENTS
EARN \$50
TODAY!

Volunteers Required
for Harmless
Psychology Experiment

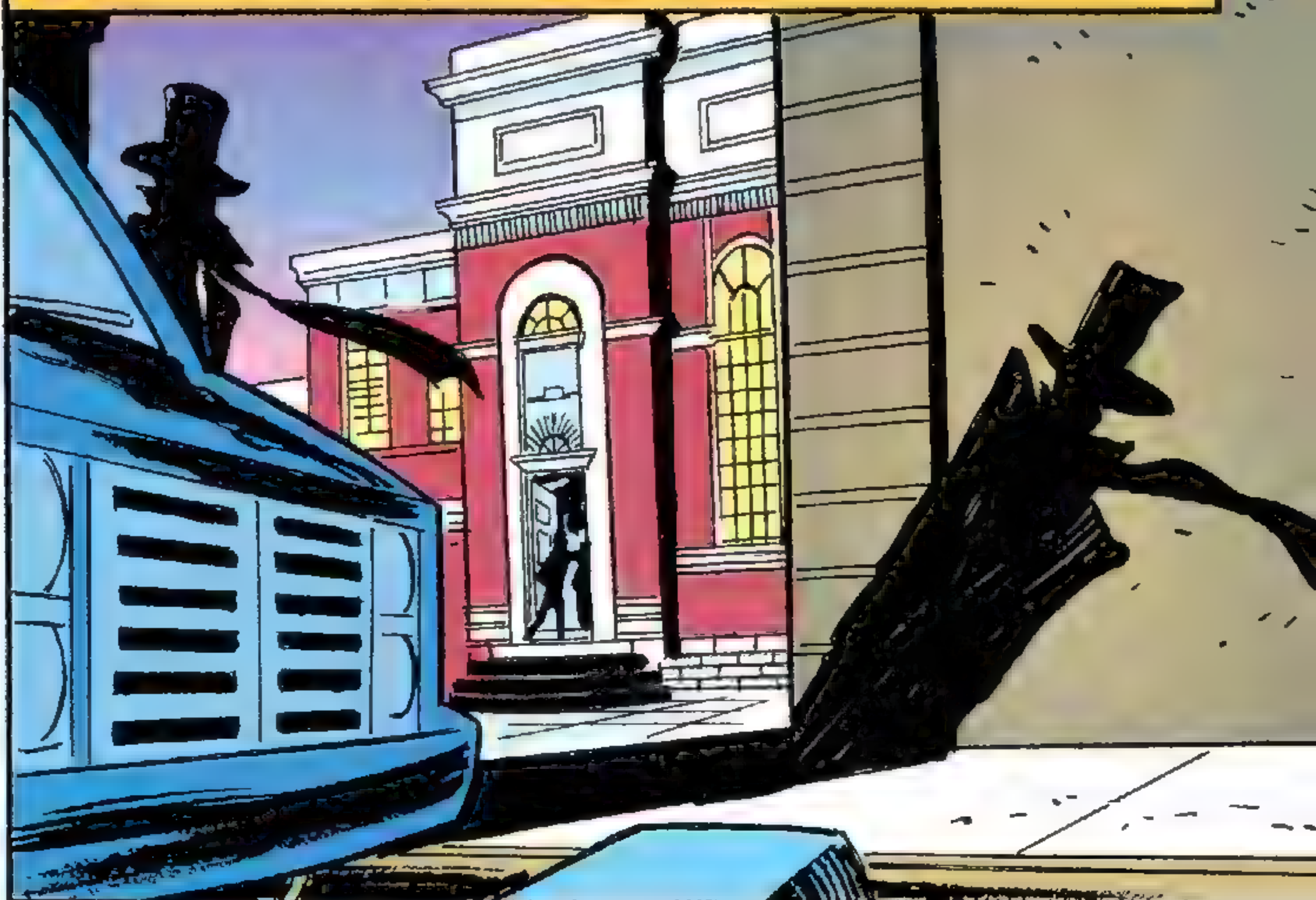
Report to Munsen Annex,
Gotham U. ~ 6 PM



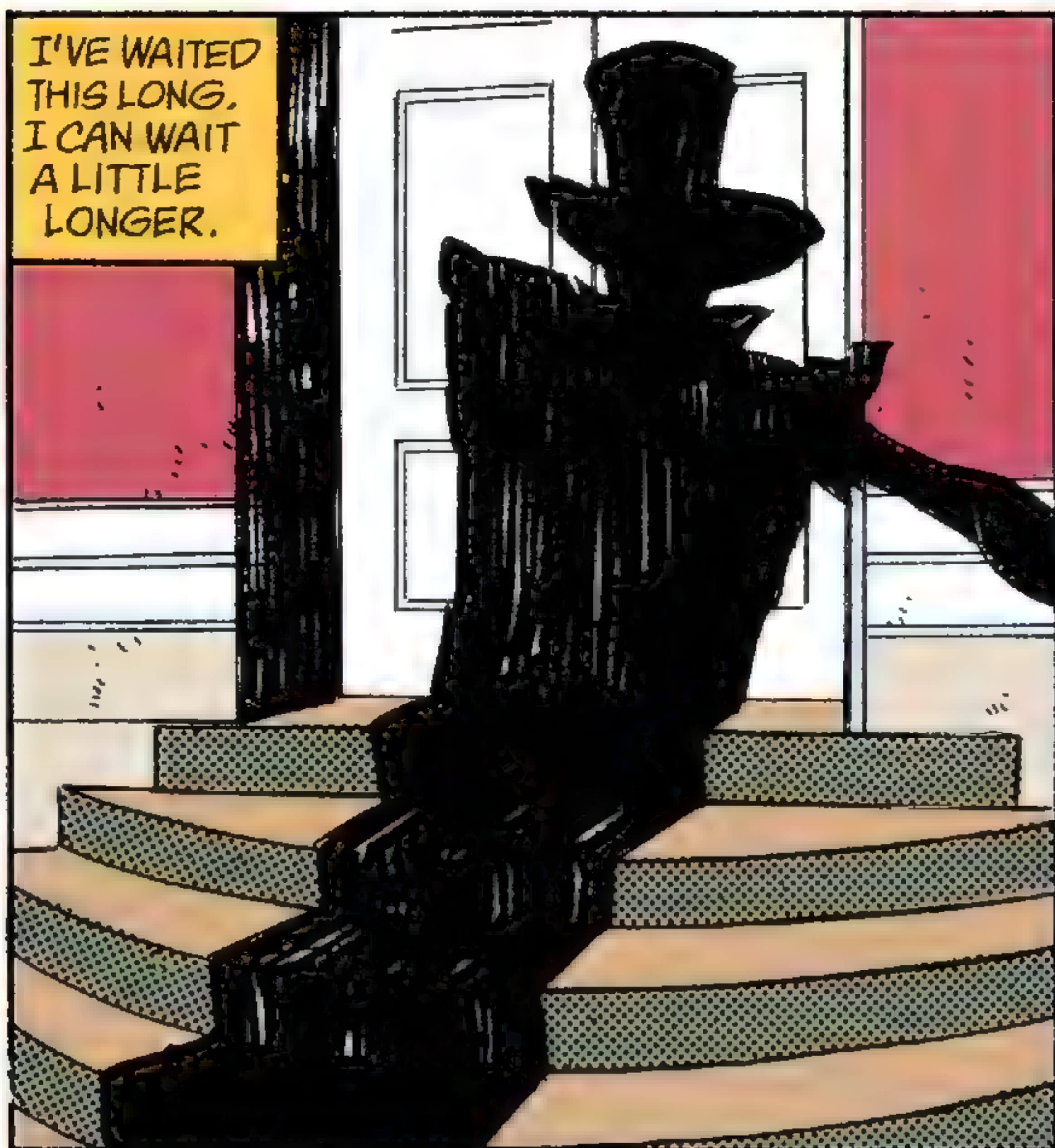
TEN YEARS...TEN LONG, ROLLER-COASTER YEARS SINCE I SHOWED MY FACE HERE.



I REMEMBER THE **CONTEMPT**--THE **HUMILIATION**--AS IF IT WAS YESTERDAY. **ANGER** BUBBLES UP...BUT I KEEP IT IN CHECK, NOURISHING IT, SAVORING IT.



I'VE WAITED THIS LONG. I CAN WAIT A LITTLE LONGER.



PLEASE BE SEATED!

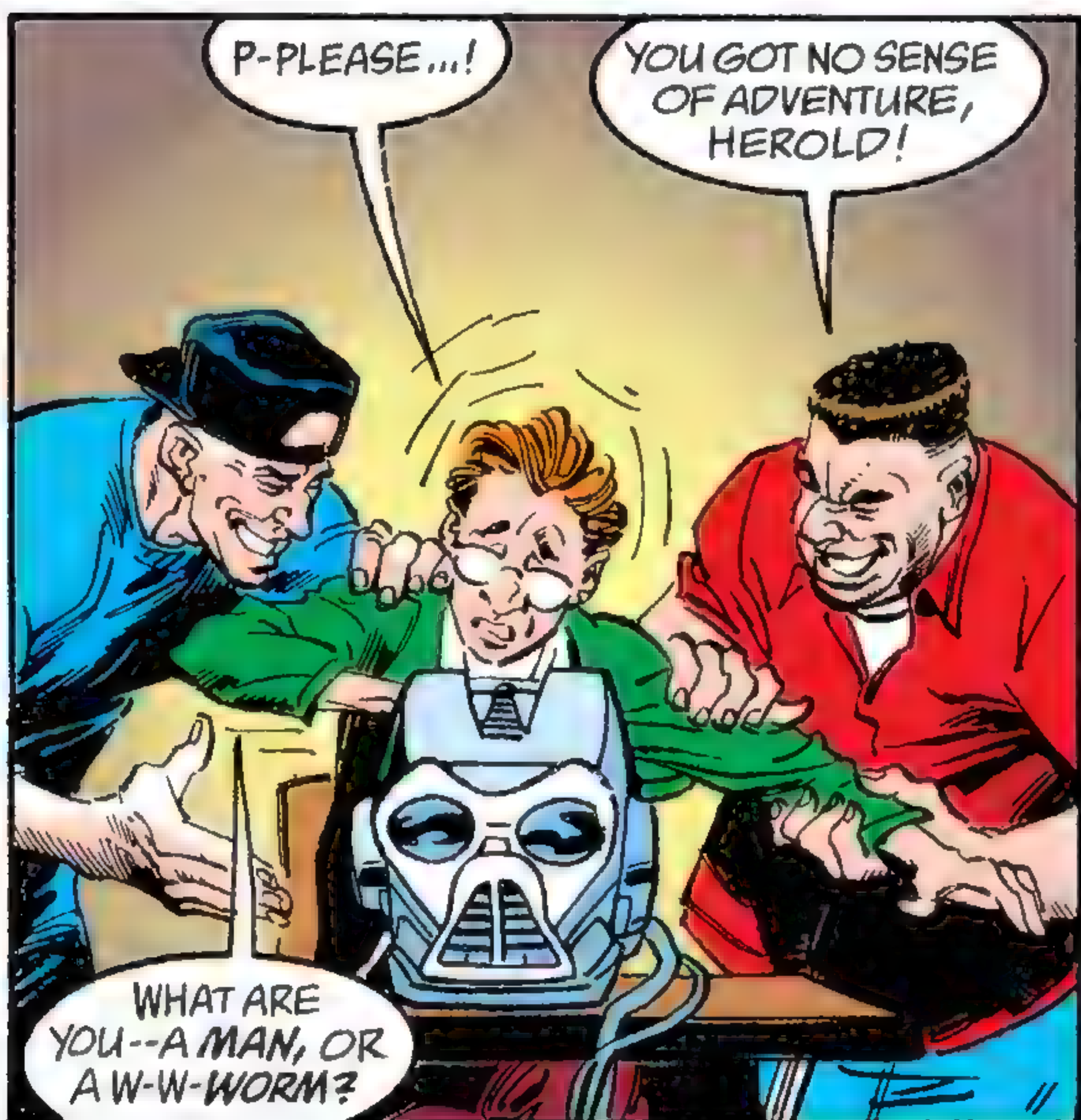
PROFESSOR RANCE WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY.



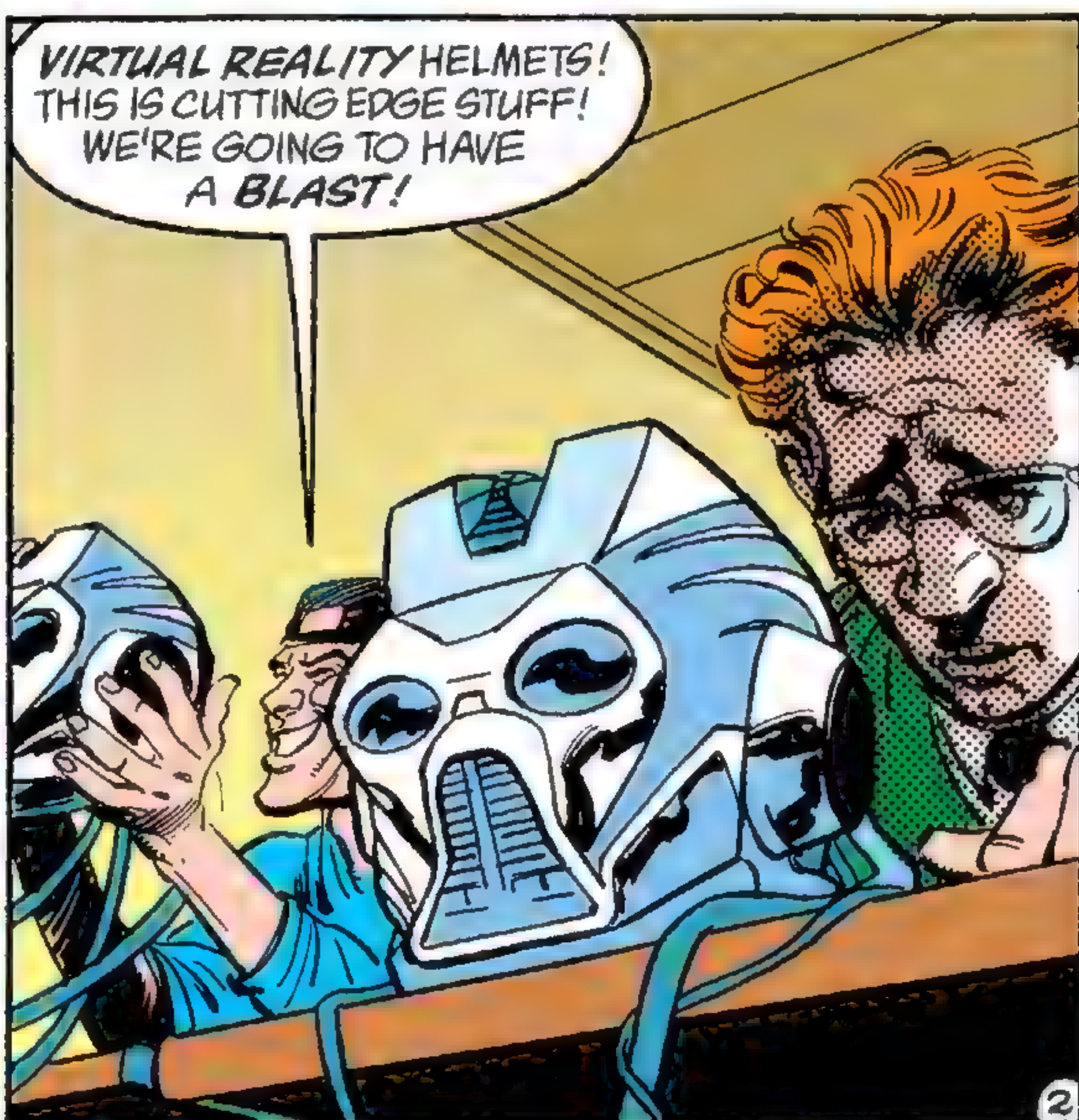
P-PLEASE...!

YOU GOT NO SENSE OF ADVENTURE, HEROLD!

WHAT ARE YOU--A MAN, OR A W-W-WORM?

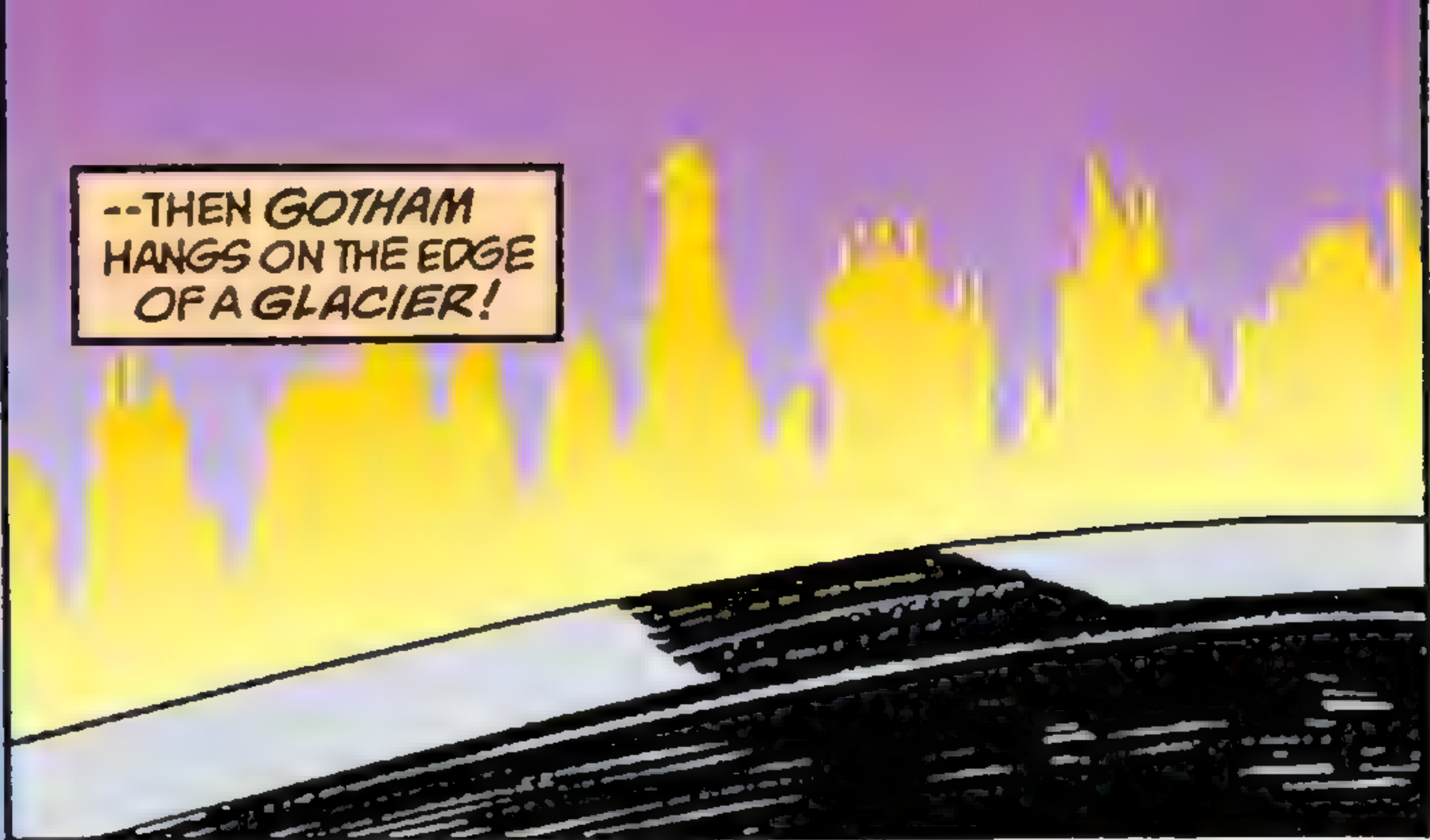


VIRTUAL REALITY HELMETS! THIS IS CUTTING EDGE STUFF! WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A **BLAST**!

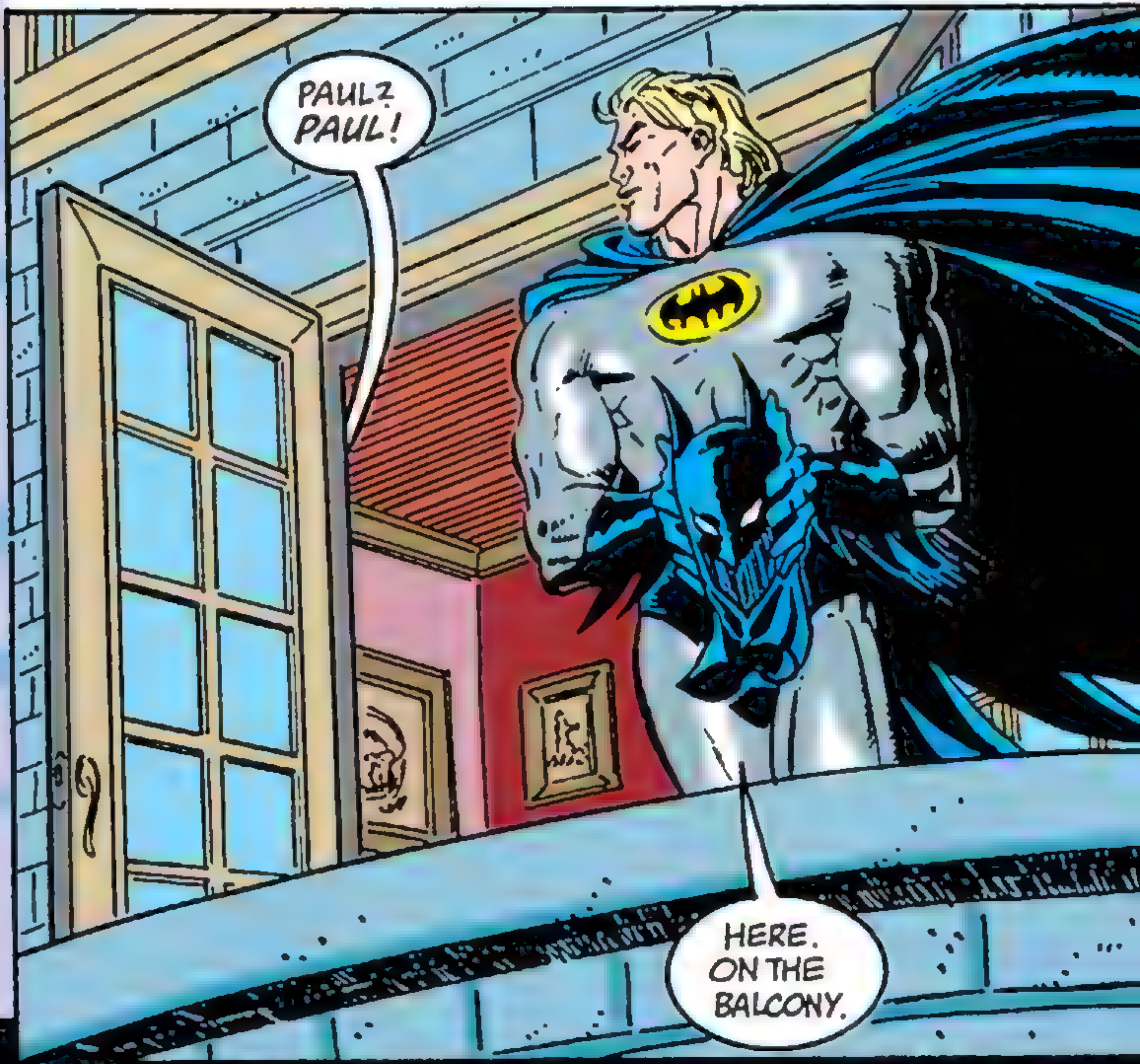




IF IT'S TRUE
WHAT THEY
SAY, THAT
REVENGE
IS A DISH
BEST TAKEN
COLD--

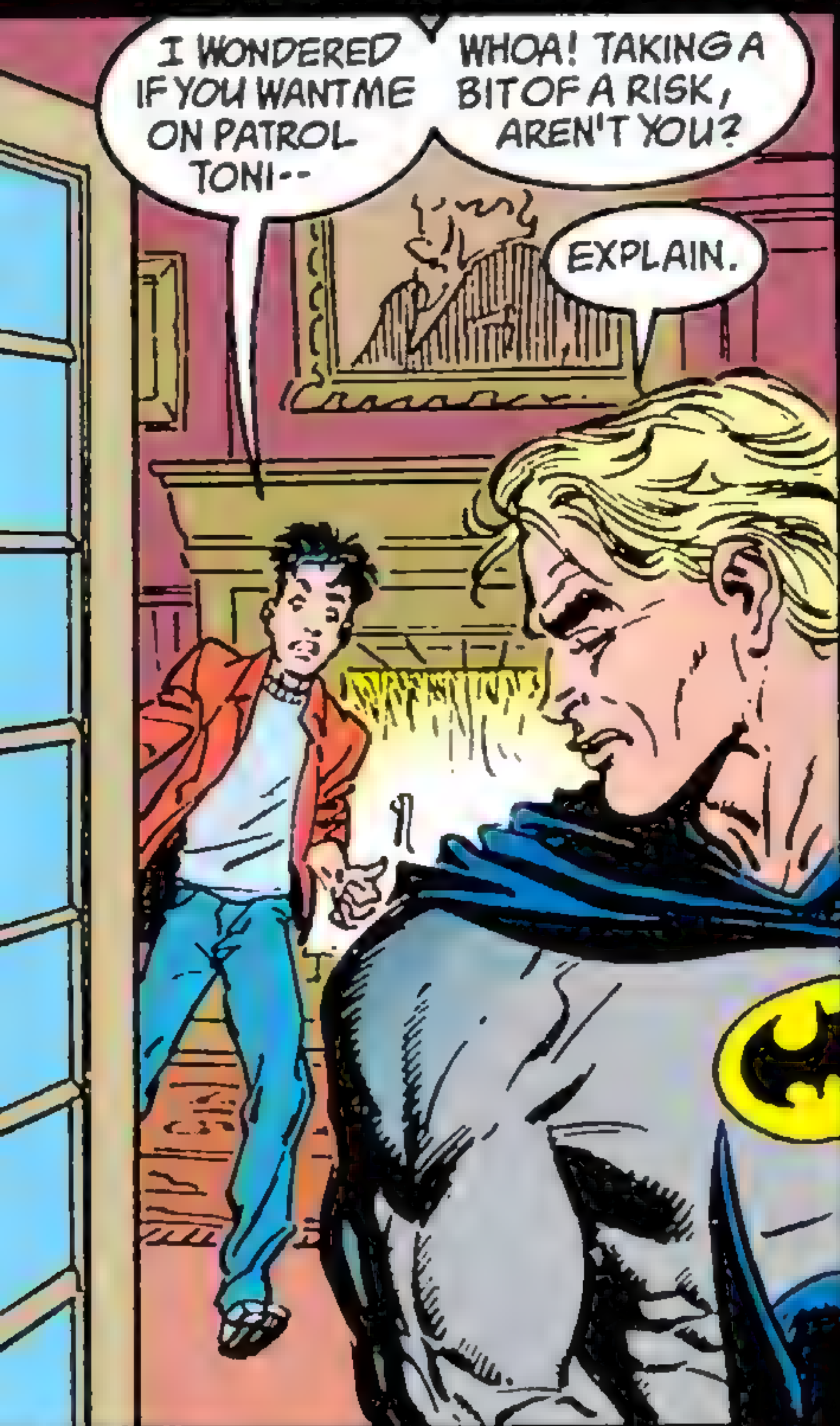


--THEN GOTHAM
HANGS ON THE EDGE
OF A GLACIER!



PAUL?
PAUL!

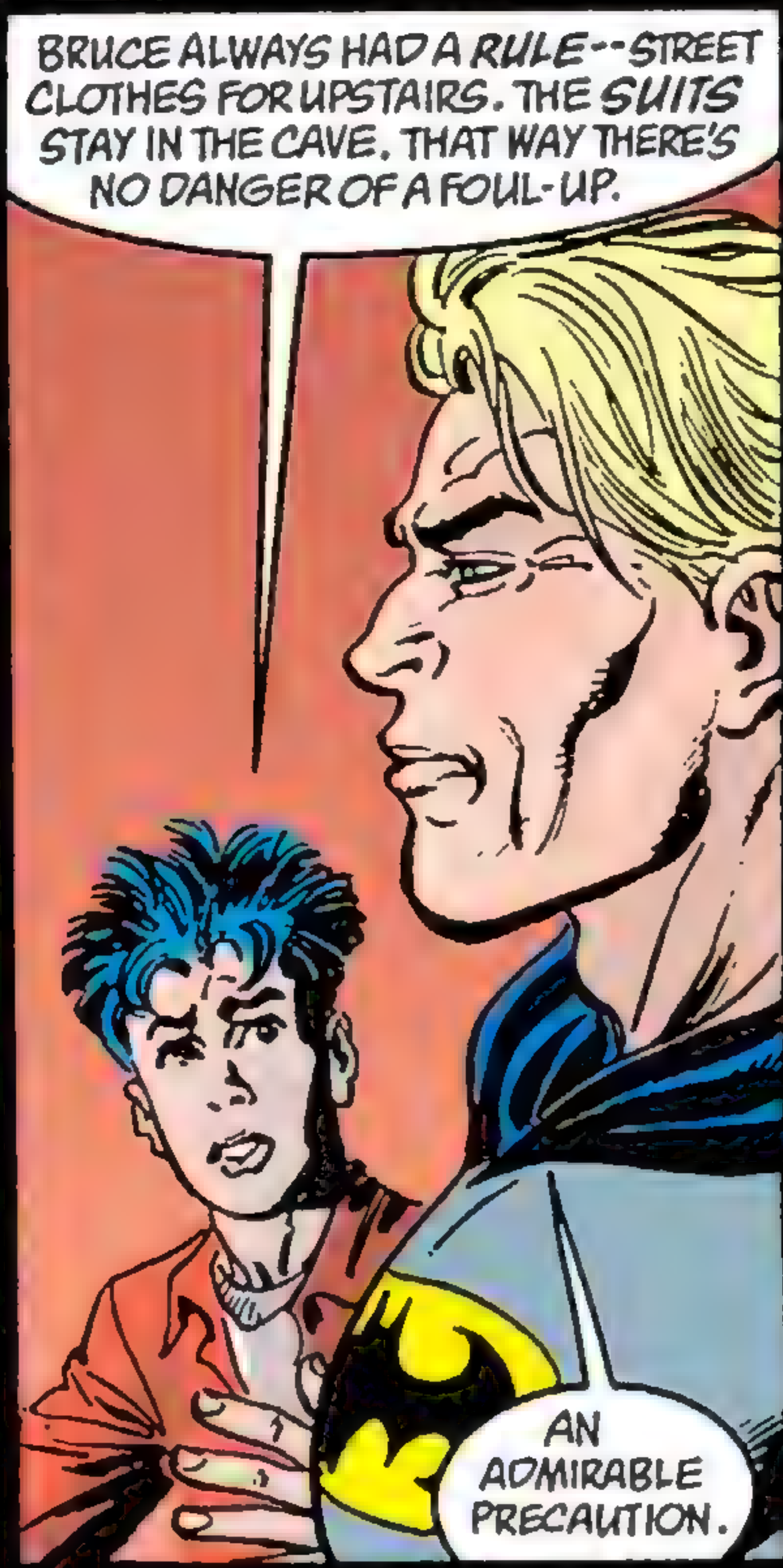
HERE.
ON THE
BALCONY.



I WONDERED
IF YOU WANT ME
ON PATROL
TONI--

WHOA! TAKING A
BIT OF A RISK,
AREN'T YOU?

EXPLAIN.



BRUCE ALWAYS HAD A RULE--STREET
CLOTHES FOR UPSTAIRS. THE SUITS
STAY IN THE CAVE. THAT WAY THERE'S
NO DANGER OF A FOUL-UP.

AN
ADMIRABLE
PRECAUTION.

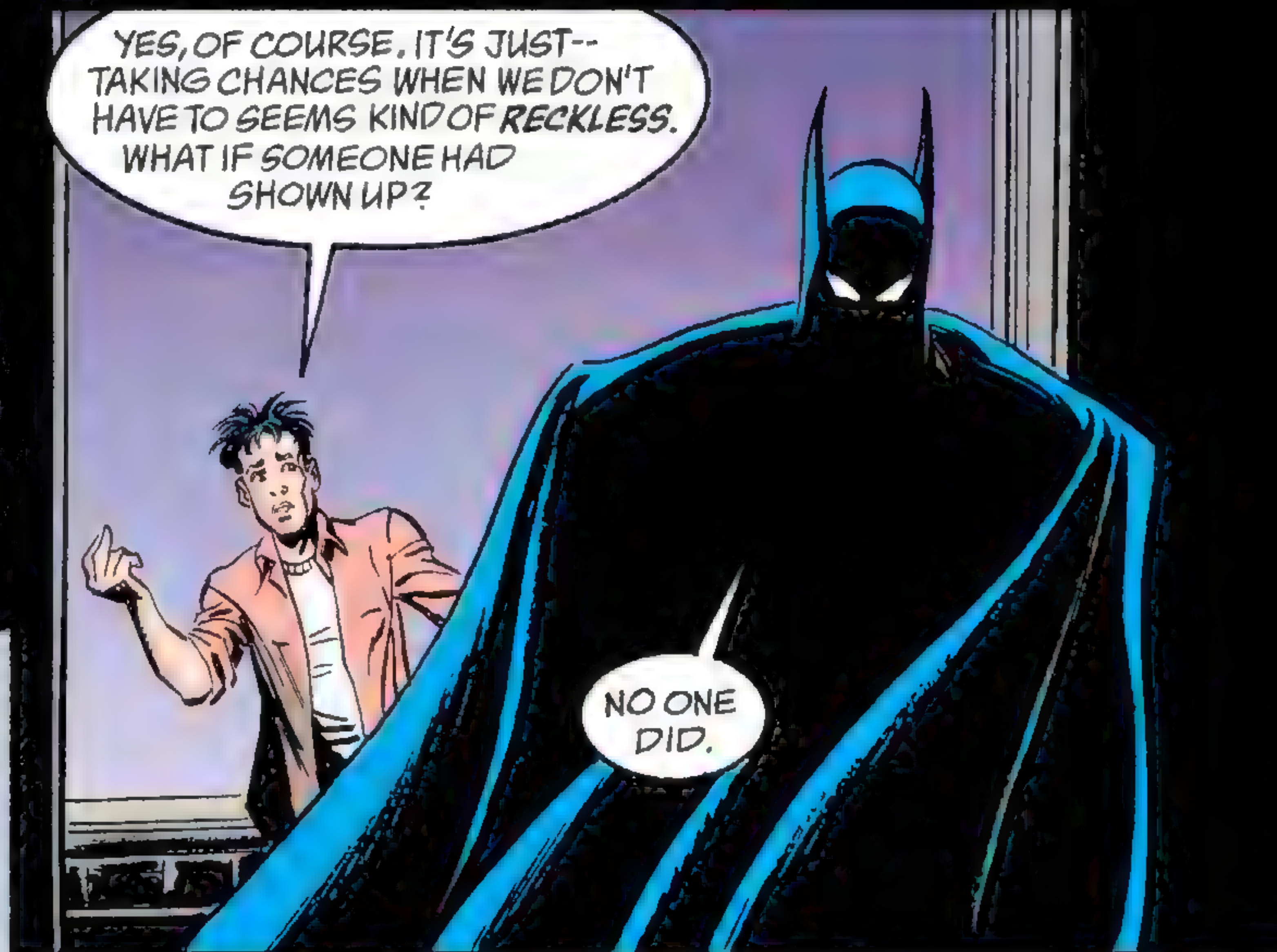


BUT IF YOU REMEMBER, BRUCE
IS OUT OF IT. HE'S BROKEN...
ARGUABLY BECAUSE HE FOL-
LOWED HIS ADMIRABLE
RULES!



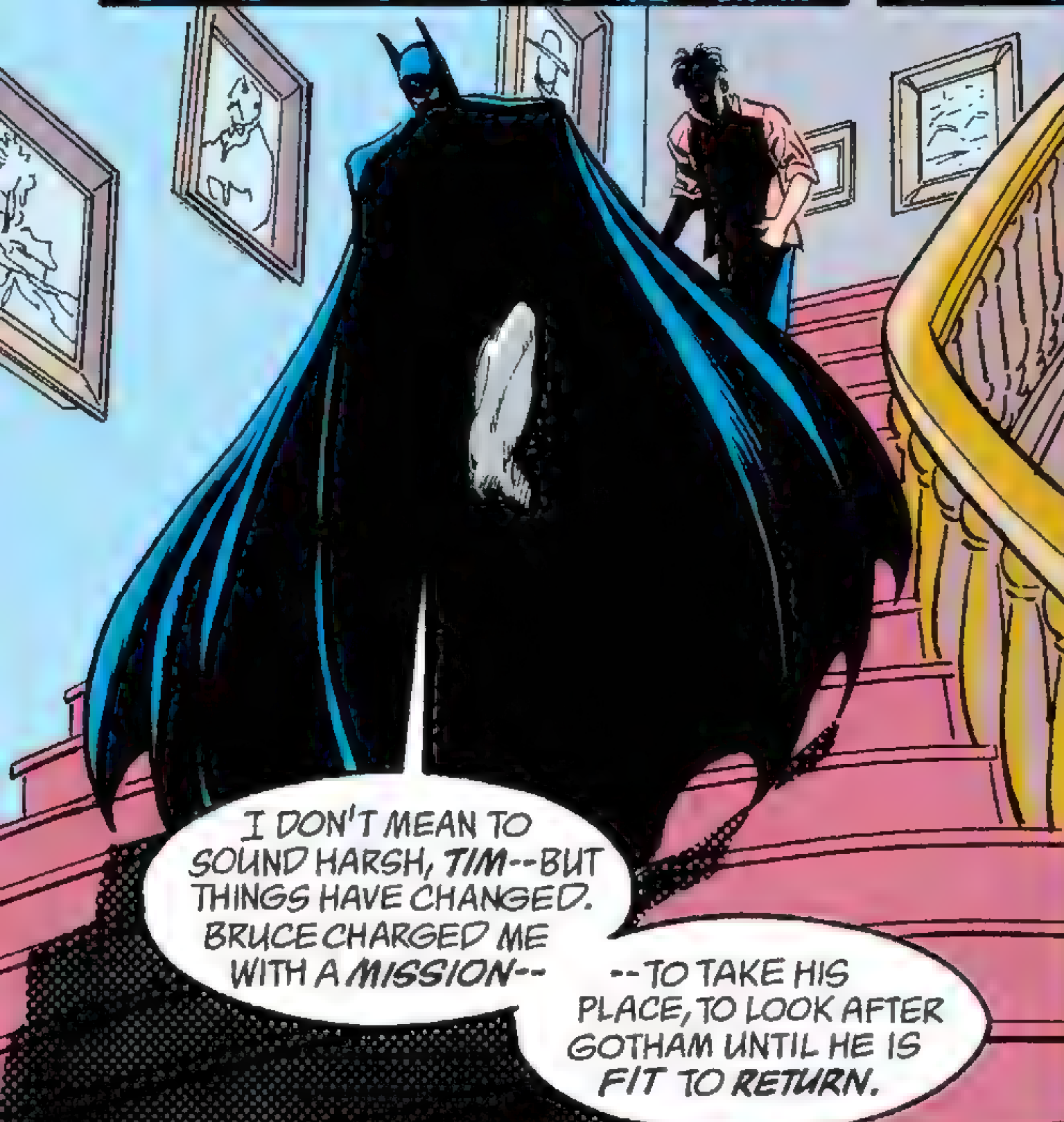
I AM THE BATMAN NOW.

I'LL DO THINGS MY WAY.



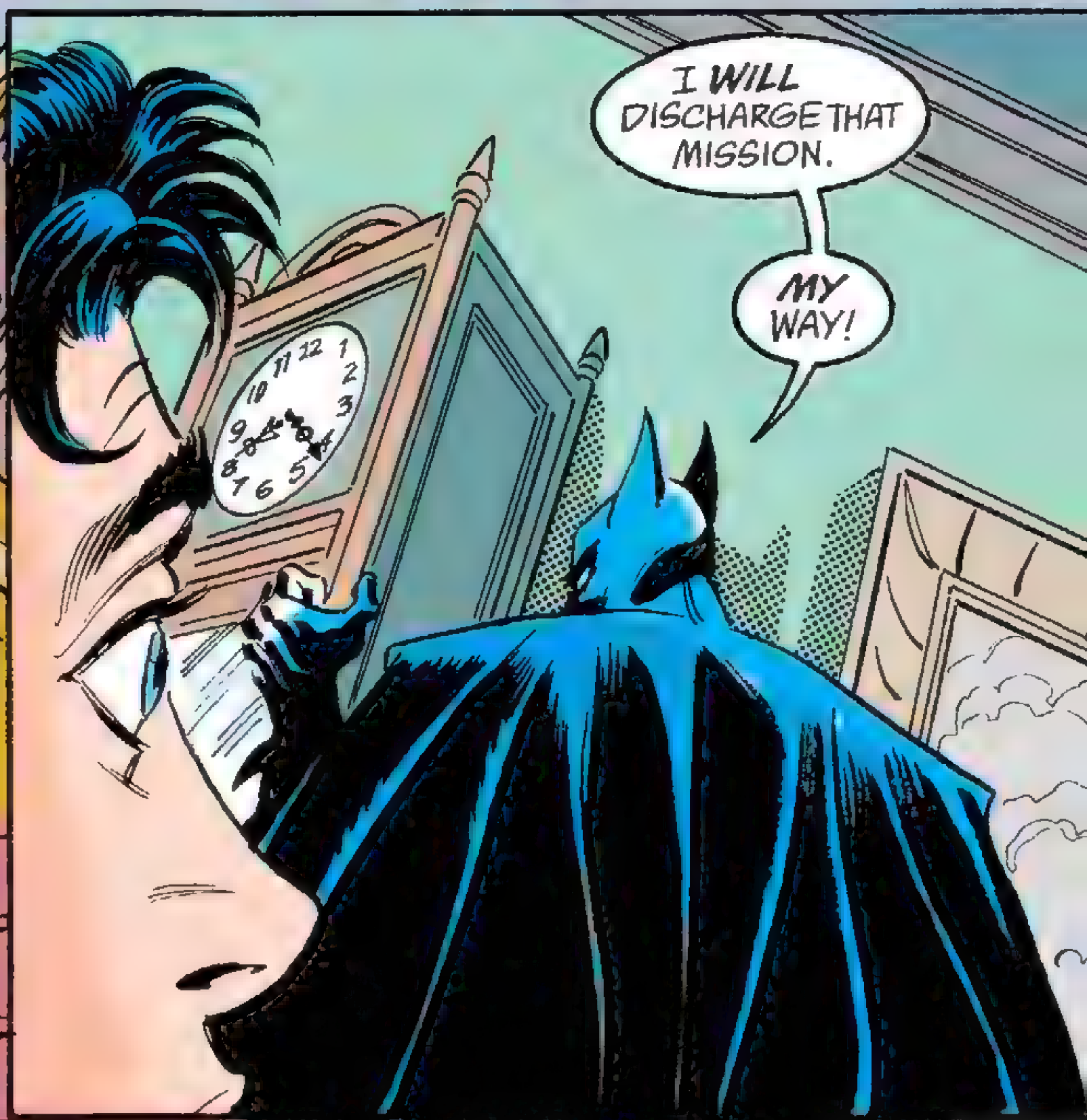
YES, OF COURSE. IT'S JUST-- TAKING CHANCES WHEN WE DON'T HAVE TO SEEMS KIND OF RECKLESS. WHAT IF SOMEONE HAD SHOWN UP?

NO ONE DID.



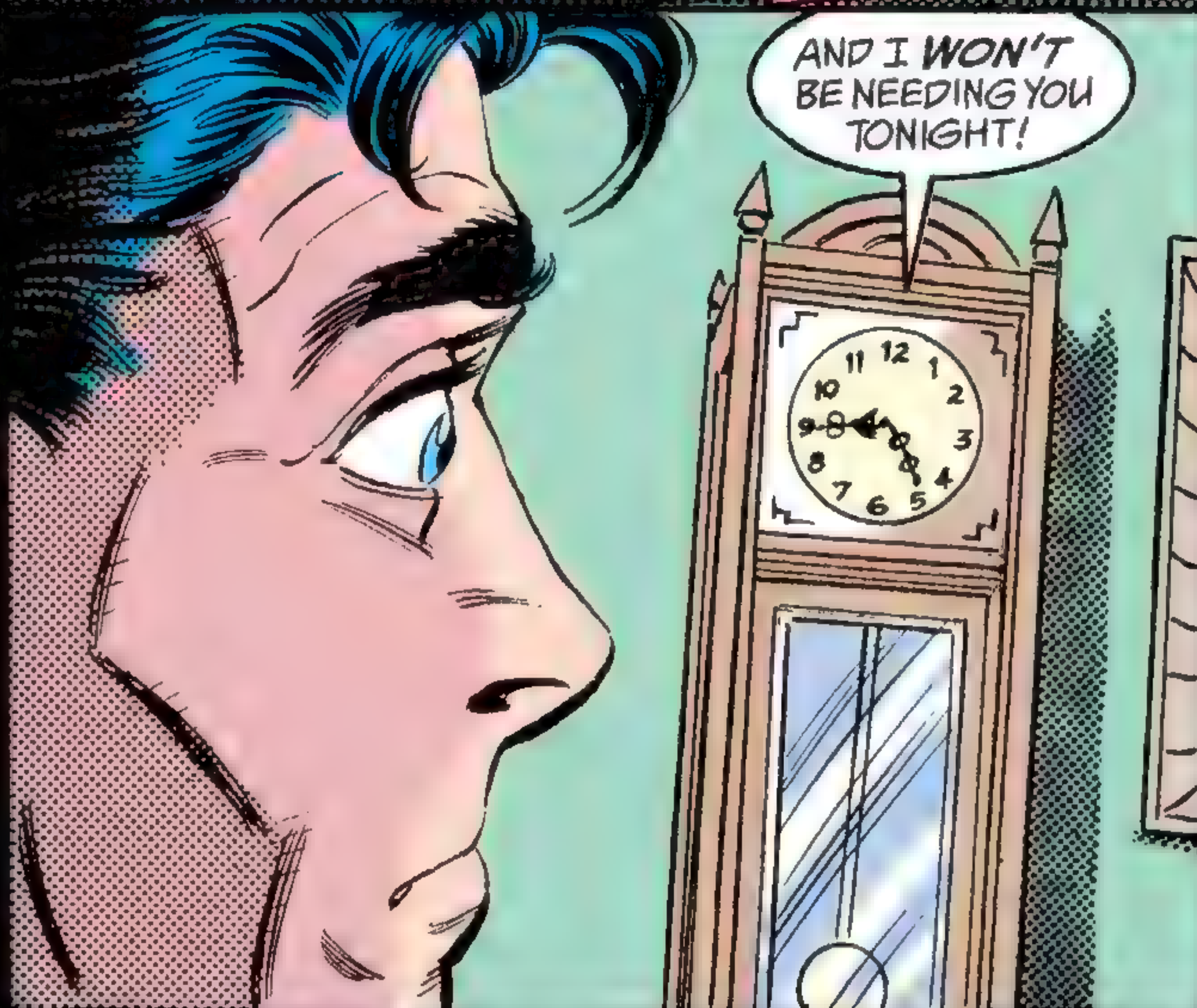
I DON'T MEAN TO SOUND HARSH, TIM--BUT THINGS HAVE CHANGED. BRUCE CHARGED ME WITH A MISSION--

--TO TAKE HIS PLACE, TO LOOK AFTER GOTHAM UNTIL HE IS FIT TO RETURN.

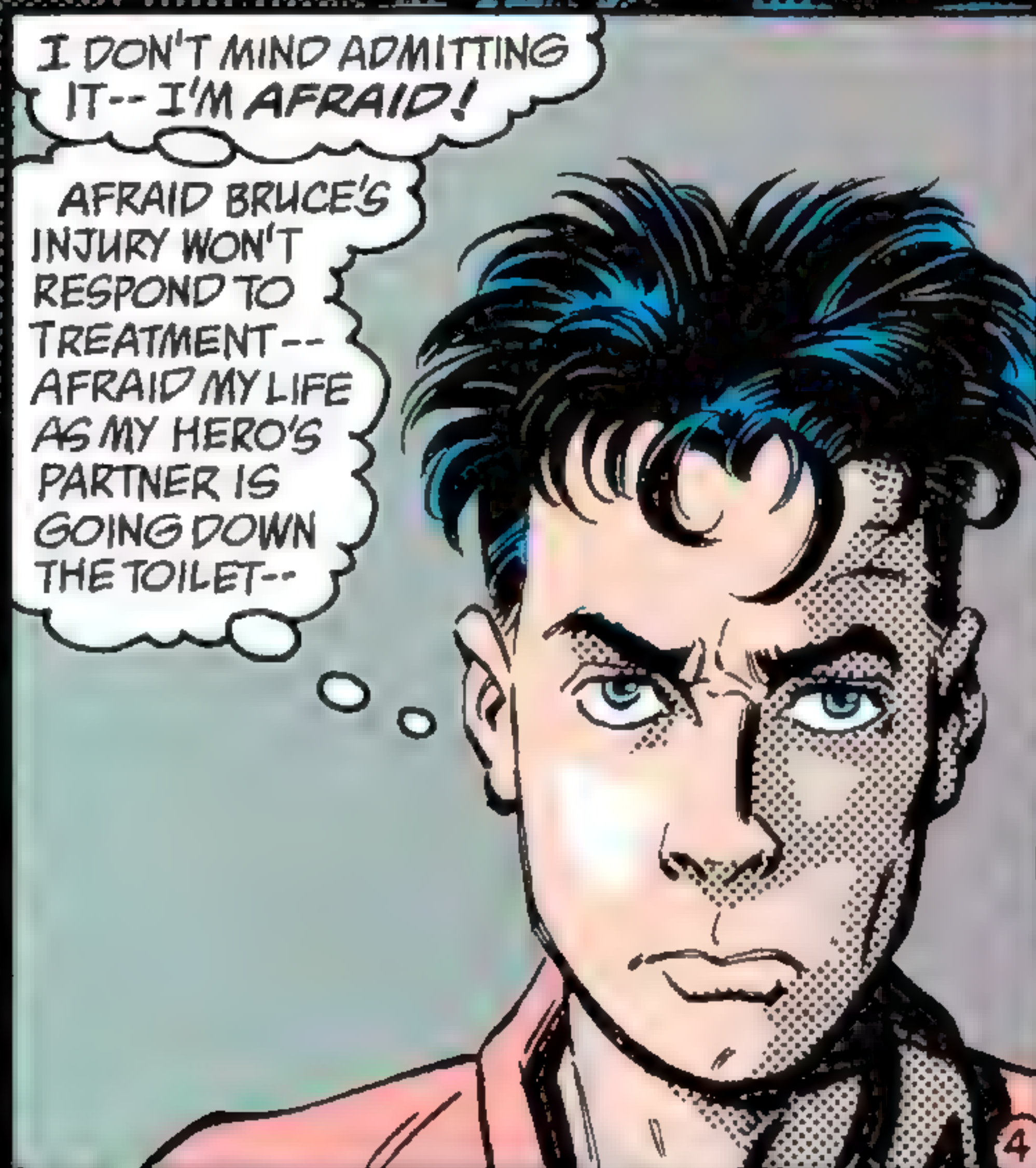


I WILL DISCHARGE THAT MISSION.

MY WAY!

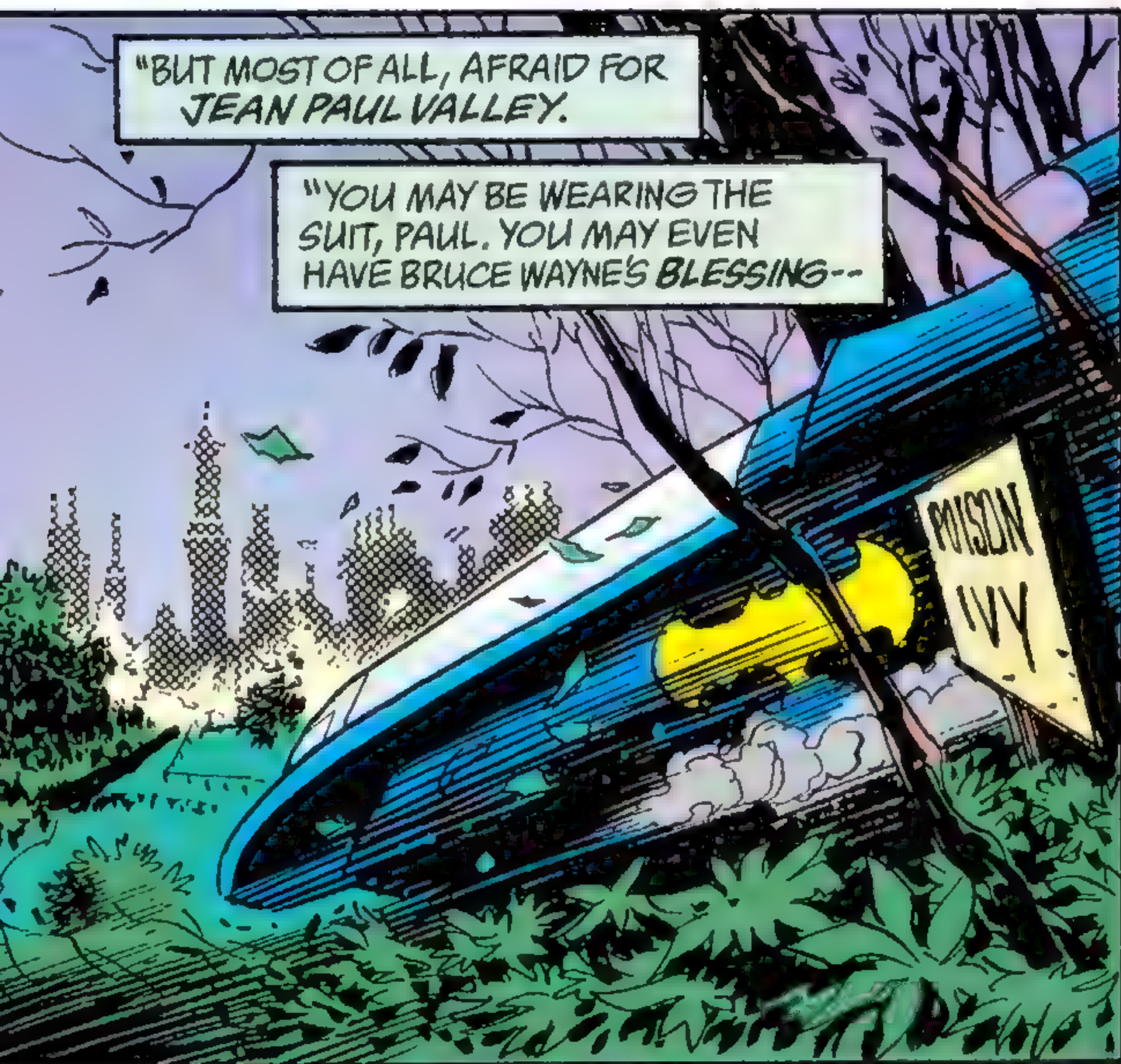


AND I WON'T BE NEEDING YOU TONIGHT!



I DON'T MIND ADMITTING IT-- I'M AFRAID!

AFRAID BRUCE'S INJURY WON'T RESPOND TO TREATMENT-- AFRAID MY LIFE AS MY HERO'S PARTNER IS GOING DOWN THE TOILET--



"BUT MOST OF ALL, AFRAID FOR
JEAN PAUL VALLEY.

"YOU MAY BE WEARING THE
SUIT, PAUL. YOU MAY EVEN
HAVE BRUCE WAYNE'S *BLESSING*--



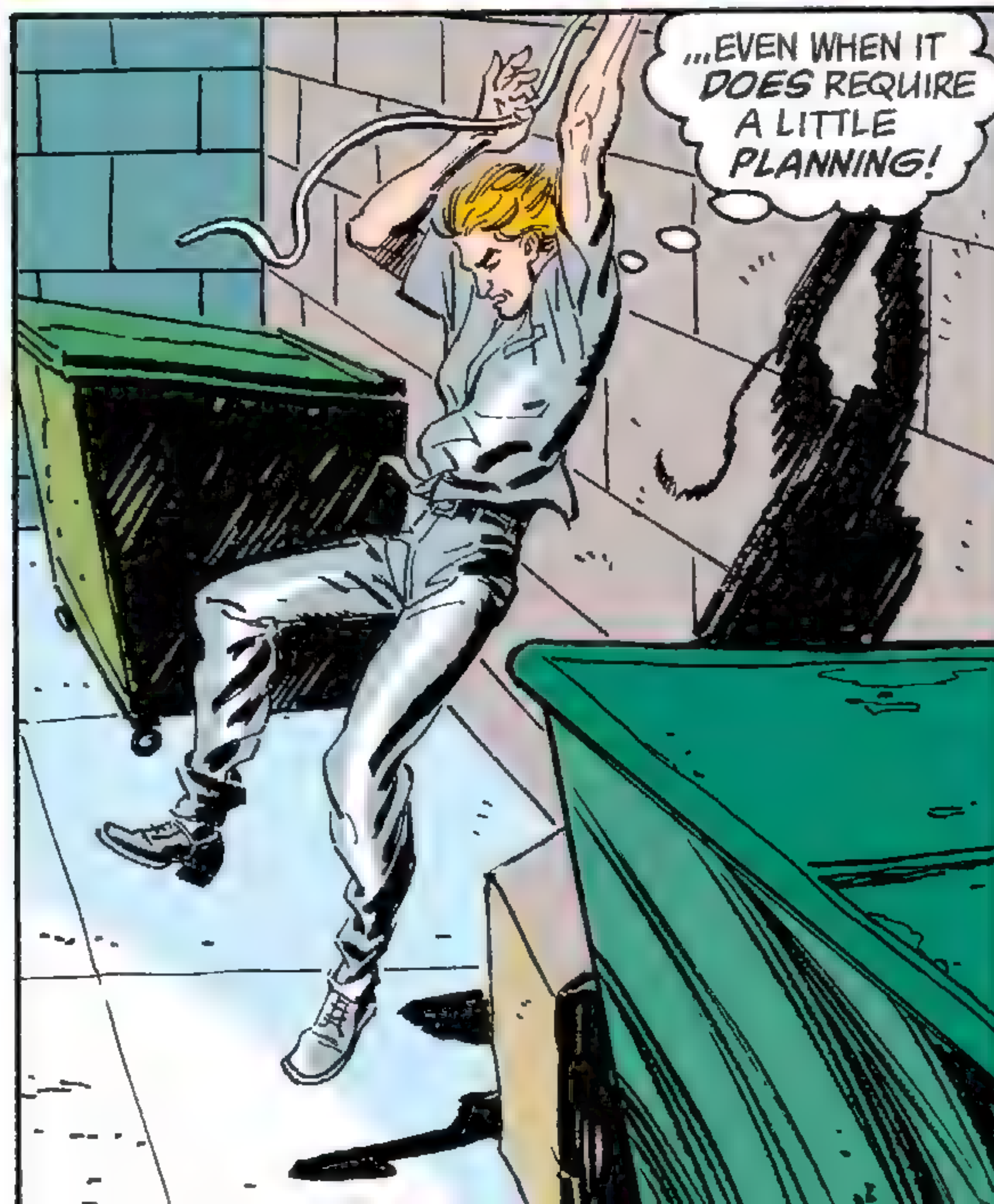
"BUT IF YOU WANT
TO BE EVEN *HALF*
THE MAN HE IS,
YOU STILL HAVE
A *WHOLE LOT*
TO *LEARN!*"



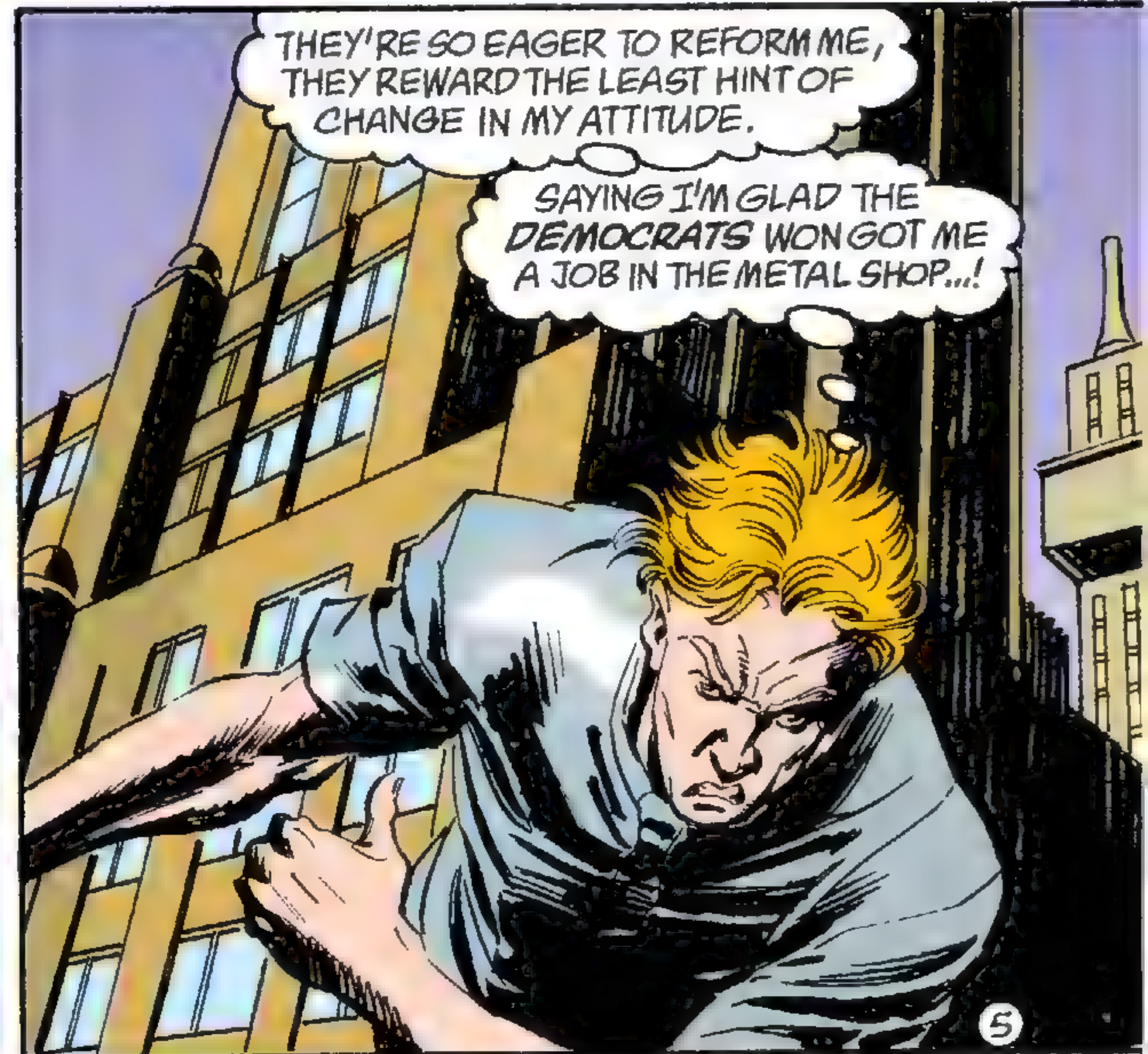
THE CREEPS
JUST NEVER
GET IT!



THE ESSENCE
OF ANARCHY IS
SURPRISE--
SPONTANEOUS
ACTION...



...EVEN WHEN IT
DOES REQUIRE
A LITTLE
PLANNING!



THEY'RE SO EAGER TO REFORM ME,
THEY REWARD THE LEAST HINT OF
CHANGE IN MY ATTITUDE.

SAYING I'M GLAD THE
DEMOCRATS WON GOT ME
A JOB IN THE METAL SHOP...!



DEMOCRACY...
HAH! THERE'S A
LAUGH. THEY PRETEND
THAT IT WORKS --
PRETEND THAT THE
VOICE OF THE
PEOPLE, SPOKEN
THROUGH ITS ELECTED
REPRESENTATIVES,
WILL BE HEARD.



TRASH! THE WORLD IS RUN BY ELITES
--BANKERS, THE MILITARY, GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES. CRIMINALS ALL, THEY
PREY LIKE VAMPIRES ON THEIR
VICTIMS ...!



I'VE BEEN THINKING
A LOT ABOUT ELITES LATELY.
HOW THEY COME TO POWER--

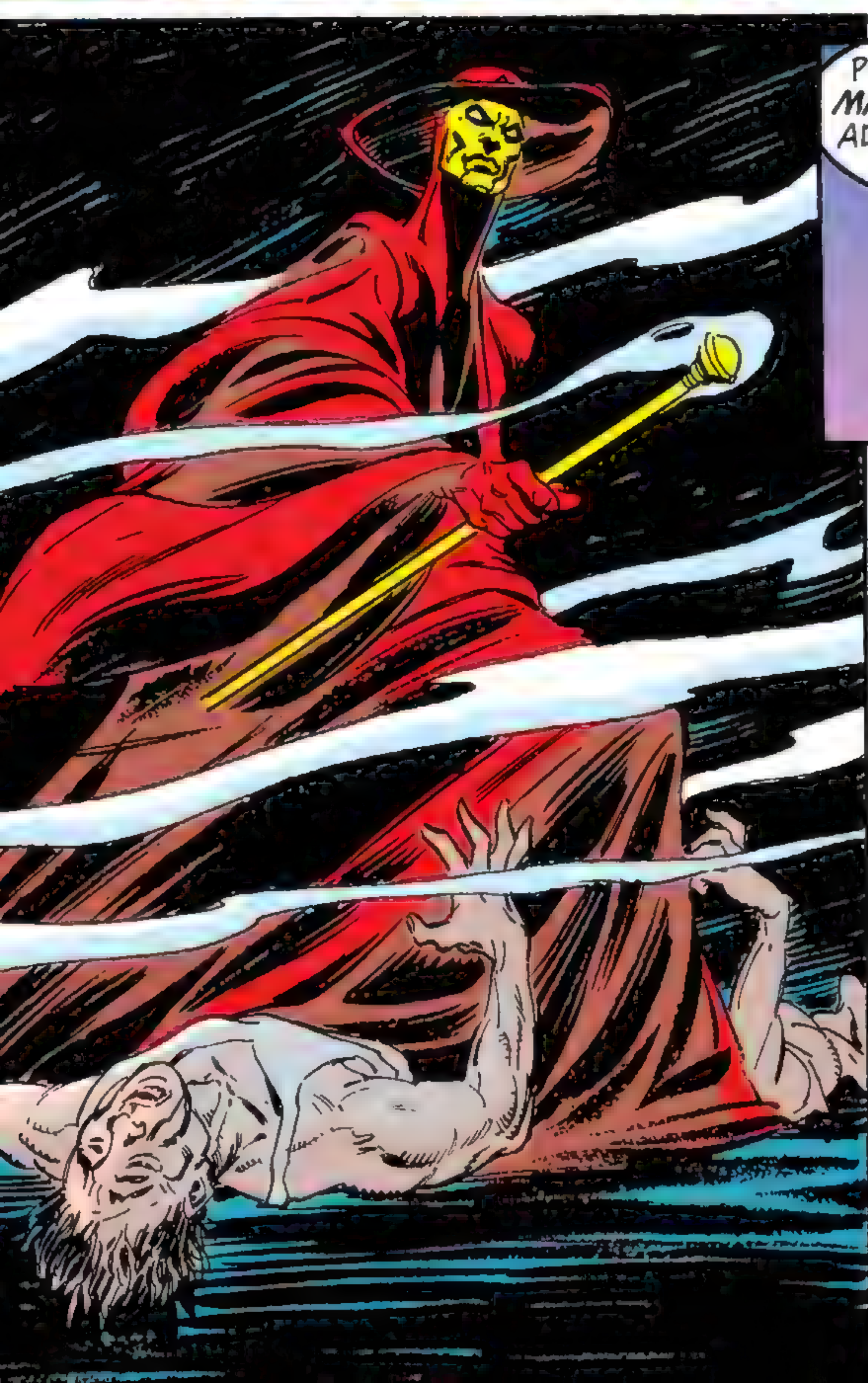


--HOW TO
STOP THEM!

GAME'S A
BOGEY, HOMEY!
WHAT YA GOT
STASHED?



UH-OH...!

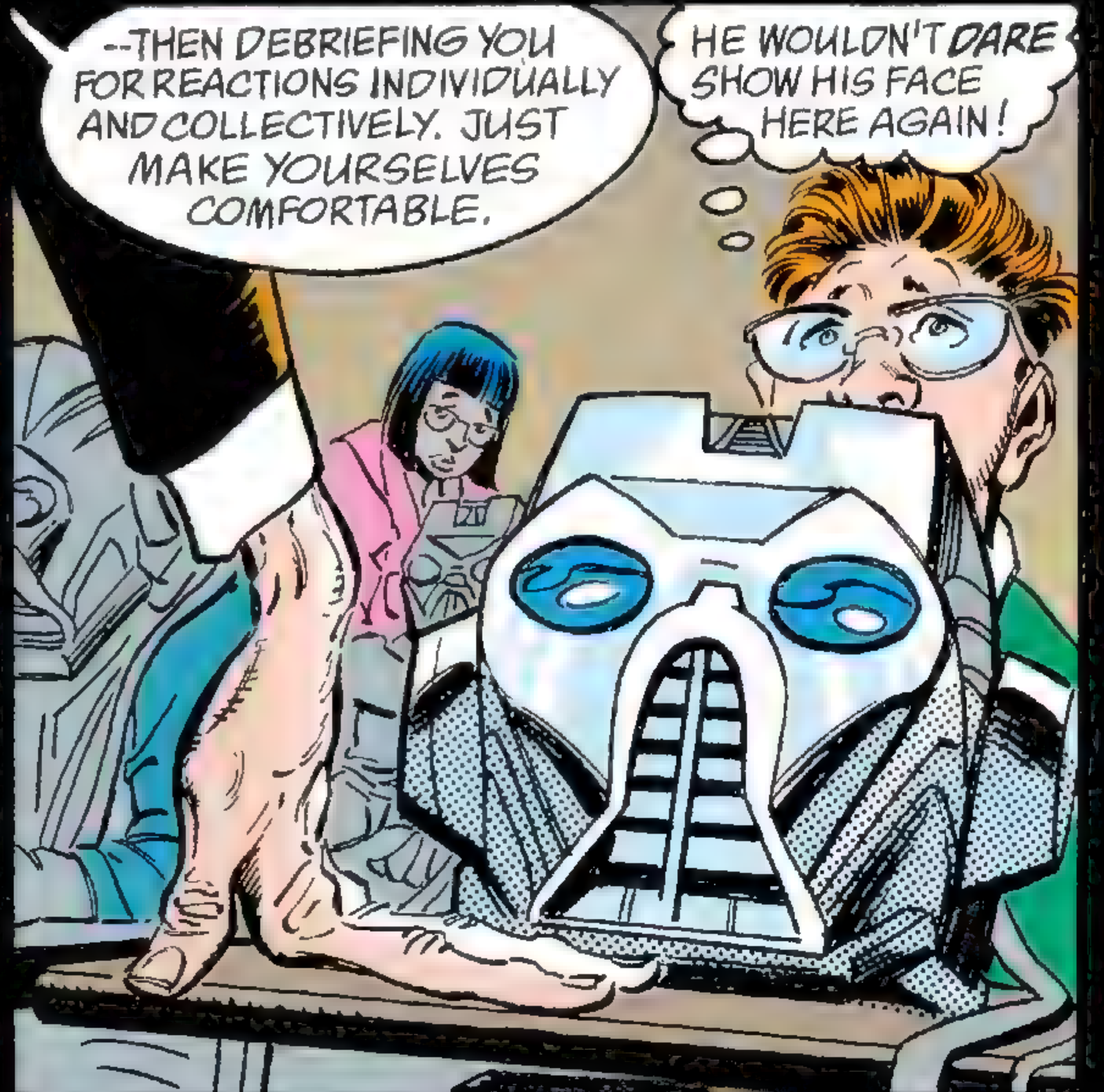
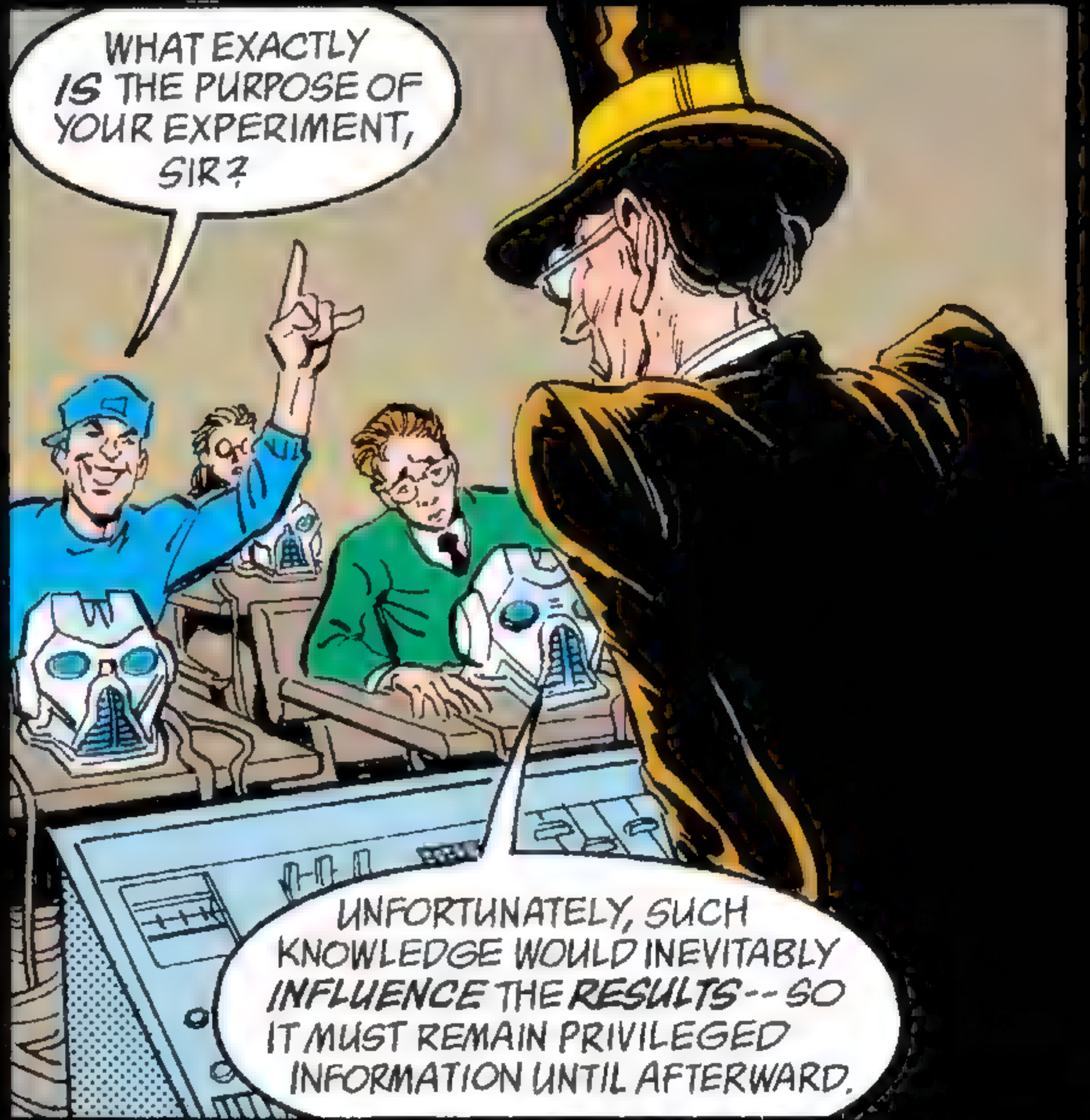


PROFESSOR RANCE? I'M
MARION STOPES, PSYCHOLOGY
ADMINISTRATION. WE SPOKE
ON THE PHONE...

...WHEN I CALLED
TO HIRE THE HALL? MY DEAR
LADY--I WOULD RECOGNIZE
THAT ANGELIC
VOICE ANYWHERE!

WHY,
THANK YOU,
PROFESSOR!









WHY? "I WILL SHOW YOU SOMETHING DIFFERENT," AS ELIOT PUTS IT--



"YOUR SHADOW AT MORNING STRIDING BEHIND YOU, OR YOUR SHADOW AT EVENING RISING TO MEET YOU..."

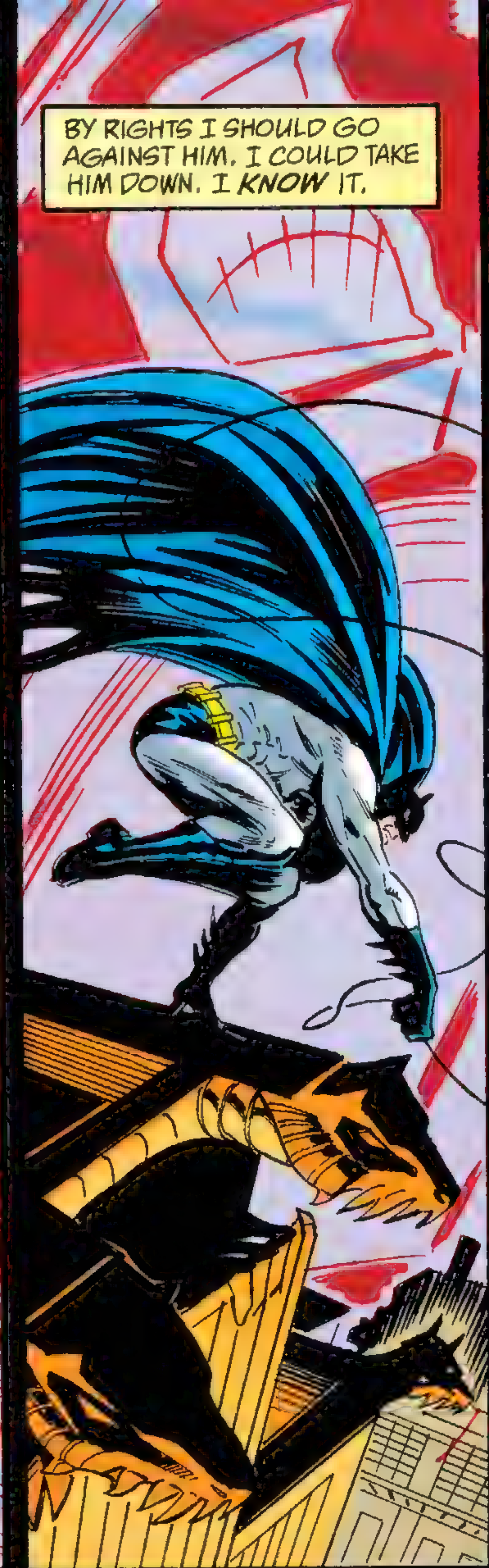


"I WILL SHOW YOU FEAR IN A HANDFUL OF DUST!"

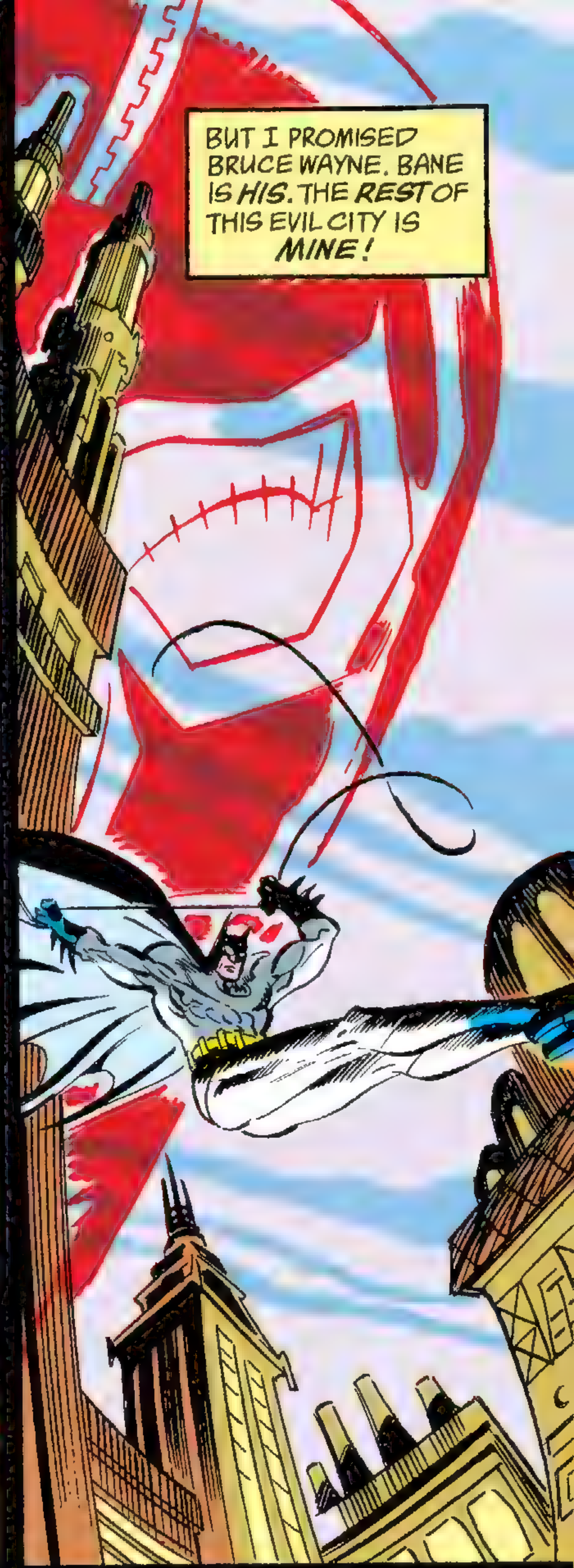
THE CITY'S ON THE BRINK, STRESS
LEVELS ON OVERDOSE. AND
TOWERING ABOVE IT LIKE SOME
MACHIAVELLIAN LORD OF EVIL...
BANE!



BY RIGHTS I SHOULD GO
AGAINST HIM. I COULD TAKE
HIM DOWN. I *KNOW* IT.



BUT I PROMISED
BRUCE WAYNE. BANE
IS *HIS*. THE REST OF
THIS EVIL CITY IS
MINE!

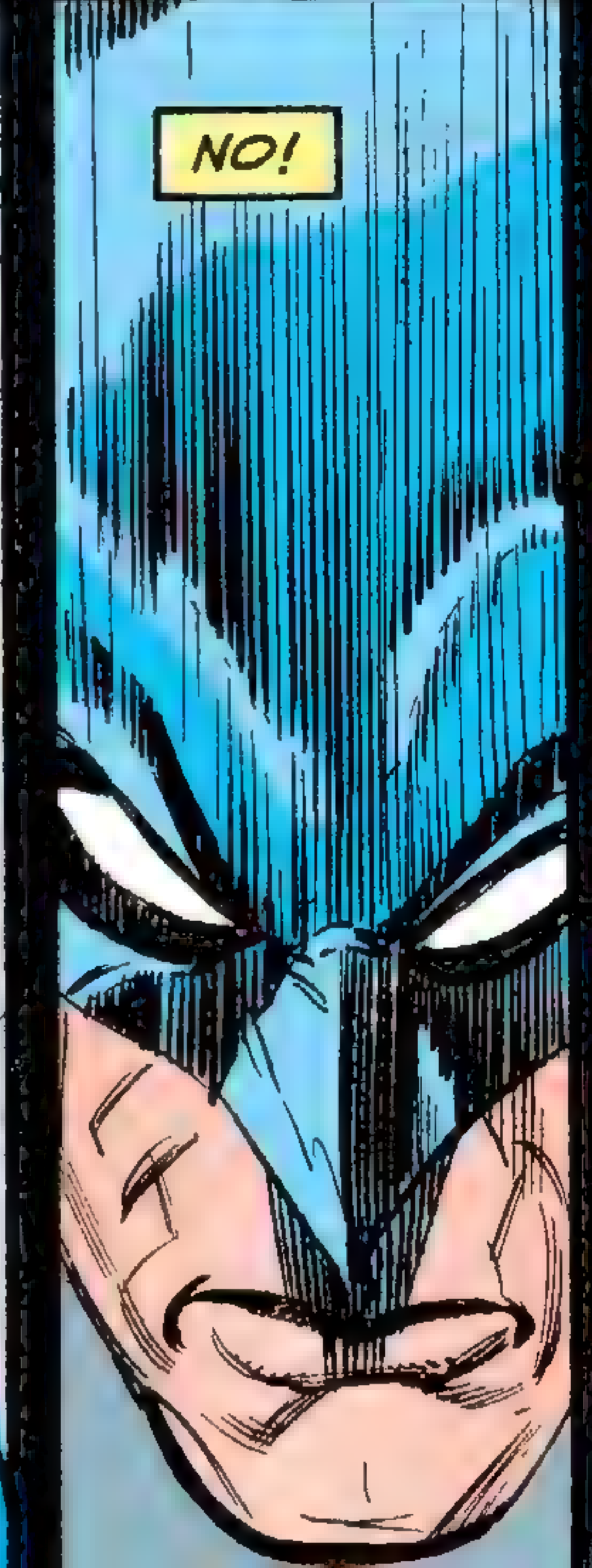


THE NIGHT--THE CHILL--THE CHALLENGE--

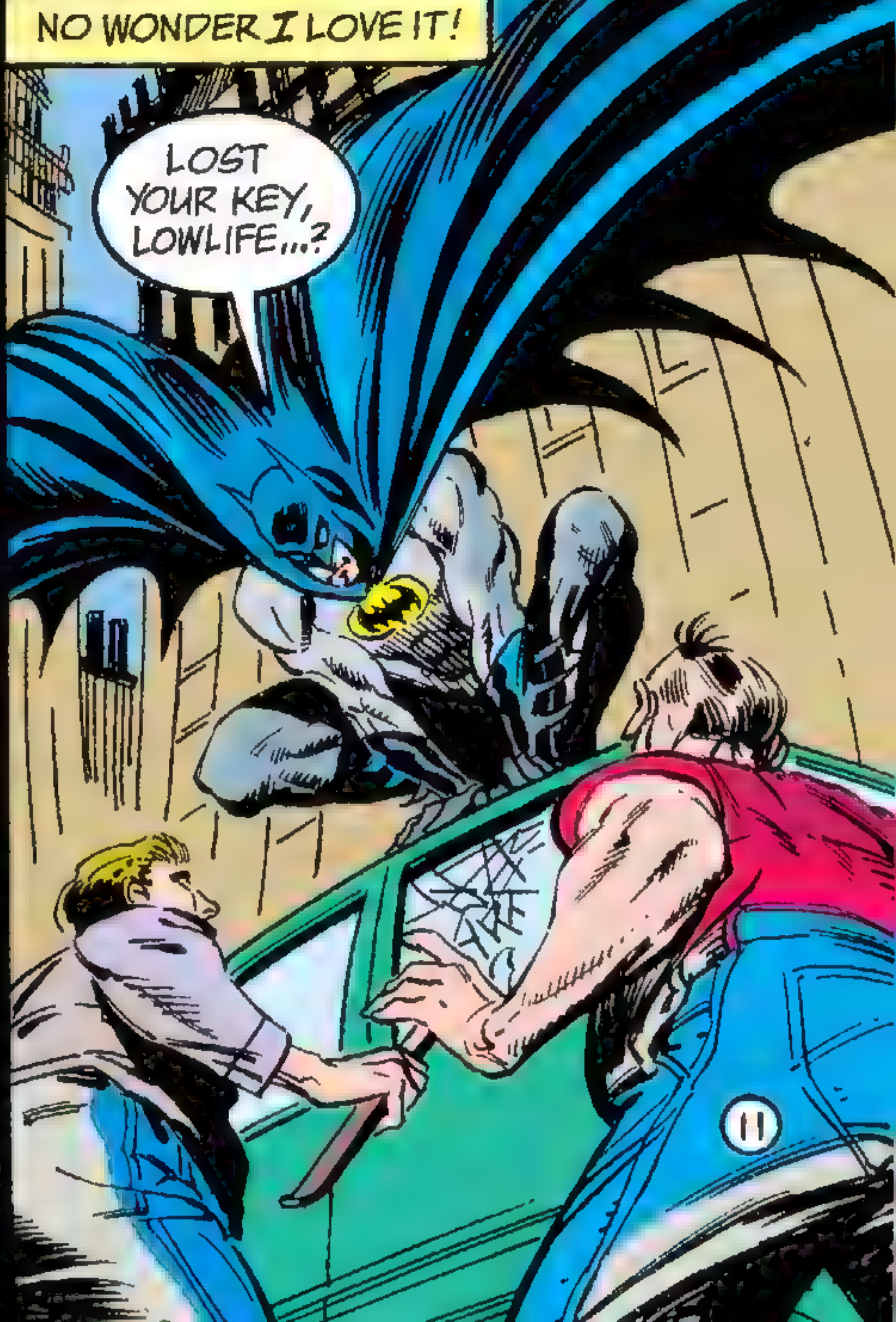


NO WONDER
BATMAN LOVED
IT SO MUCH!

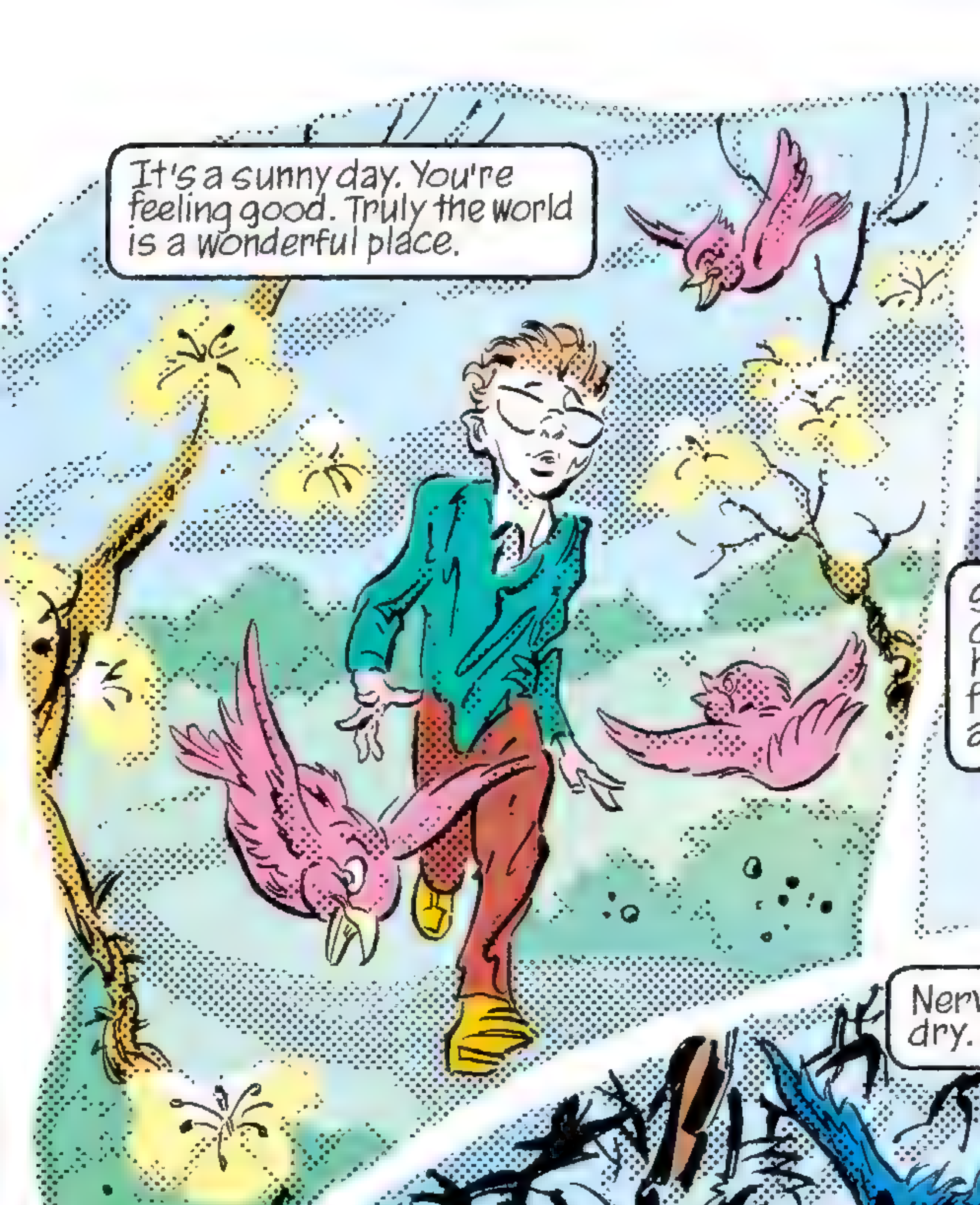
NO!



NO WONDER I LOVE IT!



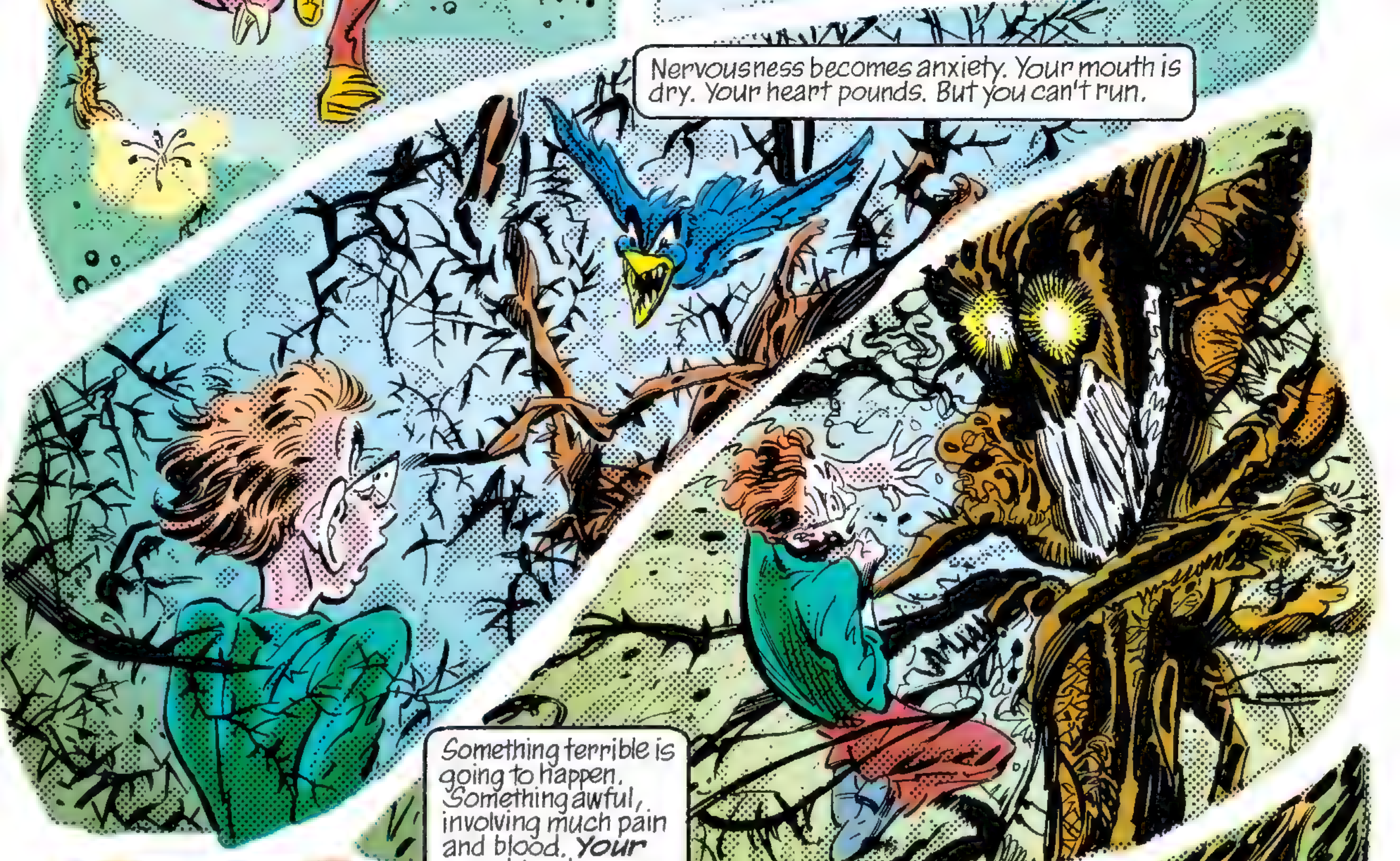
LOST
YOUR KEY,
LOWLIFE...?



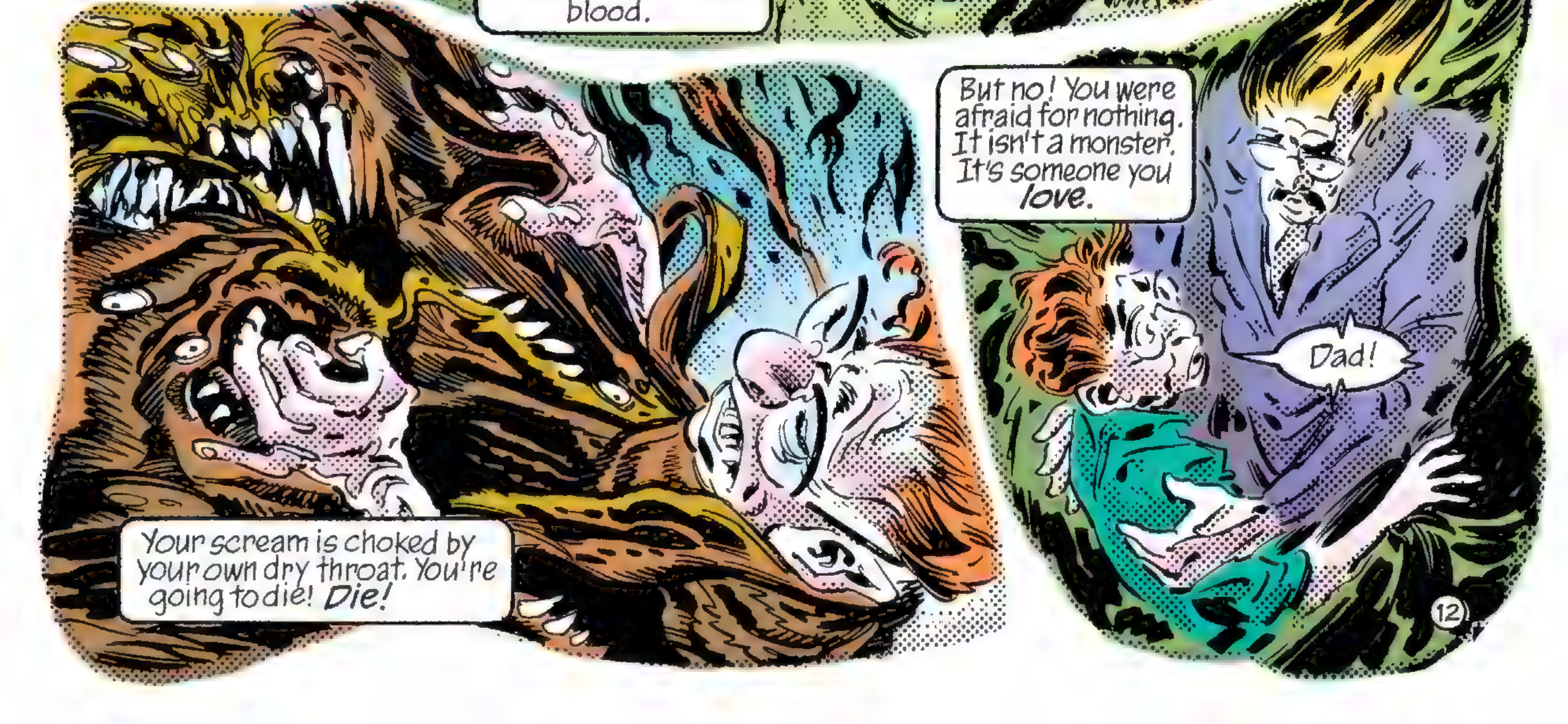
It's a sunny day. You're feeling good. Truly the world is a wonderful place.



Suddenly, a dark cloud blots your horizon. You feel uneasy... apprehensive.



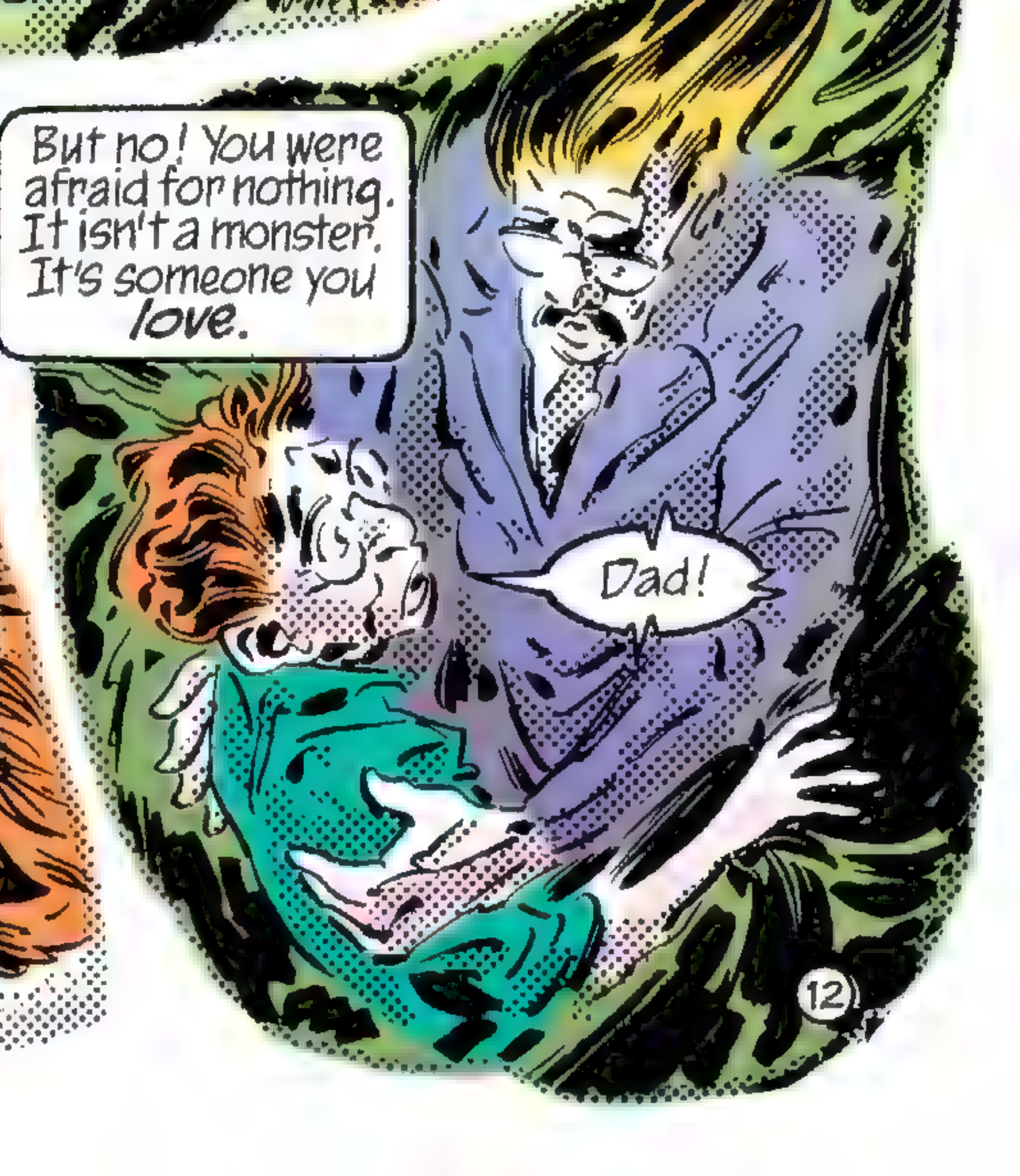
Nervousness becomes anxiety. Your mouth is dry. Your heart pounds. But you can't run.



Something terrible is going to happen. Something awful, involving much pain and blood. **Your** blood.



Your scream is choked by your own dry throat. You're going to die! **Die!**



But no! You were afraid for nothing. It isn't a monster. It's someone you *love*.

Dad!

You can almost *taste* the relief, sweet and cool, as your loved one holds you close.

Not strictly true, Dad!

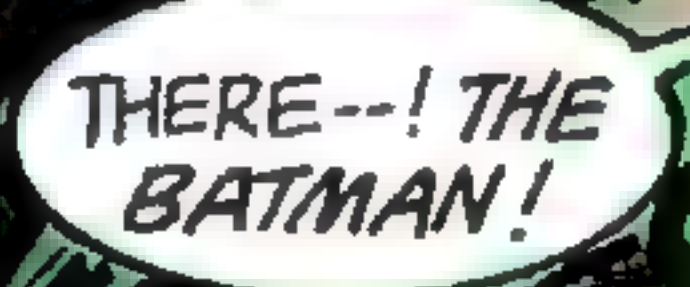
Don't be afraid, Phil. Daddy's here. Nothing can harm you now.

No!
No!

NOOOOOOOO!

GOOTHAM'S ALWAYS BEEN AN EVIL CITY, BUT NOW IT'S WORSE THAN EVER. SOMEONE BROKE THE MANIACS OUT OF ARKHAM.

CORNELIUS STIRK--FIREFLY--MR. ZSASZ HAVE PLAYED THEIR BLOODY GAMES. AND AS ALWAYS, IT'S THE ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO SUFFER AND DIE.





SMOKE HIM!

I DON'T SEE NOTHIN'! DID WE GET HIM?

AFRAID NOT, BOYS.

CARE TO TRY AGAIN?

The world is evil. All things must suffer.

Only one man can help you ... The Scarecrow.

I can be your friend.
Obey me, and the
terror will cease.

I can stop the pain.
Obey me, and the
evil will cease.

Blood--guts--ripping flesh. Obey me, and the horror will cease.

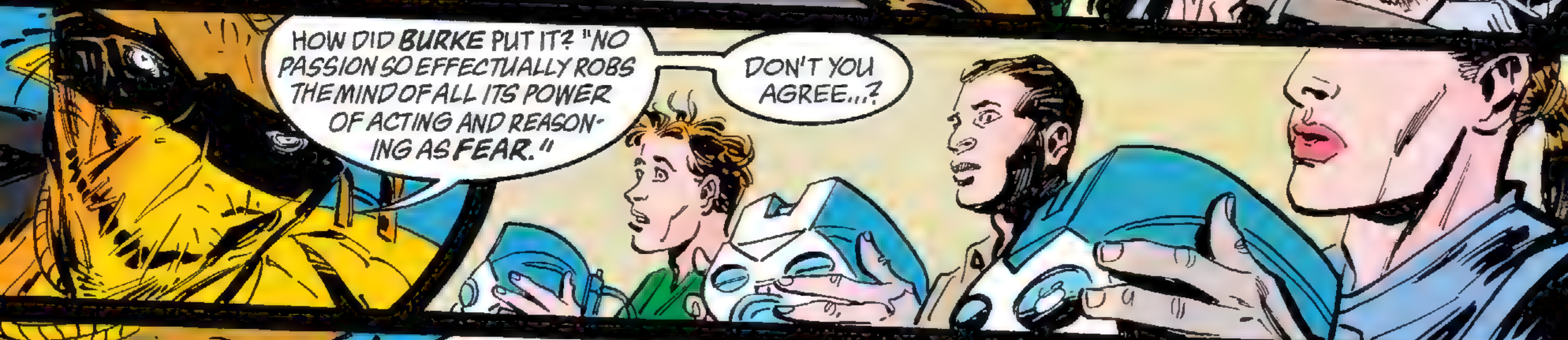
You will pay for your sins in blood and pain.

I am the Scarecrow.

I am your friend,
your savior, your
guide. Obey me!
Obey me!

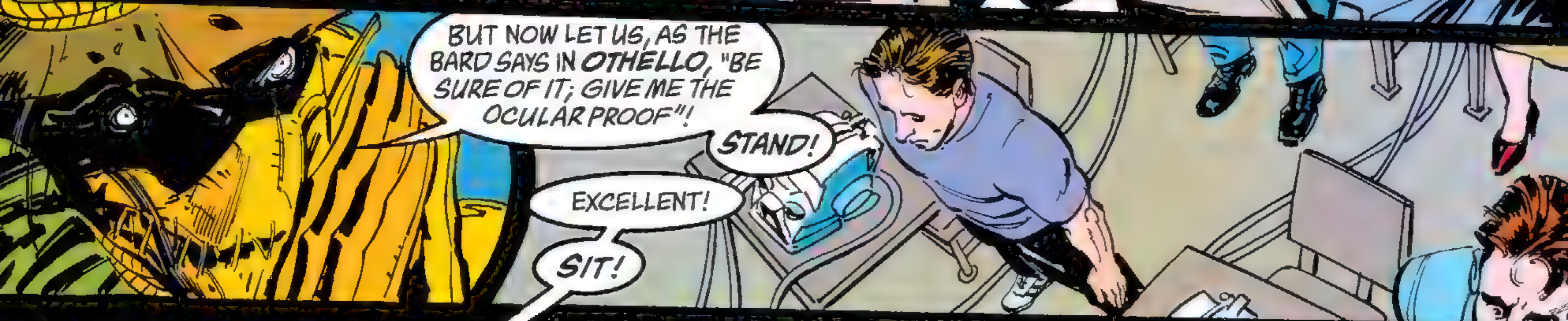


I DECLARE THIS
EXPERIMENT TERMINATED.
YOU MAY REMOVE YOUR
HELMETS!



HOW DID BURKE PUT IT? "NO
PASSION SO EFFECTUALLY ROBS
THE MIND OF ALL ITS POWER
OF ACTING AND REASON-
ING AS FEAR."

DON'T YOU
AGREE...?



BUT NOW LET US, AS THE
BARD SAYS IN *OTHELLO*, "BE
SURE OF IT; GIVE ME THE
OCULAR PROOF!"

STAND!

EXCELLENT!

SIT!



BARK
LIKE
DOGS!

WOOF
WOOF!
GRRRRUFF!
RRRR
WUFF!
GRR
FF



AND ONE
FINAL TEST.
YOU-- TAKE
THE GUN.



SHOOT
HIM!

YES, YES, I KNOW IT'S
AGAINST ALL TABOOS! BUT
THE OLD ORDER NO LONGER
MATTERS. I AM YOUR
MENTOR NOW-- I,
SCARECROW!

KILL
HIM!

OBEY ME! YOU
MUST OBEY
ME!

BLAM!

THANK YOU,
FRIEND!

NOW, I'D LIKE TWO
VOLUNTEERS TO BRING
IN YOUR COSTUMES
FROM MY VAN--



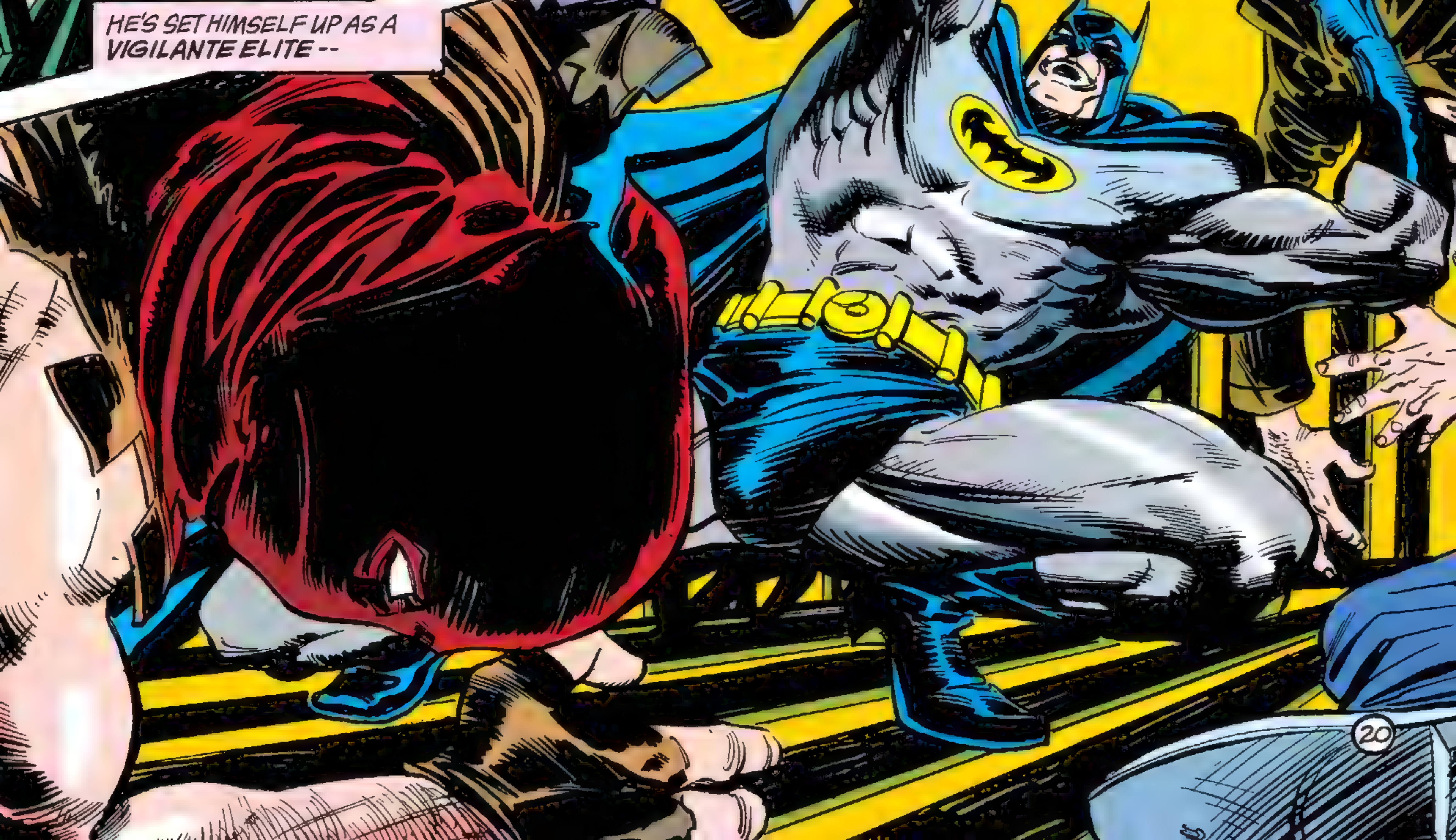
HE FIGHTS LIKE A MACHINE--
DISARMING THEM FIRST,
TAKING NO CHANCES, REVELLING
IN HIS UNIQUE BLEND OF
ATHLETIC SKILL AND BRUTAL
PHYSICAL POWER.

...AND CRIMINALS.

HE'S A MONUMENT
IN THIS CITY-- SOME-
THING THAT WAS
HERE LONG BEFORE
THERE WERE STREETS
AND BUILDINGS AND...

A comic book panel showing Batman in his blue and grey suit with a yellow bat emblem on the chest. He is holding a man in a red hat and a purple coat by the collar. The man is holding a small, silver, rectangular device. The background is a dark, industrial setting with a large red structure.

SUDDENLY I UNDERSTAND. THE EVIL OF
GOTHAM CITY IS ALL BATMAN'S FAULT!

A comic book panel showing Batman in his blue and grey suit with a yellow bat emblem on the chest. He is holding a man in a red hat and a purple coat by the collar. The man is holding a small, silver, rectangular device. The background is a dark, industrial setting with a large red structure.

HE'S SET HIMSELF UP AS A
VIGILANTE ELITE --



-- A COSTUMED HERO WHO ISSUES
A CHALLENGE TO ALL:

"GOTHAM IS MY CITY--
TAKE IT IF YOU CAN!"



AND THE MANIACS HAVE ACCEPTED! THE JOKER--
THE VENTRILOQUIST AND SCARFACE --THE HOODS, ZSASZ,
TWO-FACE... ALL OF THEM--THEY ONLY EXIST AS AN
ANSWER TO HIS CHALLENGE!

IT'S LIKE A VEIL HAS
BEEN LIFTED FROM MY
EYES. I SEE CLEARLY
FOR THE FIRST TIME.

BATMAN CREATES HIS OWN
VILLAINS. HE IS THE CITY'S
TRUE ENEMY!

NOWHERE TO
RUN, CREEP!

KLAMP!

WUMPI!

AAAAAH!

HIS MOTIVES MAY
BE PURE-- HIS
INTENTIONS
HONORABLE --
BUT HIS GUILT IS
UNMISTAKABLE!



THE BATMAN
MUST FALL--

-- AND ANARKY--THE
VOICE OF THE PEOPLE--
MUST BRING HIM DOWN!



MAN HAS
ALWAYS WORSHIPPED
GODS. YOU NAME IT,
AND MANKIND HAS
GIVEN IT A GOD.

THOR, THE GOD OF
THUNDER-- ANUBIS, THE
GOD OF EMBALMING--
ABU, THE SUMERIAN GOD
OF VEGETATION --
GOVANNON, WELSH
RIVER GOD--

THERE ARE GODS OF
WAR AND HEALING--
MOUNTAINS AND MONEY,
FIREPLACES AND
APPLE TREES--



BUT THOUGH I HAVE
SCoured EVERY TOME IN
MY ANCIENT COLLECTION, I
HAVE FOUND NO MENTION
ANYWHERE OF THE MOST
OBVIOUS GOD OF ALL...

THE GOD
OF FEAR!

I HAVE IT ON GOOD
AUTHORITY-- BEN JONSON'S,
IN FACT-- THAT "T'WAS ONLY
FEAR FIRST IN THE
WORLD MADE GODS."

SO IT IS
FITTING THE VACANCY
BE FILLED--

--AND YOU,
MY RAGGEDY
MINIONS, ARE
GOING TO HELP
ME FILL IT!



APPLE TREES,
I ASK YOU!



DON'T FEEL LEFT
OUT, MS. STOPES! YOU
TOO WILL HAVE YOUR
PART TO PLAY IN THE
DRAMATIC CREATION OF
THE LIVING GOD
OF FEAR!

TAKE THIS. FIND
YOURSELF SOMEWHERE SAFE
AND OUT OF THE WAY UNTIL TEN
O'CLOCK PRECISELY, THEN
RELEASE IT INTO THE
UNIVERSITY AIR INTAKES.

WILL YOU
DO THAT?

YES.

THEN OFF
YOU GO, DEAR
LADY!

YOU OTHERS--
WALK THIS WAY!

ALL ABOARD, MY
STRAW-HEADED SLAVES!
TONIGHT WE REWRITE
HISTORY--AS WE **HALT**
THE **FLIGHT** FROM
RELIGION--

--AND INSTALL A
BRAND NEW GOD
OF FEAR!

HRRAA000!
HRRAAIII!

NEXT

I, SCARECROW!

Cover art by BRIAN STELFREEZE



NO 17 LATE SEP 93
PART TWO OF THREE

KNIGHTFALL™



B A T M A N

SHADOW OF THE BAT

THE GOD OF FEAR

BY ALAN GRANT & BRETT BLEVINS





AH! HOW
"OUR FEARS DO
MAKE US
TRAITORS"!

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND...?

SHAKESPEARE--
"MACBETH." BUT DON'T
YOU WORRY ABOUT
IT, MY TEENAGED
ZOMBIE!

YOUR
TARGET LIES
THERE--

--AND YOU STRIKE AT TEN
PRECISELY. ALLOW NO ONE
TO INTERFERE. GOT THAT?

YES.

NOT YOU, MY FRIEND!
YOU INTRIGUE ME.

YOU SAY
I KILLED YOUR
FATHER...?

ANSWER! YOU
DARE NOT DISOBEY
MY FEAR-INDUCED
CONDITIONING!

It's like my mind is
split in two. There's a
tiny part unaffected,
calmly observing
everything in this
insane nightmare--

While the rest of me recoils in terror from the menace of his words.

Y-Y-YES. YOU K-KILLED MY DAD. P-P-PAUL HEROLD!

HEROLD...? THE ANTIQUARIAN BOOK HEROLD?

OF COURSE! HE WAS MY VERY FIRST VICTIM... SHOT AT CLOSE RANGE, IF I RECALL!

WHY, MY BOY, THIS MAKES YOU OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE!

I ALWAYS MEANT TO STEAL HIS COLLECTION-- HE HAD SOME RARE TOMES-- BUT I WAS JUST SO BUSY AFTER THE MURDER!

YOU INHERITED, I SUPPOSE...?

NEVER LOOK A GIFT HORSE, I ALWAYS SAY! WE'LL GO THERE NOW!

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GO ON--QUIET INTO THAT DARK NIGHT!

FATE HAS CAST US TWO TOGETHER, BOY--



THIS WILL BE A NIGHT GOTHAM REMEMBERS FOREVER!

HRRAAACOOO!

N-NO MORE, MAN! I'VE HAD ENOUGH--!

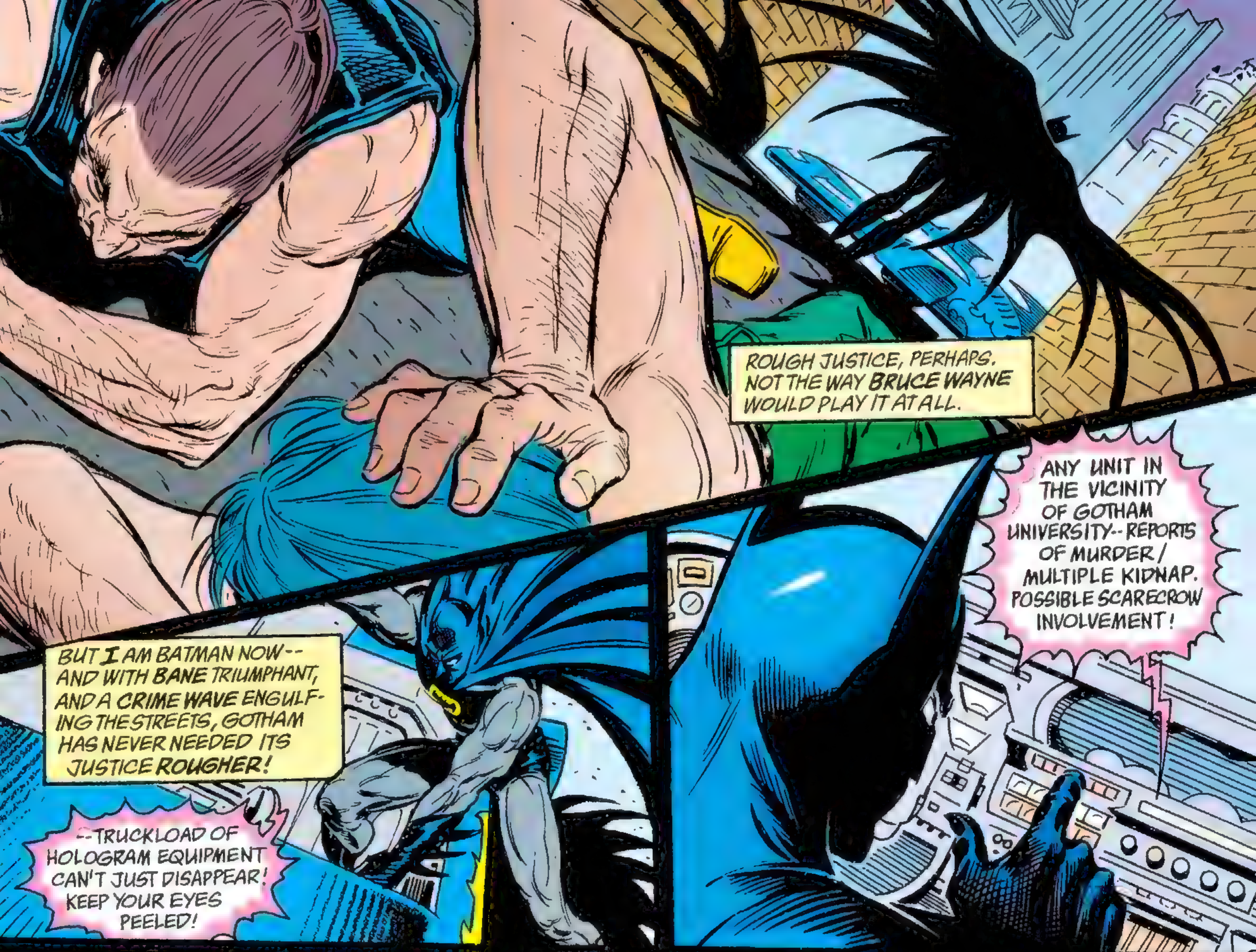


NOW, I DON'T CARE IF THE POLICE GET YOU OR NOT. THIS IS MY PERSONAL WARNING--

--IF I SEE EITHER OF YOU ON THE STREETS AFTER DARK IN THE NEXT MONTH, YOU GET THE SAME AGAIN--



--WHETHER YOU'VE DONE ANYTHING WRONG OR NOT!



ROUGH JUSTICE, PERHAPS.
NOT THE WAY BRUCE WAYNE
WOULD PLAY IT AT ALL.

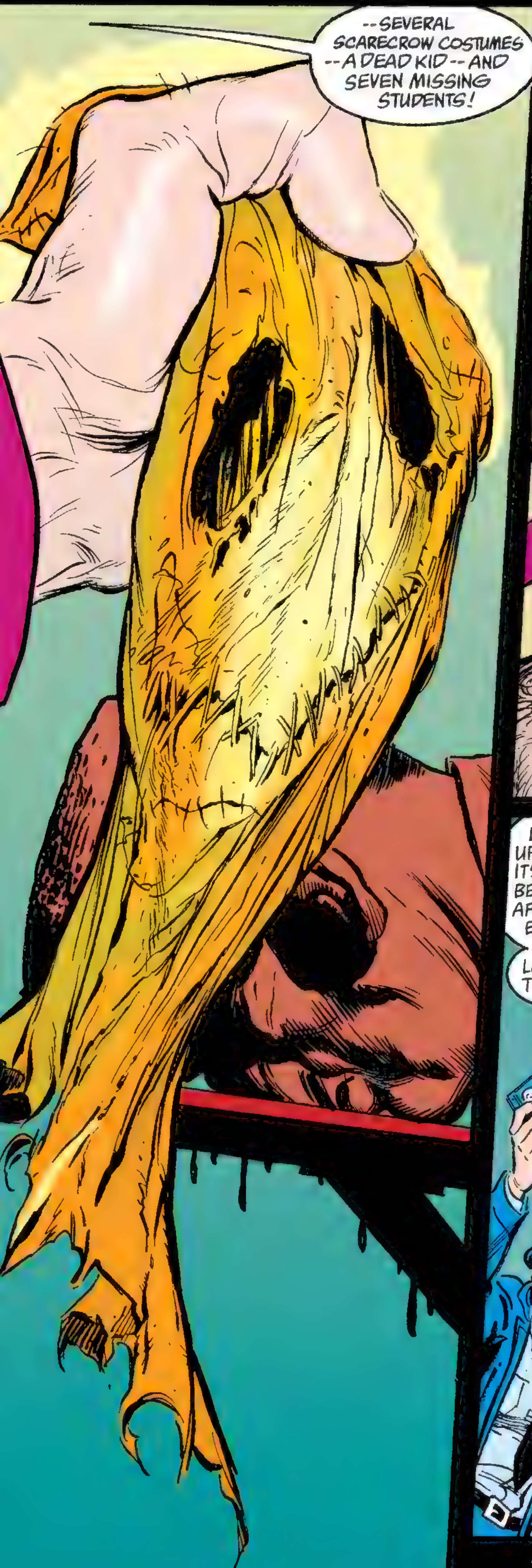
BUT I AM BATMAN NOW--
AND WITH BANE TRIUMPHANT,
AND A CRIME WAVE ENGULF-
ING THE STREETS, GOTHAM
HAS NEVER NEEDED ITS
JUSTICE ROUGHER!

--TRUCKLOAD OF
HOLOGRAM EQUIPMENT
CAN'T JUST DISAPPEAR!
KEEP YOUR EYES
PEELED!

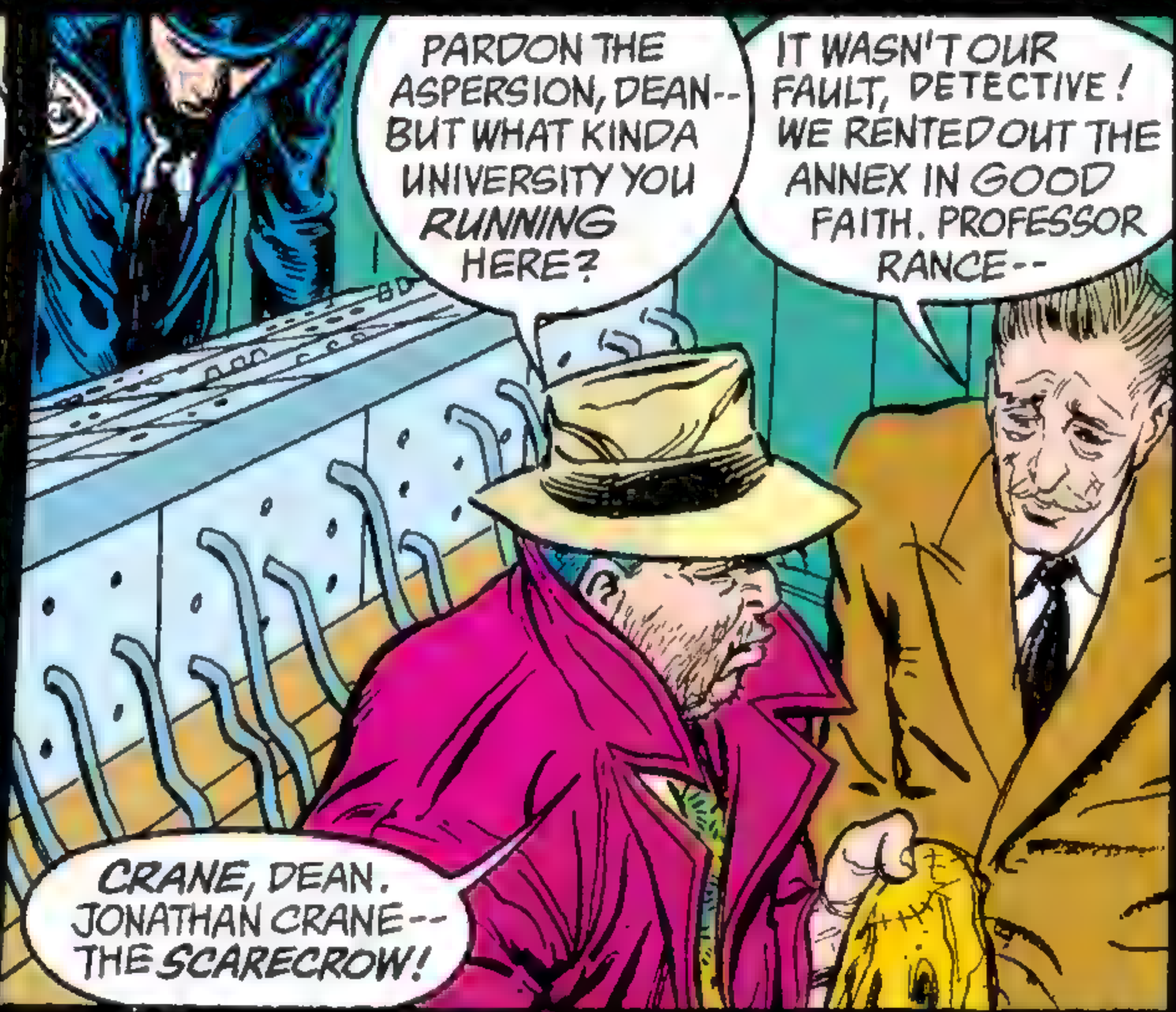
ANY UNIT IN
THE VICINITY
OF GOTHAM
UNIVERSITY-- REPORTS
OF MURDER /
MULTIPLE KIDNAP.
POSSIBLE SCARECROW
INVOLVEMENT!



OFFICERS
BULLOCK AND
MONTOKYA ALREADY
DISPATCHED!



--SEVERAL
SCARECROW COSTUMES
--A DEAD KID-- AND
SEVEN MISSING
STUDENTS!



PARDON THE
ASPERION, DEAN--
BUT WHAT KINDA
UNIVERSITY YOU
RUNNING
HERE?

IT WASN'T OUR
FAULT, DETECTIVE!
WE RENTED OUT THE
ANNEX IN GOOD
FAITH. PROFESSOR
RANCE--

CRANE, DEAN.
JONATHAN CRANE--
THE SCARECROW!

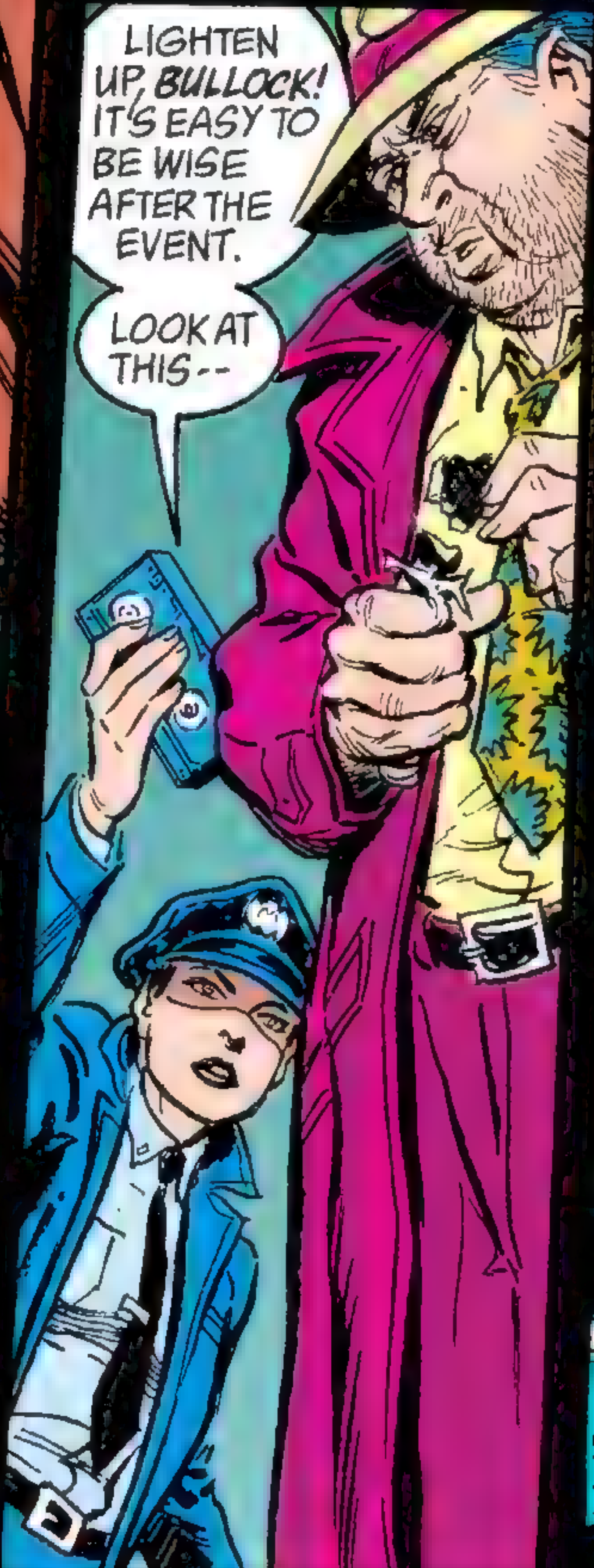


YOU DIDN'T
EVEN CHECK
ON HIM!

THAT
WAS MS. STOPES'
RESPONSIBILITY--

SHE
AROUND?

ER, I FEAR
SHE'S MISSING,
TOO!



LIGHTEN
UP, BULLOCK!
IT'S EASY TO
BE WISE
AFTER THE
EVENT.

LOOK AT
THIS--



A MESSAGE?

NOT
FOR US.



THIS IS EVIDENCE-- FOUND
AT THE SCENE OF A CRIME.
WE WATCH!

WHERE THE
HECK'S OUR BACK-
UP? AND THE
MEDS?

CITY'S GOING
WILD. EVERYBODY'S
STRETCHED!

GREETINGS,
BATMAN!

YO
YOURSELF,
FRUIT-
CAKE!

I'VE READ
THAT THE PRESENT
PARLOUS STATE
OF WORLD AFFAIRS
MAY BE A DIRECT
RESULT OF MANKIND'S
LONG SLOW DRIFT
AWAY FROM
RELIGION.

I INTEND
TO RECTIFY
THAT SORRY
FACT.

BEFORE THE
NIGHT IS OVER, A
MILLION VOICES
WILL SING MY PRAISE--
A MILLION KNEES BEND
IN HOMAGE--A MILLION
SCREAMS BEG ME TO
RELEASE THEM FROM
MY AWFUL REIGN
OF TERROR.

BEWARE... FOR
TONIGHT THE GOD
OF FEAR STALKS
GOTHAM CITY!

CHEEZ!
FRUITCAKE
AIN'T THE HALF
OF IT WHERE
THAT CREEP'S
CONCERNED!

TAPE SEEMS
TO BE STUCK--

HRAAAAH!!!
HRAAAOOOOO!



WHAT THE
HECK--?

DOWN!
GET
DOWN!

VA-DAAMM!

MAGNESIUM-
BASED BOOBY-
TRAP. MEANT
FOR ME.

HEY, POINT
TAKEN! NEXT
TIME I JUST
PASS THE
MESSAGE
ON!

THAT'S ONE WE OWE
YOU. IF YOU EVER NEED
ANYTHING--

GET ME A LIST OF THE MISSING STUDENTS.
LET ME KNOW IF FORENSIC COMES UP
WITH ANY LEADS--

--THOUGH
I'D BET THEY
WON'T!

GOD OF
FEAR?
THAT'S A NEW
ANGLE FOR
HIM.

WHATEVER HIS PLAN, IT
SOUNDS BIG. WAYNE SAID
I CAN'T GO AFTER BANE...

...BUT
NOBODY SAID
ANYTHING ABOUT
NOT MESSING UP THE
SCARECROW!

HRAA000!

HRAIIII!



WOOPS! BUT "SILENCE IS THE PERFECTEST HERALD," AS THE BARD SO RIGHTLY POINTED OUT!

MY GIZMOS ARE IN PLACE THROUGHOUT THE CITY--MY ZOMBIES WAITING FOR THE STROKE OF TEN!

AND HOW SHALL I SPEND MY FINAL HOURS AS A MORTAL, BEFORE GODHOOD CLASPS ME TO ITS OMNIPOTENT BREAST?

WHY, IMMERSSED IN THE ONLY THING THAT COULD EVER VIE WITH FEAR FOR MY AFFECTIONS--

--SOMEONE ELSE'S BOOKS!

THE ANTI-BATZ ...

'S THE HURRY, KIDDOS? STICK AROUND AN' HAVE SOME FUN!

P-PLEASE--LET US GO!

EVEN STREET GANGS DEFINE THEIR SHABBY EXISTENCE IN TERMS OF BATMAN!

I HATE A MOANER, KID!

AAAH!

I'VE BEEN WORKING OUT
EVERY DAY SINCE THE LAST
TIME THEY CAUGHT ME.
BUT THERE'S NO POINT
RISKING MYSELF--

TWANNNG!

-- WHEN
THE LINE OF LEAST
RESISTANCE--

THUDD

AAAH!

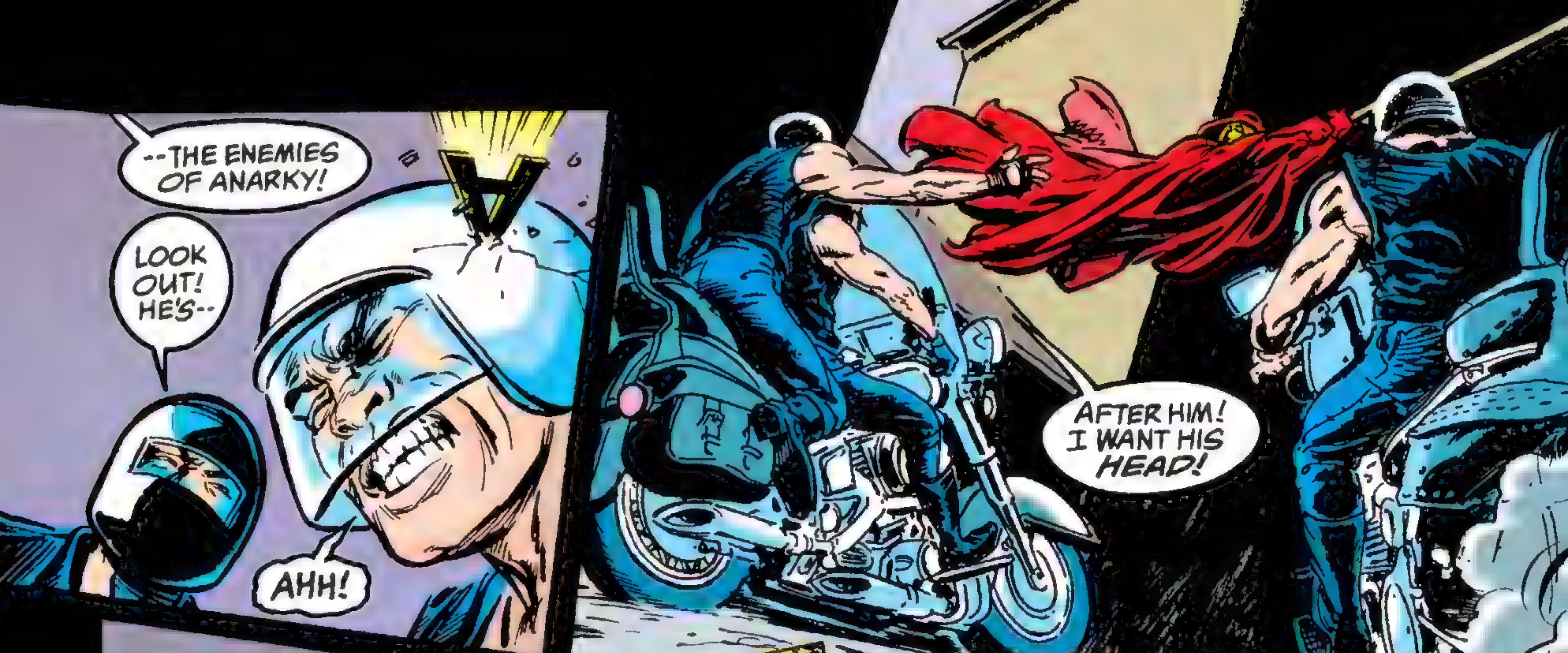
-- IS THE LIKELIEST
ROAD TO SUCCESS.

LIKE TO TRY TO
INTIMIDATE
ME...?

HEY, YOU'RE
ANARKY, AIN'TCHA?
WHAT'S YER GRIPE
WITH US? I HEARD
IT WAS THE LAW
YER AGAINST!

I'M AGAINST ANYTHING
THAT'S AGAINST PEOPLE!

CRUELTY--BRUTALITY--
EXPLOITATION... THESE ARE
THE ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE--



I ONLY EVER
HAD TWO LOVES IN
MY LIFE-- FEAR, OF
COURSE, AND
BOOKS!

ESPECIALLY ANCIENT
BOOKS... SCHOLARLY TOMES
THAT DEFY TIME, PASSING
THEIR WISDOM DOWN THE
YEARS...!

CONTEMPORARY
EUROPEAN
MEDIAEVAL
CHILDREN'S
ANCIENT
ROOF GARDEN

OH PRECIOUS WORDS!
MOST POTENT LETTERS!
TRULY, AS BACON TELLS US,
"KNOWLEDGE ITSELF IS
POWER!"

FEEL THE PARCHMENT...
THE MUZZLE-SOFT LEATHER...
SMELL THAT MUSTY, DUSTY
ODOR...!

He's crazy!

And I can't do
anything except
stand here!

BOOKS CAUSED YOUR
FATHER'S DEATH, YOU KNOW.
INDIRECTLY, AT LEAST. THE
ACTUAL CAUSE OF DEATH
WAS STUPIDITY. WANT TO
HEAR ABOUT IT?

Y-Y-Y-YES.



FIRST, LET'S GET RID OF THAT IRRITATING STUTTER. A LEGACY OF HIS TRAUMATIC DEATH, NO DOUBT?

Y-YES.

THEN STOP IT.

I C-CAN'T!

VERY WELL. I... OBEY.

EXCELLENT! SETTLE DOWN AND I'LL TELL YOU A STORY...

VERY OFTEN AN INCIDENT IN CHILDHOOD SUGGESTS THE SORT OF PERSON THE CHILD WILL BE WHEN HE GROWS UP. SUCH WAS THE CASE WITH JONATHAN CRANE.

OBEY ME-- OR ELSE!

"AS A SMALL BOY, I LIKED TO FRIGHTEN BIRDS!"

"AS I GREW, MY PASSIONS FOR CAUSING FEAR AND BOOKS INTERTWINED. I STUDIED EVIL, TERROR, MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN--"

"--AND, NATURALLY, I BECAME A PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY--"

WELCOME TO GOTHAM U., PROFESSOR CRANE! WE HOPE YOUR TENURE HERE WILL BE A LONG AND HAPPY ONE.

THANK YOU. NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME--



SORRY, JUST A PASSING WHIM.

IF YOU'LL SHOW ME TO MY CLASS...?

"I WAS A FIRST-RATE TEACHER--BUT THE AUTHORITIES BALKED AT MY METHODS--"

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN--THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE GUN!

POOR CRANE! HE LOOKS LIKE A SCARECROW IN THOSE CLOTHES! HE CERTAINLY IS A QUEER FELLOW!

HE SPENDS EVERY CENT HE EARNES TO BUY BOOKS!

THE FOOLS! THEY JUDGE HUMAN VALUES BY MONEY. IF I HAD CASH, THEY'D RESPECT ME... AND I COULD BUY MORE BOOKS!

AND THERE IS A WAY--

I LOOK LIKE A SCARECROW-- SO THAT WILL BE MY SYMBOL! A SYMBOL OF POVERTY AND FEAR COMBINED--

THE SCARECROW!

"I HIRED MYSELF TO A BUSINESS-MAN NAMED KENDRICK--

PAUL HEROLD! YOU WERE TOLD TO WITHDRAW YOUR LAWSUIT AGAINST YOUR EX-PARTNER KENDRICK!

I WON'T BE INTIMIDATED! KENDRICK CHEATED ME, AND I SHALL GET SATISFACTION IN COURT!

"I COULD SMELL THE FEAR ON HIM LIKE A TANGIBLE THING. FOR AN INSTANT I SAVORED IT, TASTED IT THE WAY ANOTHER MAN MIGHT SAMPLE MARMALADE--

FOOL! YOU'RE TERRIFIED! OBEY ME--OR DIE!

I MAY BE AFRAID--BUT I HAVE PRINCIPLES!

"--THEN REPAID HIS STUPIDITY IN LEAD!"

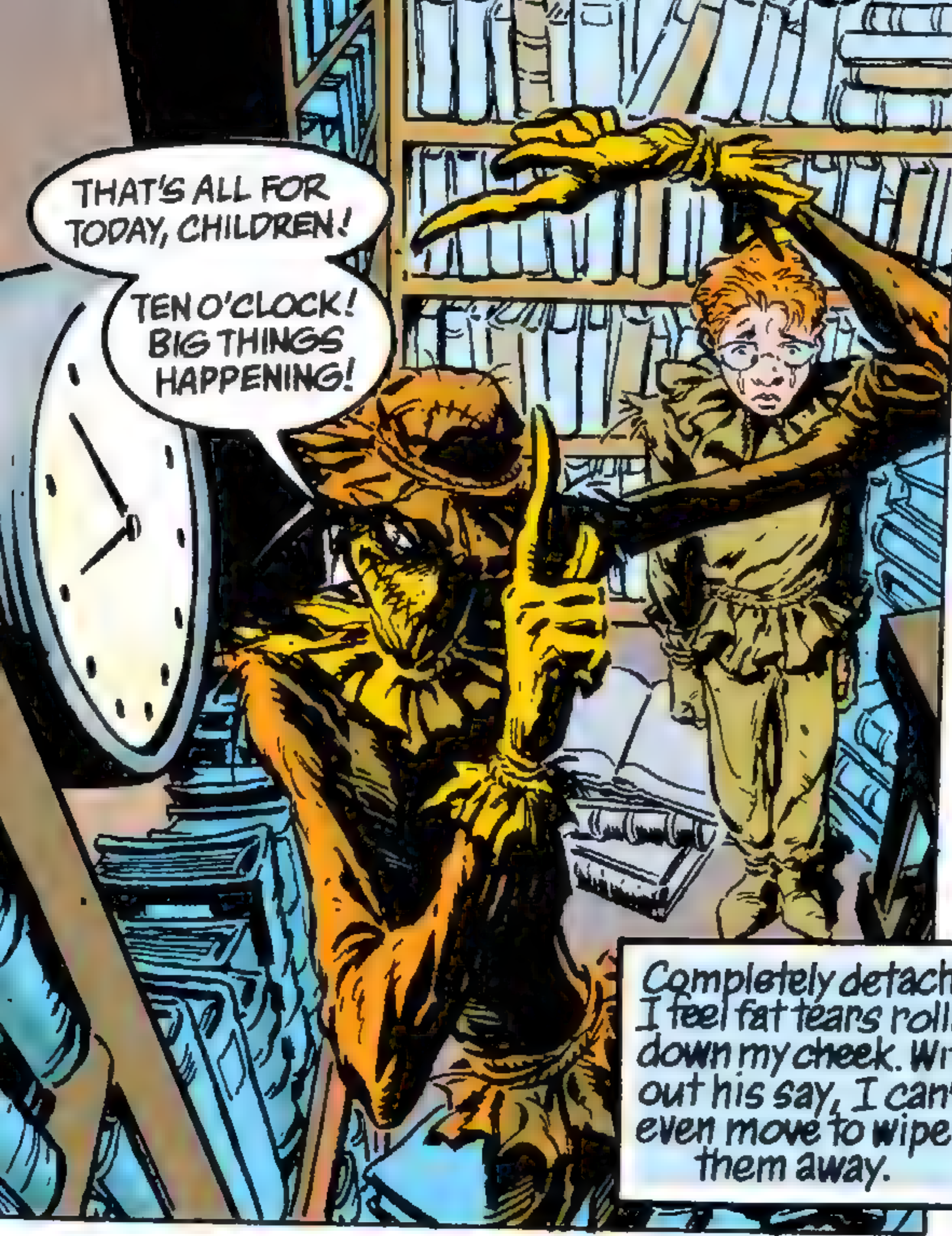
THE SCARECROW WARNS ONLY ONCE!

"I'D NEVER HURT ANYONE BEFORE, LET ALONE KILLED A MAN. IT WAS LIKE FRIGHTENING BIRDS..."

"...ONLY A MILLION TIMES BETTER!"

DADDY...? I HEARD A NOISE.

D-DADDY...?



THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY, CHILDREN!

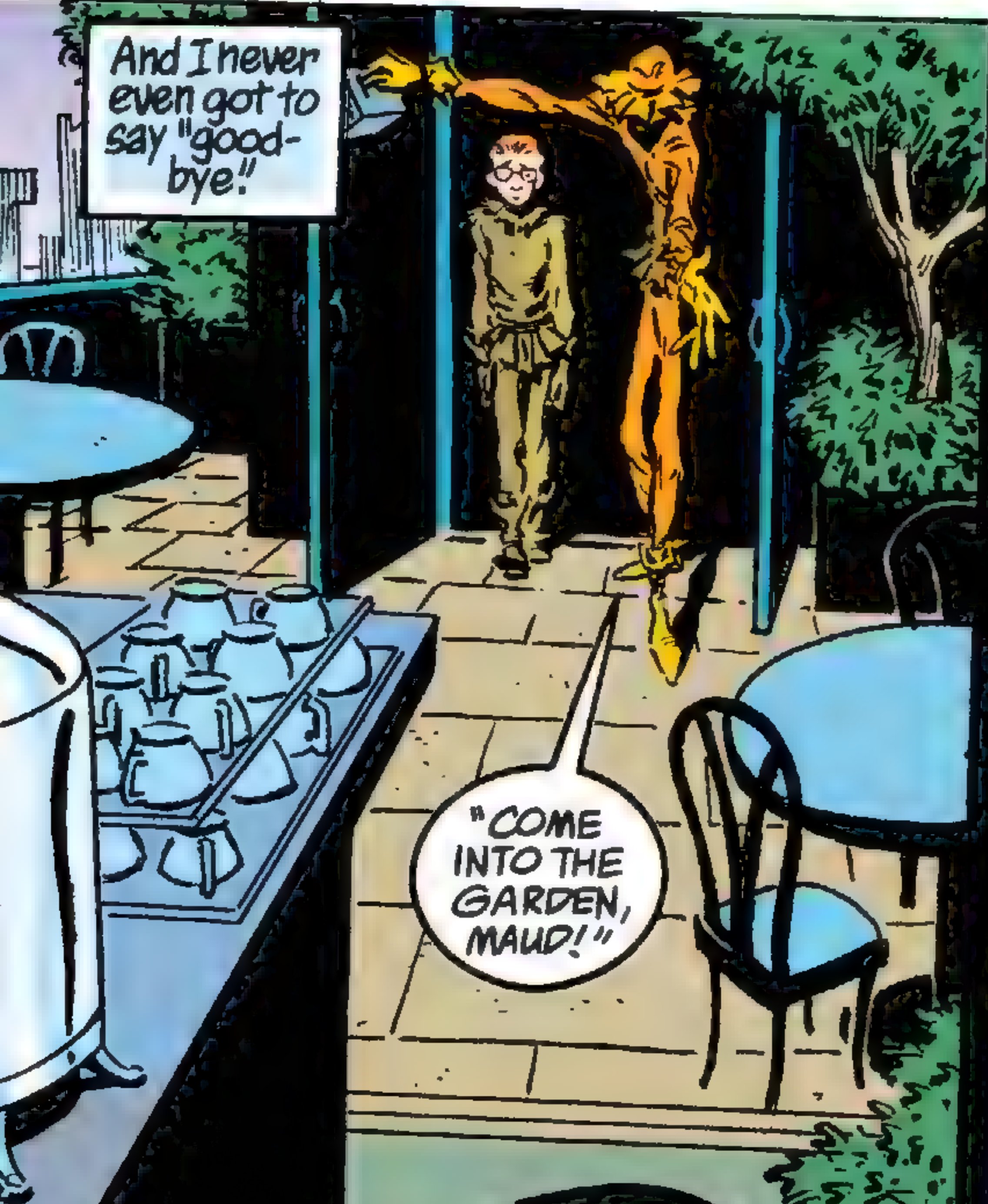
TEN O'CLOCK! BIG THINGS HAPPENING!

Completely detached, I feel fat tears rolling down my cheek. Without his say, I can't even move to wipe them away.

My poor father... murdered for his principles.

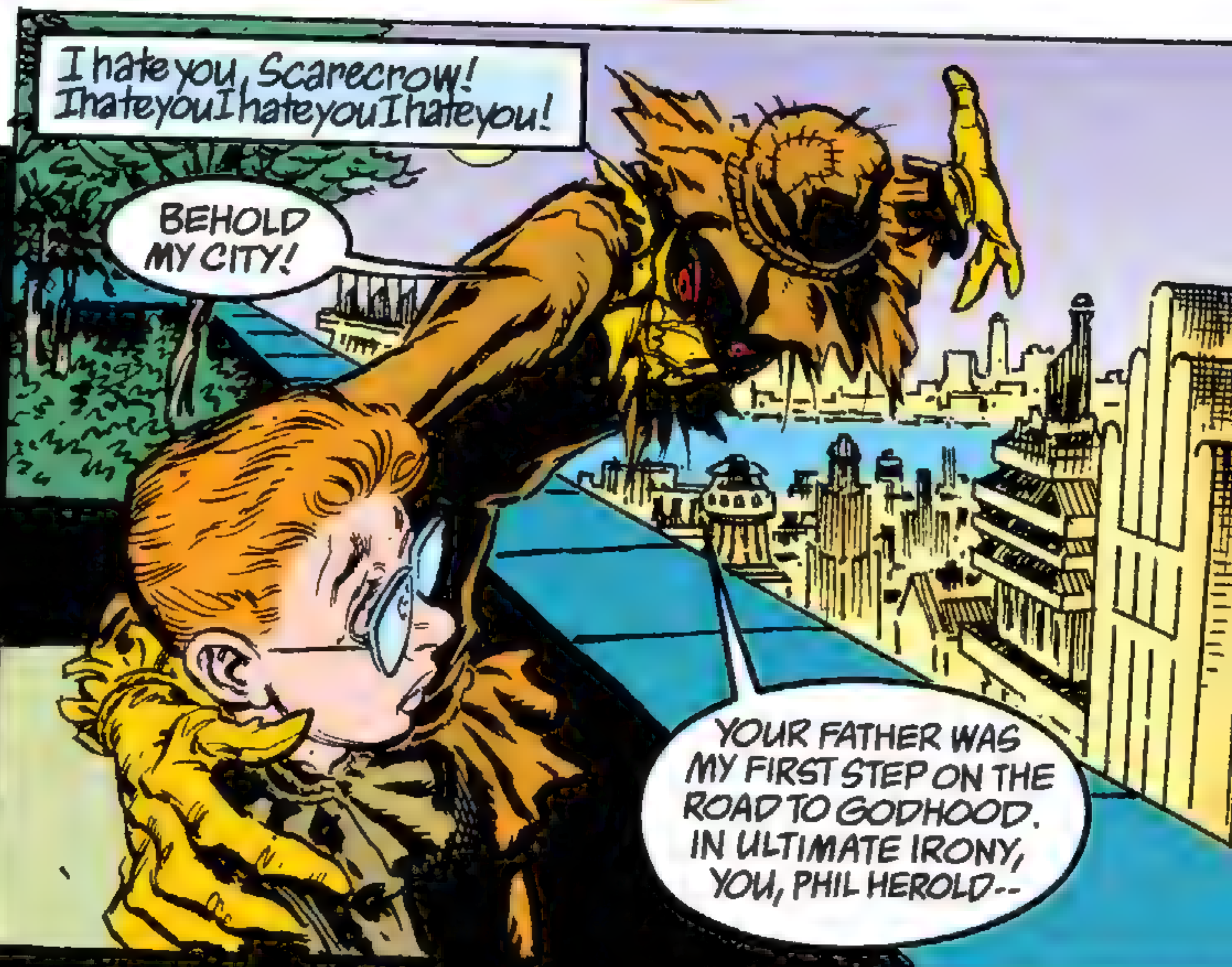


FOLLOW ME! A GRAND-STAND VIEW IS REQUIRED!



And I never even got to say "good-bye!"

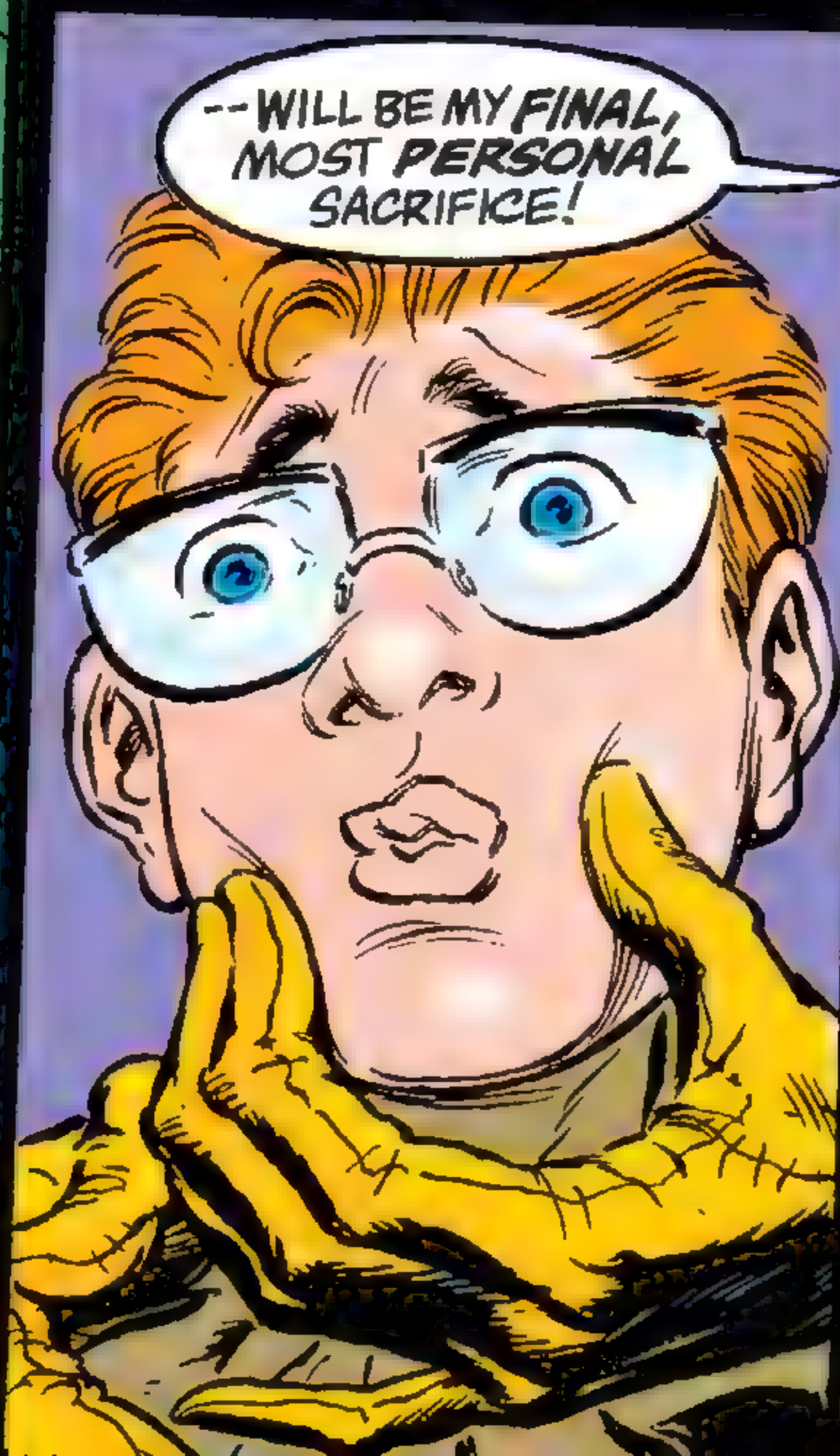
"COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD!"



I hate you, Scarecrow! I hate you I hate you I hate you!

BEHOLD MY CITY!

YOUR FATHER WAS MY FIRST STEP ON THE ROAD TO GODHOOD. IN ULTIMATE IRONY, YOU, PHIL HEROLD--



--WILL BE MY FINAL, MOST PERSONAL SACRIFICE!



CHEER UP, BOY! CHEER UP! THERE'S A GOOD TIME COMING!

EVEN IF IT'S NOT FOR YOU!

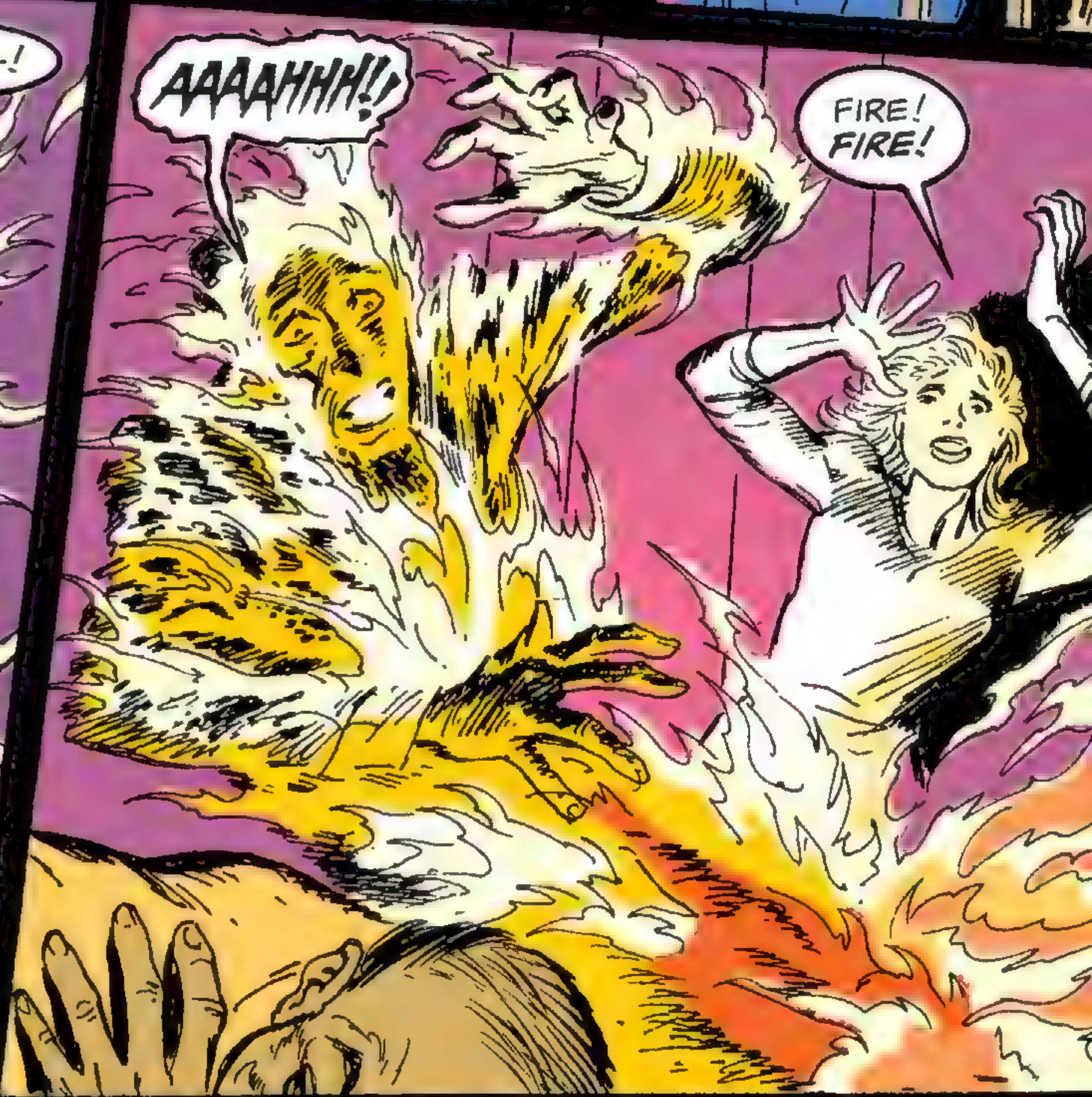
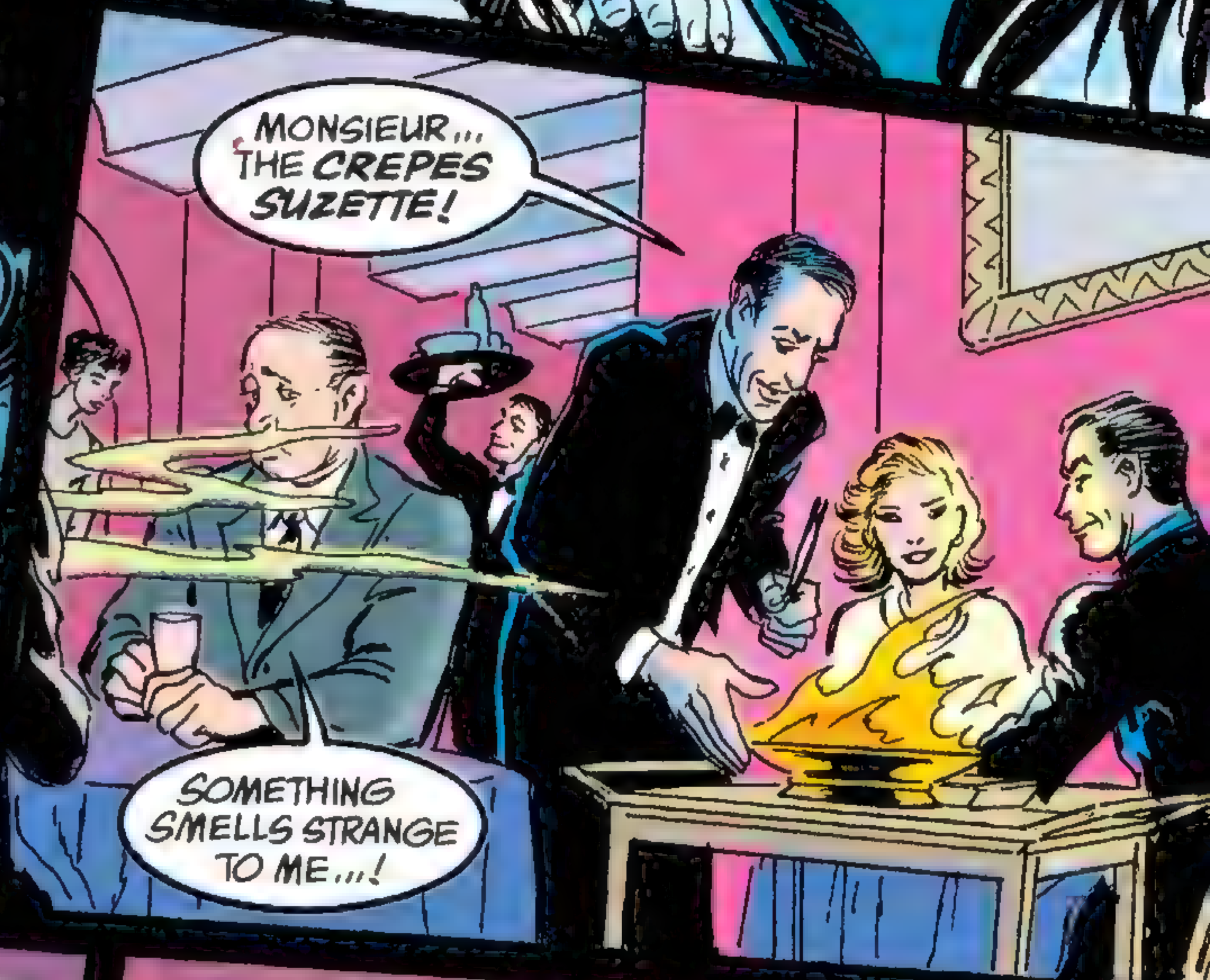
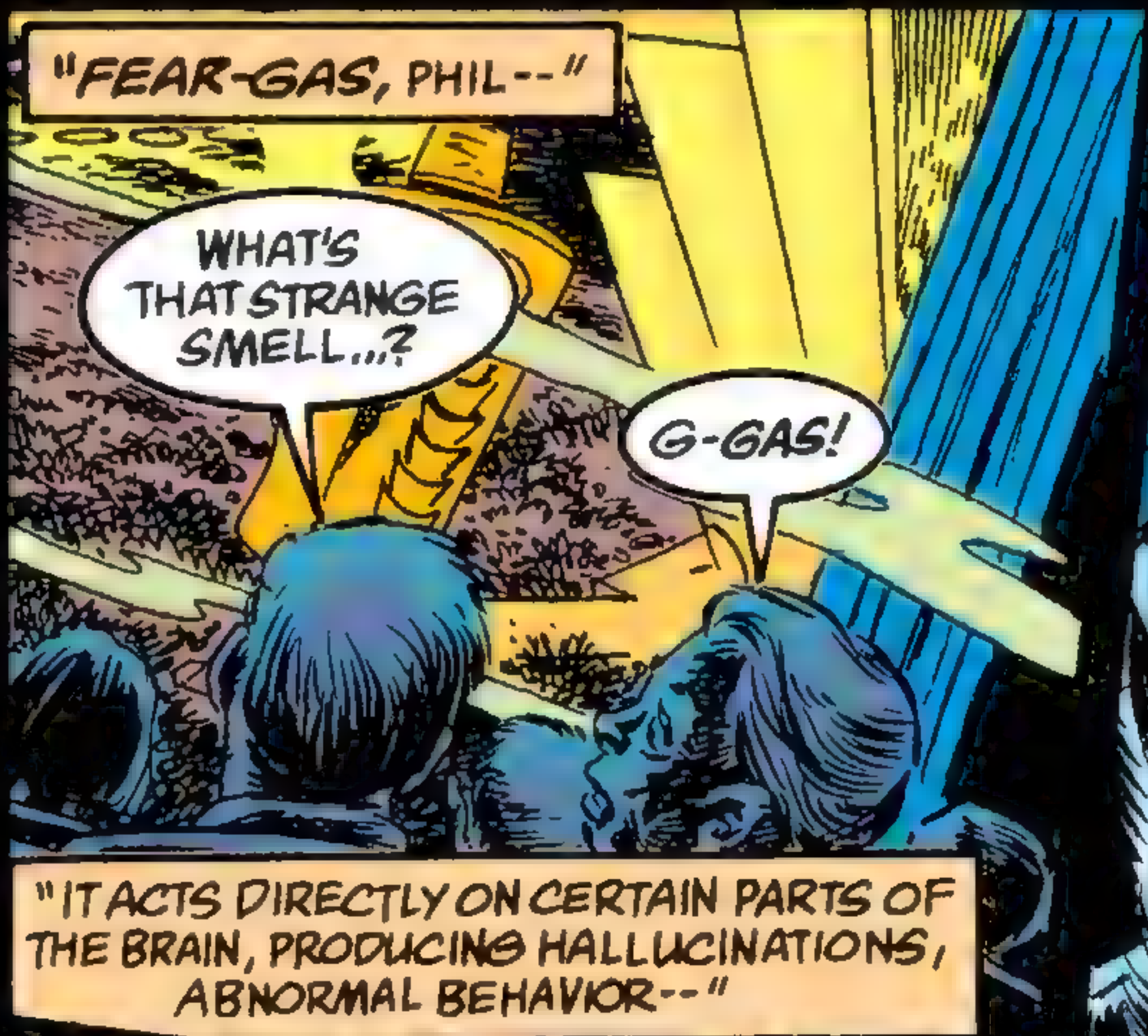


"IMAGINE, PHIL...SIX SCARECROWS--SEVEN IF YOU COUNT SWEET MS. STOPES AT THE UNIVERSITY-- EACH EQUIPPED WITH ENOUGH OF MY FEAR-GAS TO FLOAT A DIRIGIBLE!"

"SEE THEM STEALING THROUGH THE NIGHT LIKE HARBINGERS OF DOOM, WRAITHS HEADING FOR THE TARGETS I GAVE THEM--"

"A HOTEL--A THEATER-- AN APARTMENT BLOCK... PLACES SWARMING WITH THE GODLESS, WHO SEEK TO FILL THEIR EMPTY LIVES WITH MEANINGLESS DISTRACTION!"

"I WILL GIVE THEM MEANING. OUT OF THEIR SUFFERING WILL BE BORN MY GODHOOD!"





I'VE COMBED GOTHAM--
HIT ON EVERY SOURCE I
KNOW-- BUT OF THE
SCARECROW, NOT A WORD!

THERE--!

YOU--
SCARECROW!

I
HAVE
YOU!

WUMP!

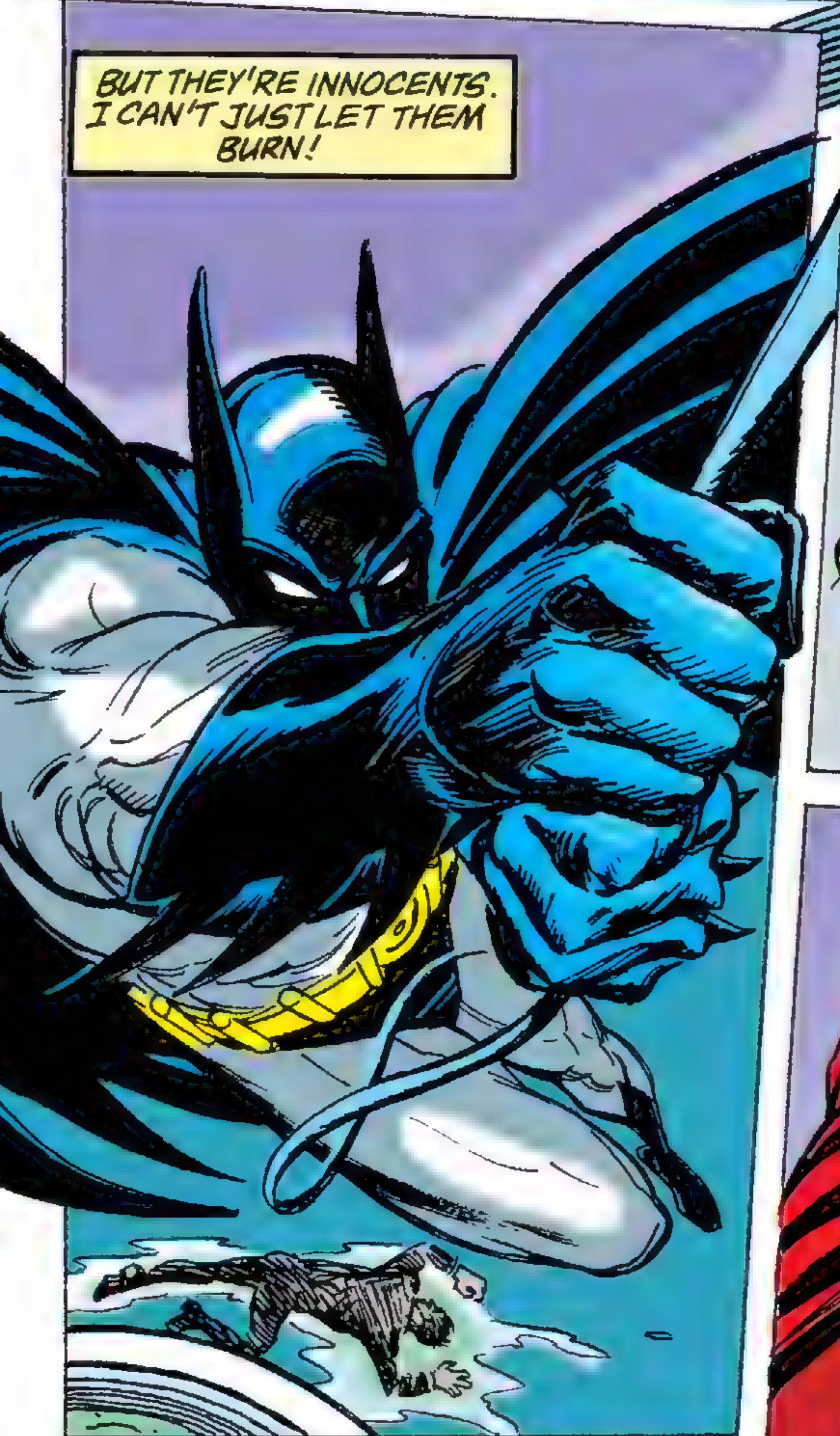
SPADOOSH!



DON'T JUST STAND THERE! CALL AN AMBULANCE-- AND THE FIRE DEPARTMENT!



NOT EXACTLY HOW I WANT TO SPEND MY NIGHT--



BUT THEY'RE INNOCENTS. I CAN'T JUST LET THEM BURN!



PROFESSOR JONATHAN CRANE, IF I REMEMBER THE POLICE FILES I HACKED INTO, THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE SAYS YOU ARE BUSTED!

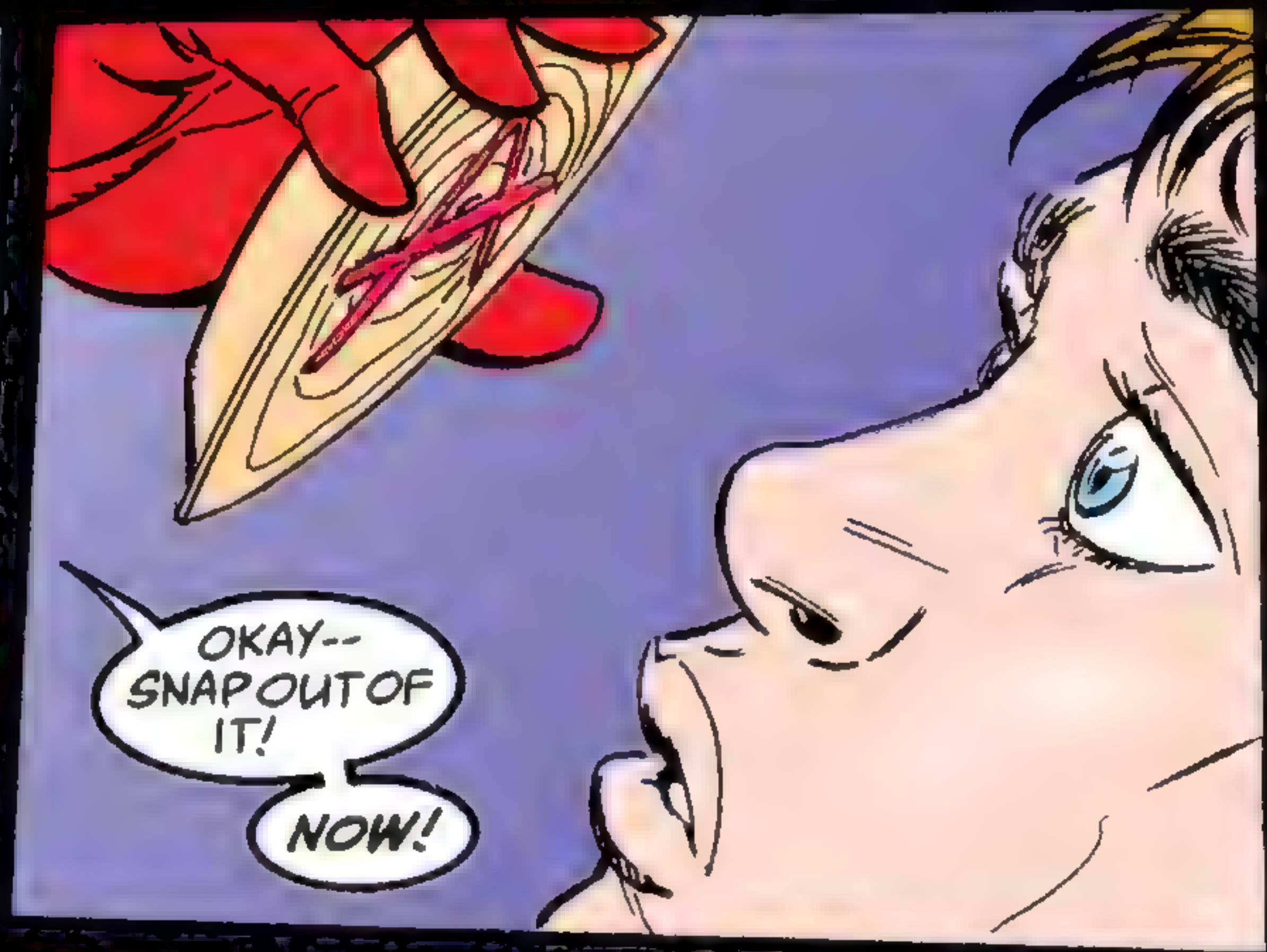


A KID?



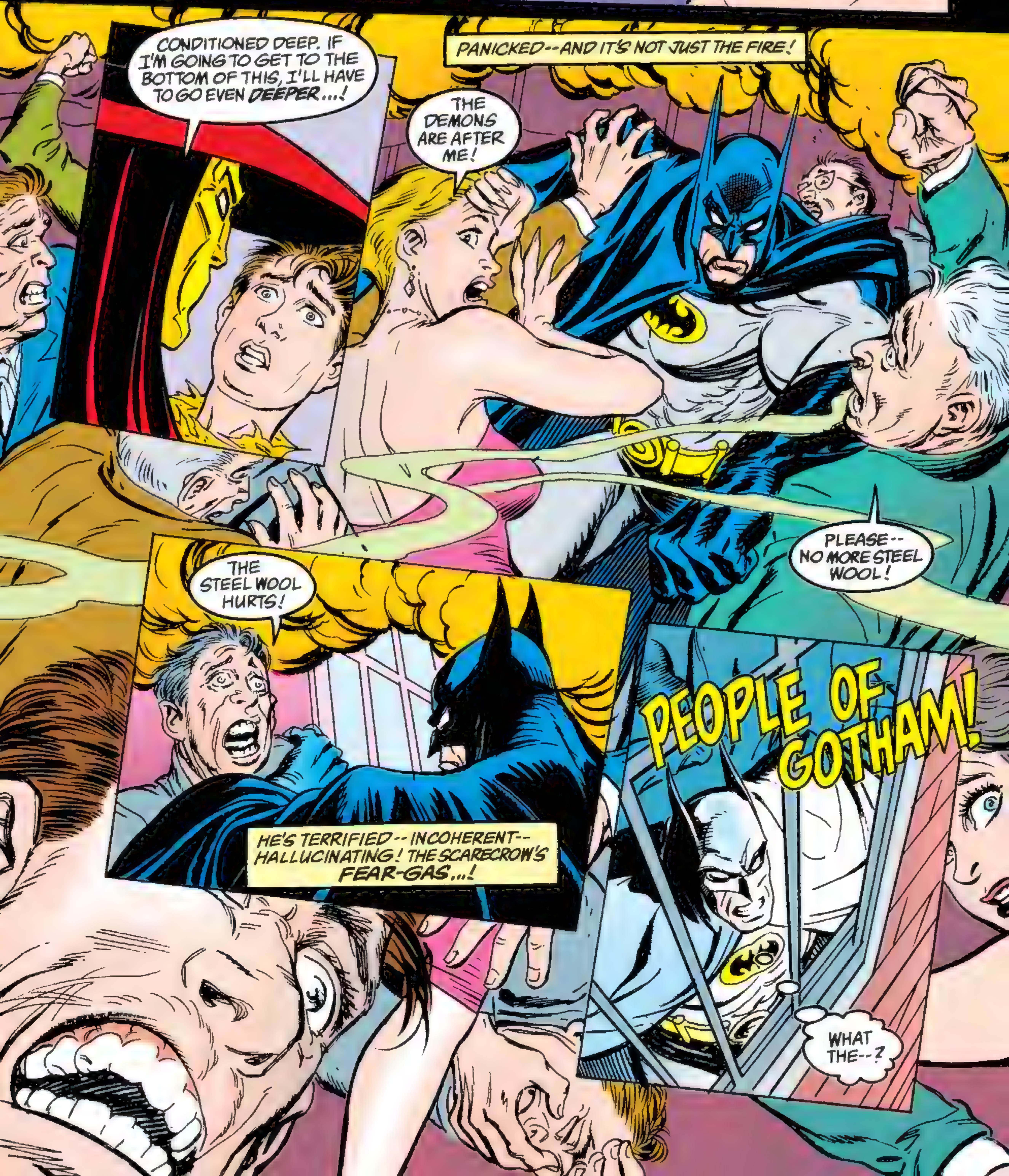
AND
HYPNO-
TIZED!

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S GOING ON
HERE--BUT I KNOW
HOW TO FIND
OUT--!



OKAY--
SNAP OUT OF
IT!

NOW!



CONDITIONED DEEP. IF
I'M GOING TO GET TO THE
BOTTOM OF THIS, I'LL HAVE
TO GO EVEN DEEPER...!

PANICKED--AND IT'S NOT JUST THE FIRE!

THE
DEMONS
ARE AFTER
ME!

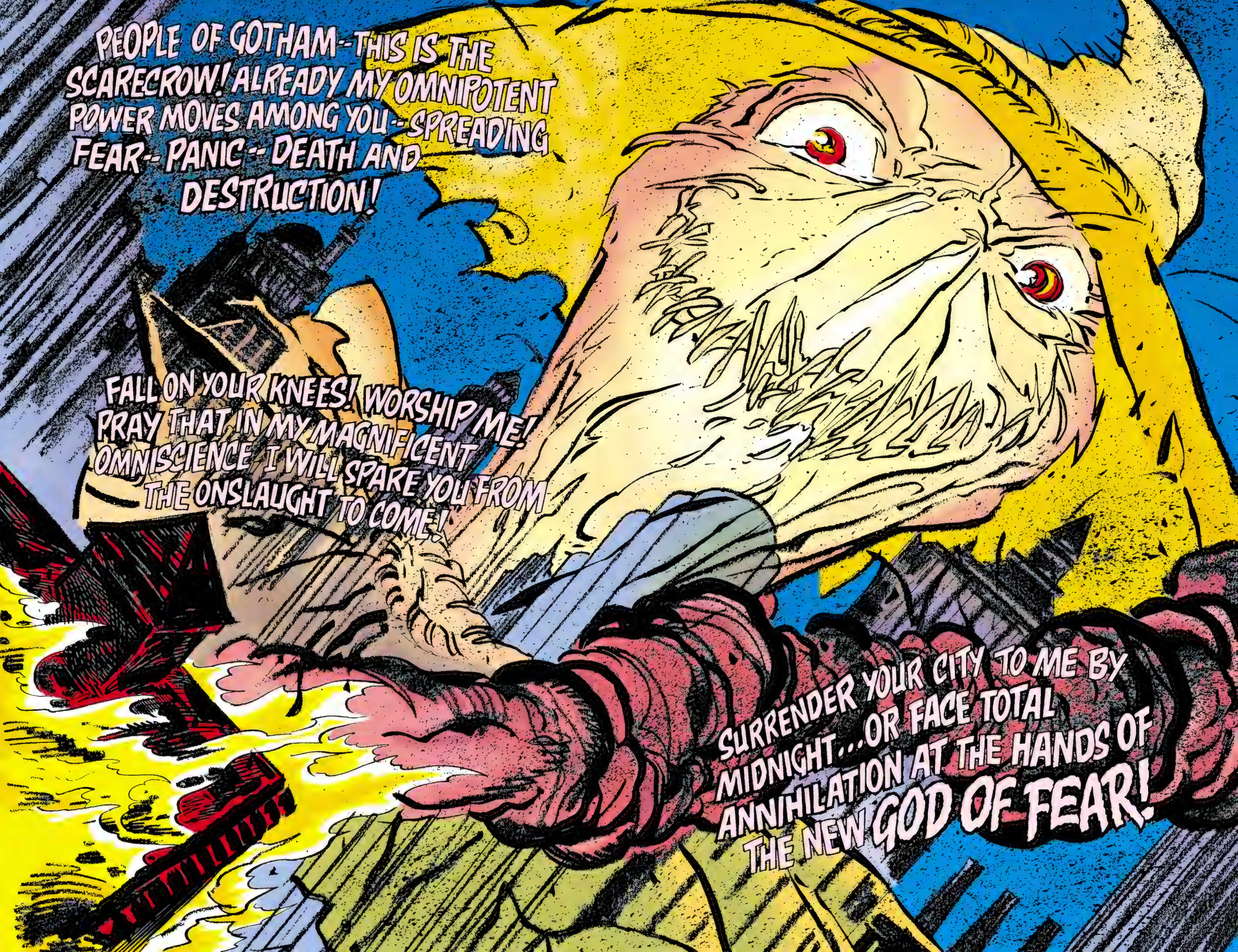
THE
STEEL WOOL
HURTS!

PLEASE--
NO MORE STEEL
WOOL!

HE'S TERRIFIED--INCOHERENT--
HALLUCINATING! THE SCARECROW'S
FEAR-GAS...!

PEOPLE OF
GOTHAM!

WHAT
THE--?



PEOPLE OF GOTHAM-THIS IS THE
SCARECROW! ALREADY MY OMNIPOTENT
POWER MOVES AMONG YOU--SPREADING
FEAR--PANIC--DEATH AND
DESTRUCTION!

FALL ON YOUR KNEES! WORSHIP ME!
PRAY THAT IN MY MAGNIFICENT
OMNISCIENCE I WILL SPARE YOU FROM
THE ONSLAUGHT TO COME!

SURRENDER YOUR CITY TO ME BY
MIDNIGHT...OR FACE TOTAL
ANNIHILATION AT THE HANDS OF
THE NEW GOD OF FEAR!



BY MIDNIGHT
OR YOUR CITY
DIES!

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED
TO THE TRUCK THE POLICE
WERE LOOKING FOR!



I CAN LEAVE THIS TO
THE PROFESSIONALS! BETTER
I FIND SCARECROW AND PUT
AN END TO HIS MANIAC
GAMES--



--THOUGH I
DON'T HAVE A
CLUE WHERE TO
START!



CRAZY! LOOKS LIKE
THE MAN OF STRAW HAS
FINALLY POPPED HIS
CORK!



STILL... COUPLED WITH WHAT
THIS POOR CREEP'S JUST
TOLD ME, IT COULD BE THE
CHANCE I'M LOOKING
FOR--

UHHH...!
WH...WHAT...?



--I CAN TAKE
OUT SCARECROW
--AND THE
BATMAN-- IN
ONE EASY
MOVE!

NEXT
ISSUE:

THE BIG FEAR!



NO 18 | EARLY OCT 93
CONCLUSION

KNIGHTFALL



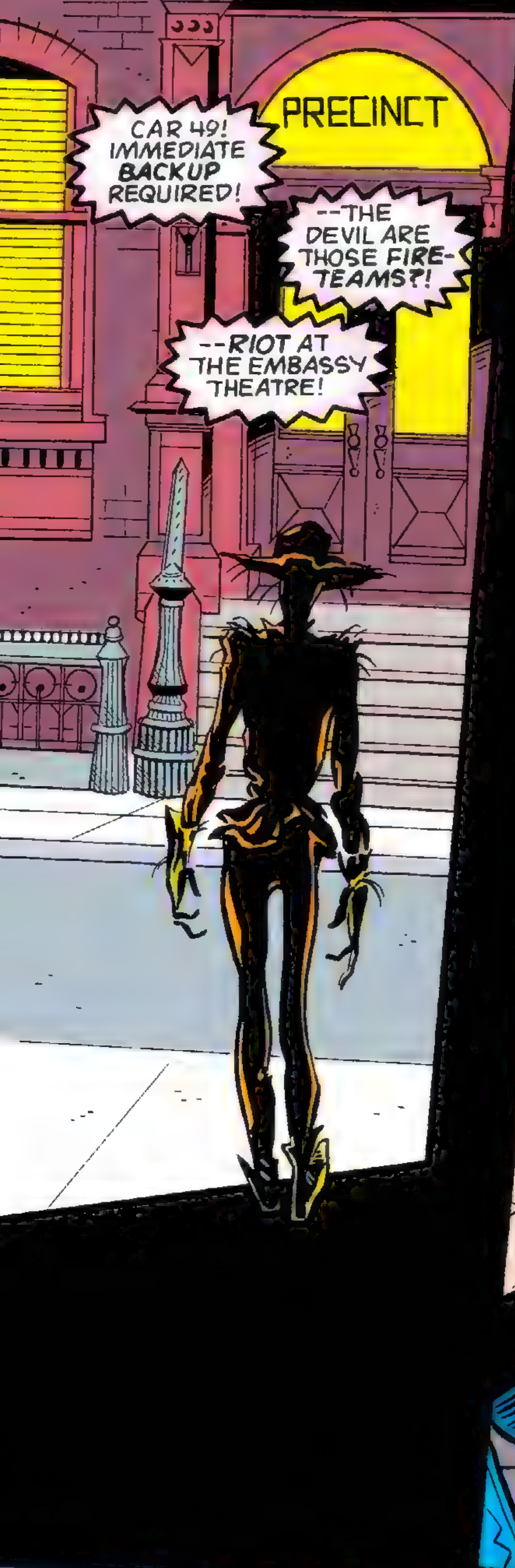
B A T M A N

SHADOW OF THE BAT

THE GOD OF FEAR

BY GRANT, BLEVINS & GEORGE



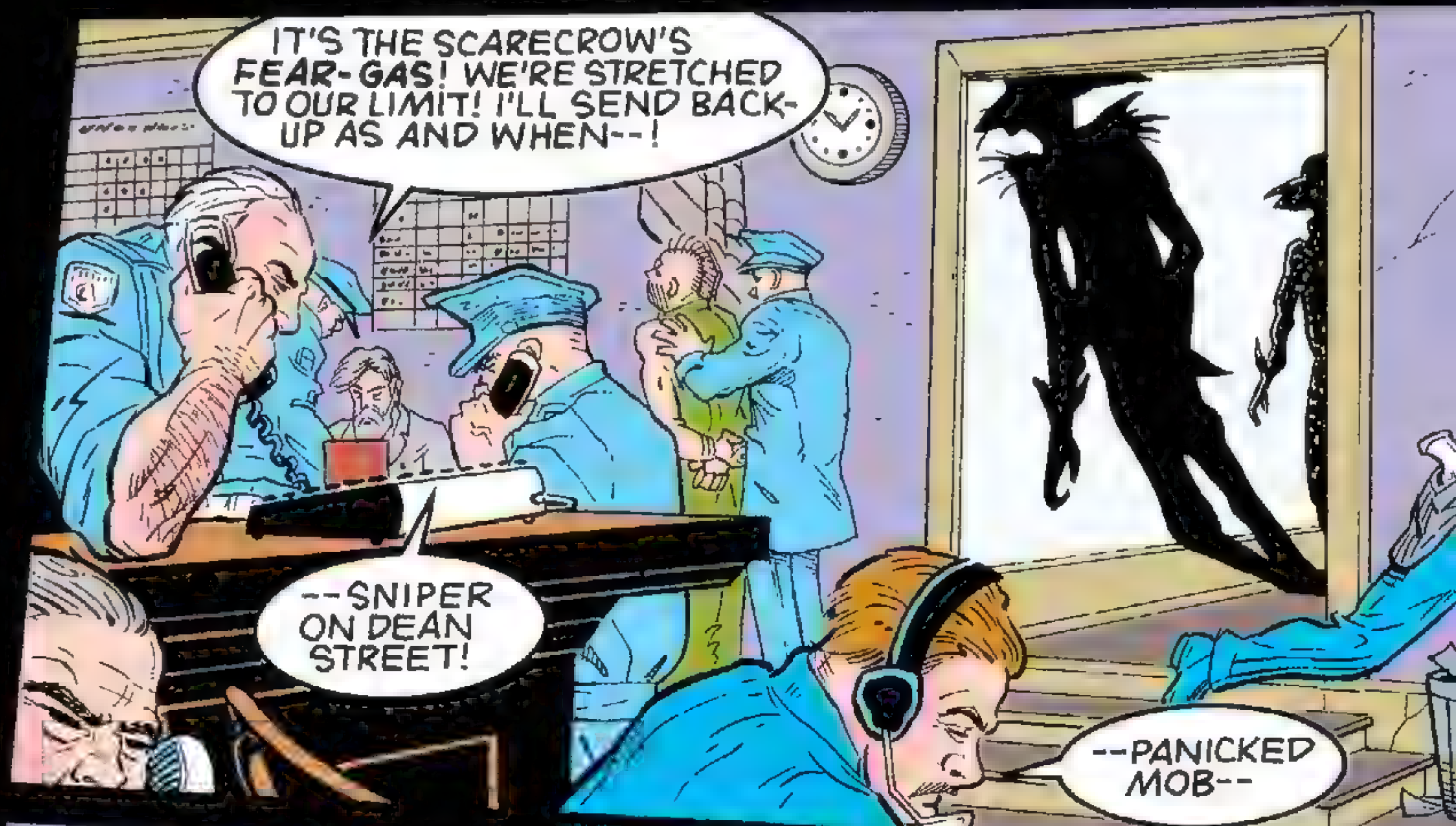


CAR 49!
IMMEDIATE
BACKUP
REQUIRED!

PRECINCT

--THE
DEVIL ARE
THOSE FIRE-
TEAMST!

--RIOT AT
THE EMBASSY
THEATRE!



IT'S THE SCARECROW'S
FEAR-GAS! WE'RE STRETCHED
TO OUR LIMIT! I'LL SEND BACK-
UP AS AND WHEN--!

--SNIPER
ON DEAN
STREET!

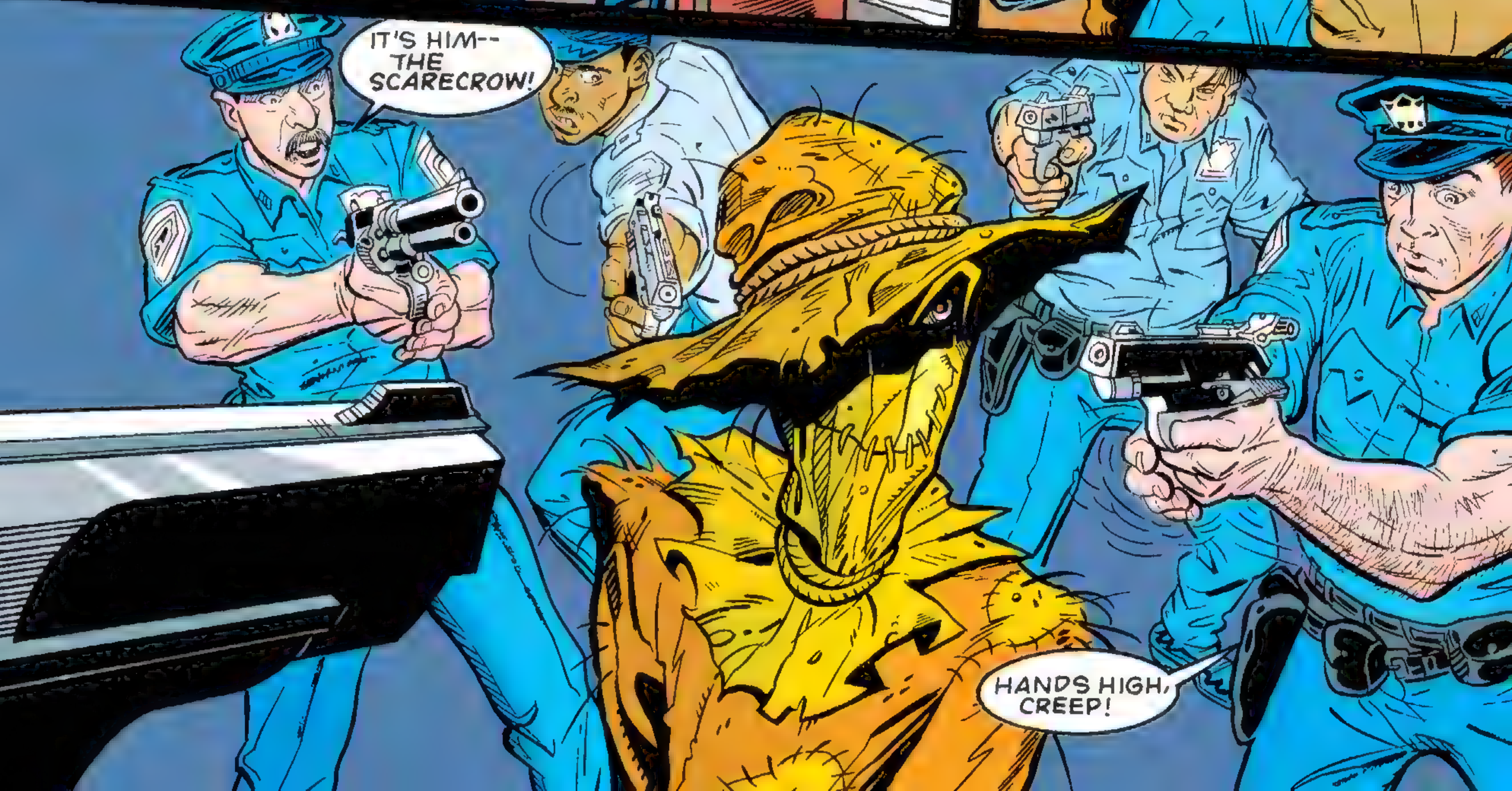
--PANICKED
MOB--



SAHEM!



I'VE
COME TO
TURN
MYSELF
IN!



IT'S HIM--
THE
SCARECROW!

HANDS HIGH,
CREEP!



HEY--
WHAT'S
THAT...?

LOOK
OUT--

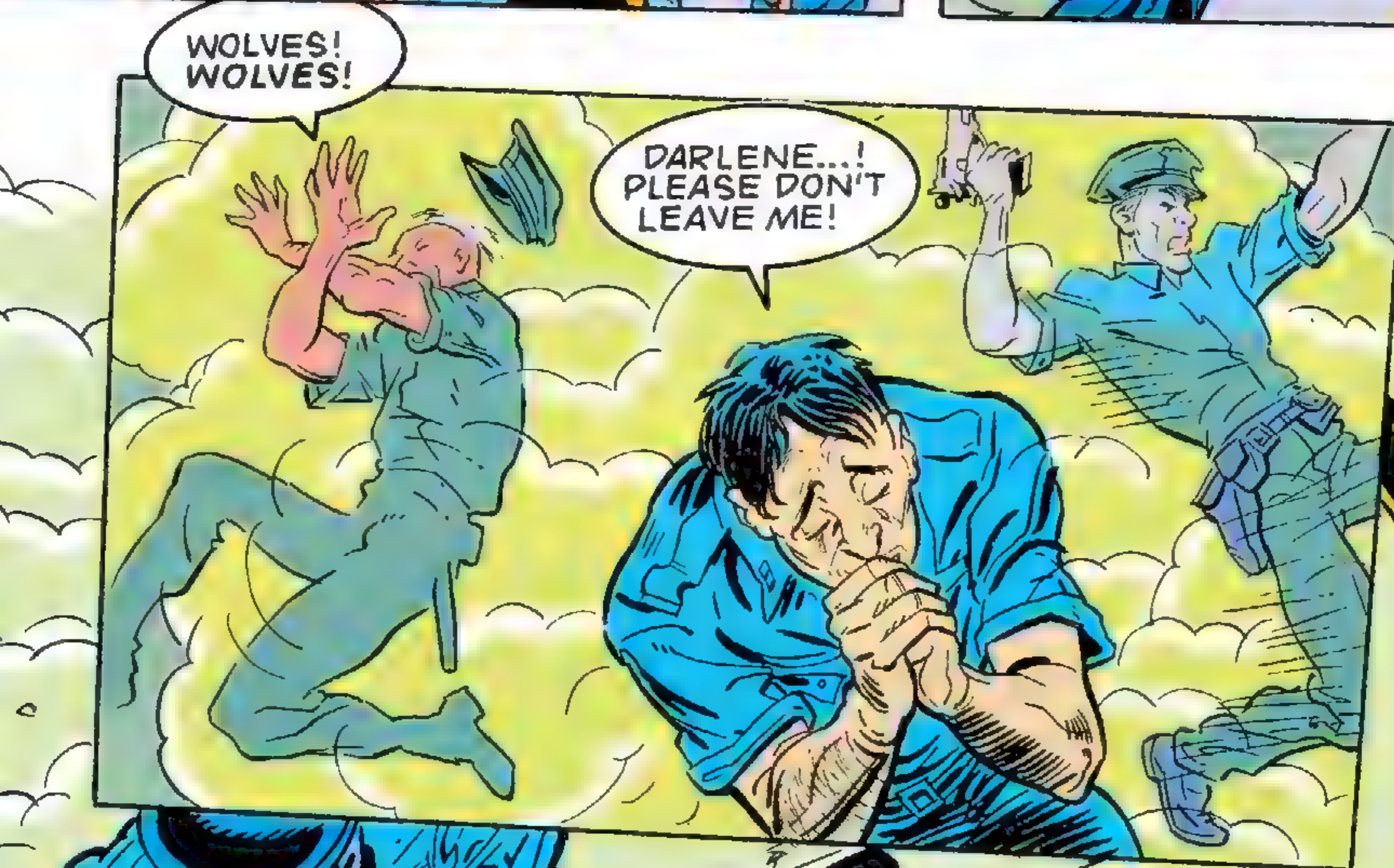


GAS--!

FWOOMFF!

GAKK!

COUGH!



WOLVES!
WOLVES!

DARLENE...!
PLEASE DON'T
LEAVE ME!

S-SCARECROW'S
GANG! GET BACK
FROM ME--!



AGH!

AAAH!

BLAM BLAM BLAM

GET BACK,
I SAY!



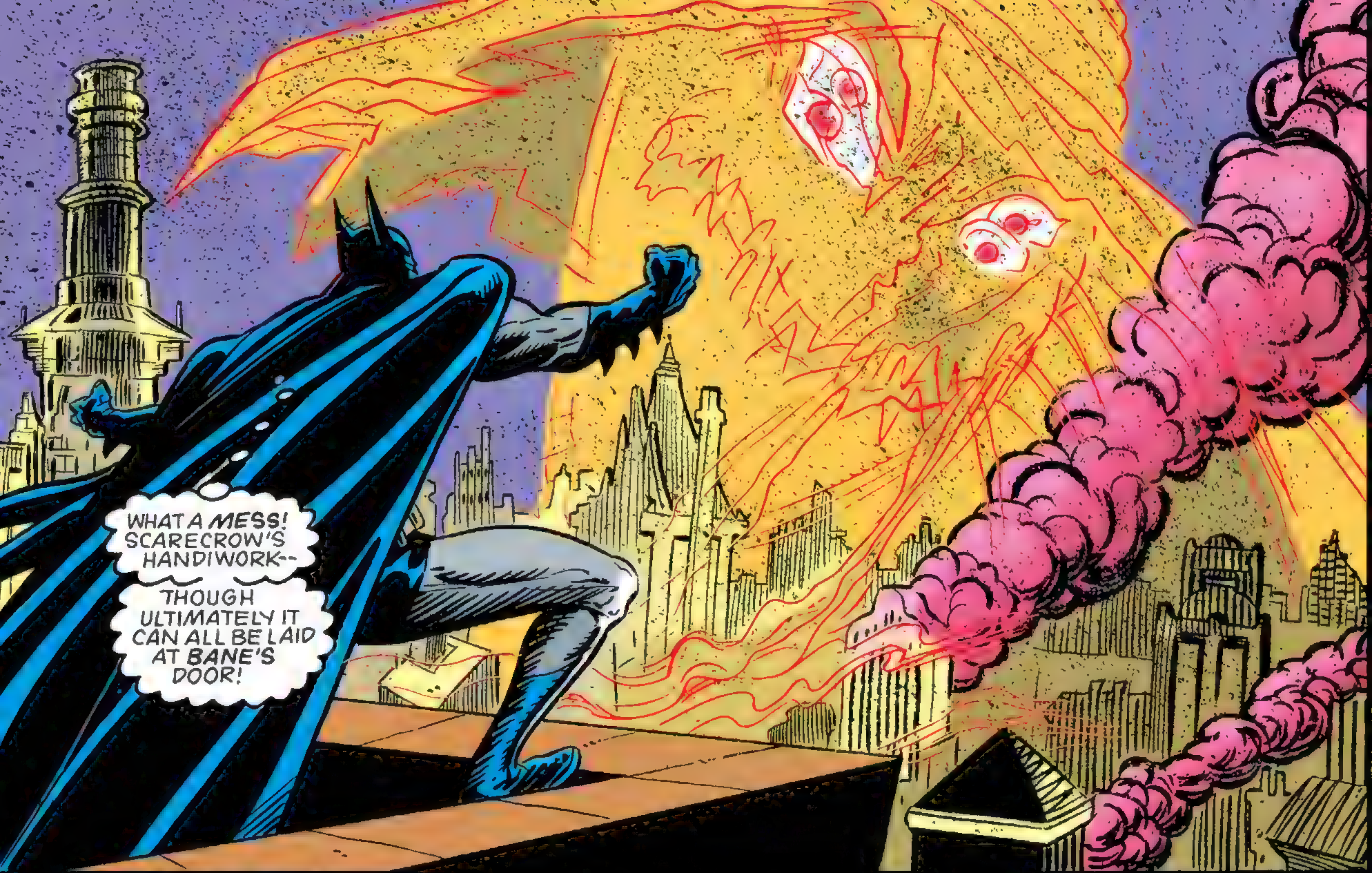
YOU HAVE TILL
MIDNIGHT TO
PROCLAIM ME...
OR YOUR CITY
WILL PERISH!



MIDNIGHT--
OR DIE!

BLAST! THIS
MUST BE ONLY ONE
OF SEVERAL
PROJECTORS--





WHAT A MESS!
SCARECROW'S
HANDIWORK--
THOUGH
ULTIMATELY IT
CAN ALL BE LAID
AT BANE'S
DOOR!

I OUGHT TO GO
AFTER HIM. I COULD
STOP THIS CARNAGE
BY SIMPLY KILLING
HIM!

NO!
GOTHAM'S MY
CITY NOW. IT'S MY
DUTY TO LOOK
AFTER IT-- AND
SCARECROW
MUST BE MY
FIRST PRIORITY!

THE HOLOGRAM GEAR
MUST BE FROM THE
TRUCKLOAD HIJACKED
YESTERDAY...

...BUT NO
CLUES THERE
AS TO WHERE
HE MIGHT
BE!

HIS INSANE ULTIMATUM
EXPIRES AT MIDNIGHT--
SO HE MUST HAVE BACKUP
PLANS FOR A MAJOR
ATTACK!

I'LL JUST HAVE
TO RUN THROUGH
ALL THE DATA
AGAIN, SEE IF
I'VE MISSED
SOMETHING....!



BASE--BULLOCK
HERE! I GOT A LIST OF
THE STUDENTS KIDNAPPED
BY THE SCARECROW.
PENCIL READY...?

GOTHAM IS IN
CHAOS!

POLICE CONFIRM THAT
EX-GOTHAM U. PROFESSOR
JONATHAN CRANE--ALIAS
THE SCARECROW--HAS
RELEASED HIS DEADLY
FEAR-GAS AT SEVERAL CITY
CENTER LOCATIONS!

MAJOR FIRES ARE
BURNING IN AT LEAST
TWO PLACES! AT THE RITZ
HOTEL, MORE THAN A
HUNDRED PEOPLE ARE
BELIEVED TO HAVE DIED
WHEN THE BALLROOM
CEILING COLLAPSED!



AT THE FORTY-THIRD
PRECINCT--A STUDENT
BELIEVED TO BE ONE OF
THOSE KIDNAPPED EARLIER
TONIGHT--WAS SHOT DEAD
IN A FIREFIGHT. THREE
POLICE OFFICERS ALSO
PERISHED!



DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC IS
GRIDLOCKED, DELAYING EMER-
GENCY SERVICE RESPONSES!
REPORTS FROM THE EMBASSY
THEATRE SUGGEST DOZENS
DEAD AND HUNDREDS
TRAMPLED IN A MASS PANIC!



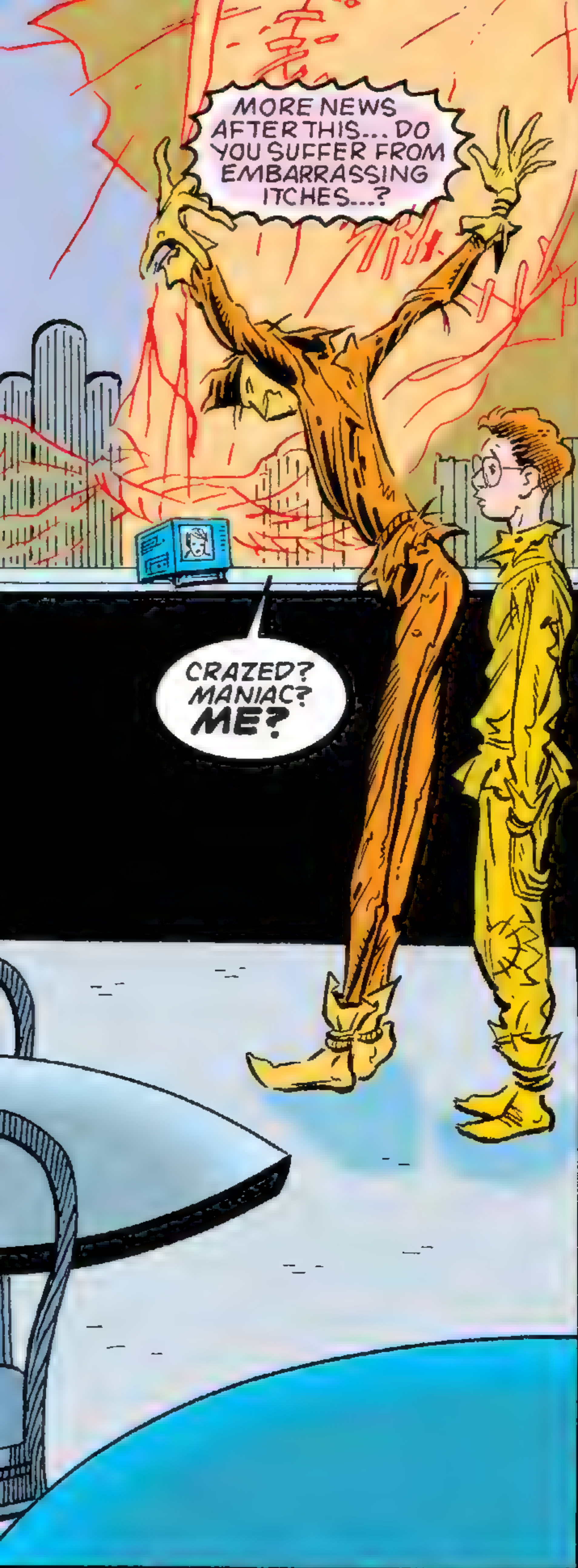
TOWERING OVER THE
CARNAGE, A GIANT HOLO-
GRAM IMAGE OF THE
PERPETRATOR--



--BUT THE CRAZED
SCARECROW HAS OUTDONE
EVEN HIMSELF THIS
TIME--

--UNLESS GOTHAM
WORSHIPS HIM AS A GOD,
THE MANIAC THREATENS
TO DESTROY THE
ENTIRE CITY!





MORE NEWS
AFTER THIS... DO
YOU SUFFER FROM
EMBARRASSING
ITCHES...?

CRAZED?
MANIAC?
ME?



YOU'LL BE
MY FIRST
TELEVISED
SACRIFICE!



INSANE
INDEED! HOW
CAN A GOD BE
INSANE?

STUNTED
DWARVES!
WHAT DO
THEY
KNOW...?



JUST TAKE THE PAUCITY
OF WORDS THEY HAVE FOR
STATES OF FEAR--ANXIETY,
NERVOUSNESS, FRIGHT,
FEAR ITSELF, AND
TERROR.

WHAT KIND OF
PRIMEVAL BRAIN
WOULD STOP AT
THAT?



WAIT TILL I'M IN
CHARGE! WE'LL BE
PRECISE! THERE'LL
BE A THOUSAND
WORDS FOR FEAR!

ONE FOR THAT COLD
CLAMMY FEELING WHEN,
ALONE IN BED, A CORPSE
GRABS YOUR ANKLE!
ONE FOR THAT SWEET,
ETERNAL FRISSON
BEFORE A MAJOR
AUTO CRASH!



A MILLION WORDS... AND ALL BASED ON FEAR!

WHAT DO YOU SAY, PHIL?

HELLO? ANYBODY HOME?

RAP RAP

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT IN THERE? HATE ME, EH?

YES.

REMEMBERING HOW I KILLED YOUR FATHER? OR WORRYING ABOUT HOW I'M GOING TO KILL YOU?

BOTH.

I want to close my hands round that scrawny neck and squeeze and squeeze and squeeze....!

DIFFICULT TO LIP-READ HIM THROUGH THAT HOOD--

CHEER UP! I LIKE YOU. WHATEVER MIGHT HAPPEN TONIGHT, I GUARANTEE YOU A MOST EXCELLENT DEATH!

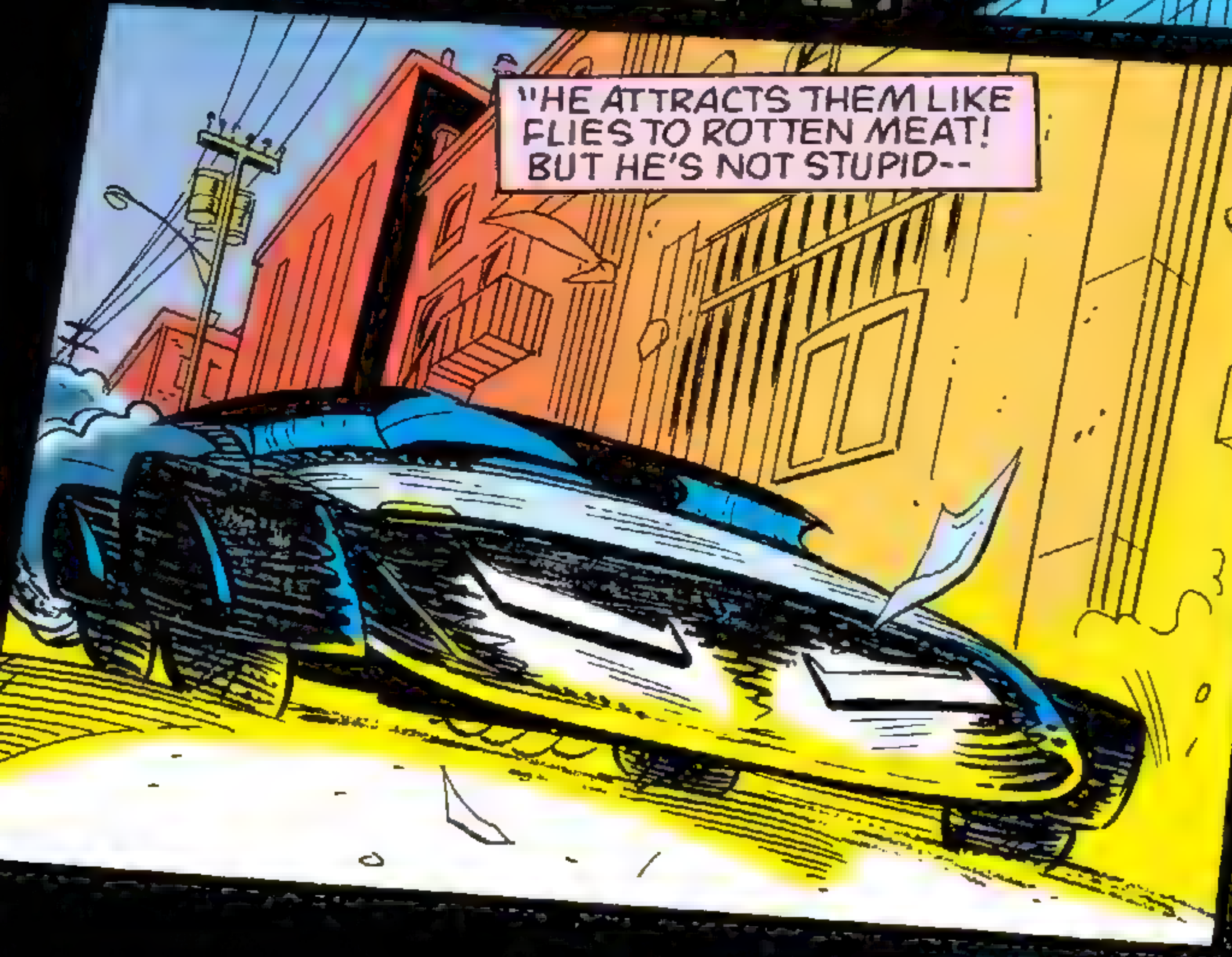
But his brainwashing stripped away my will. I can't even move unless he tells me!



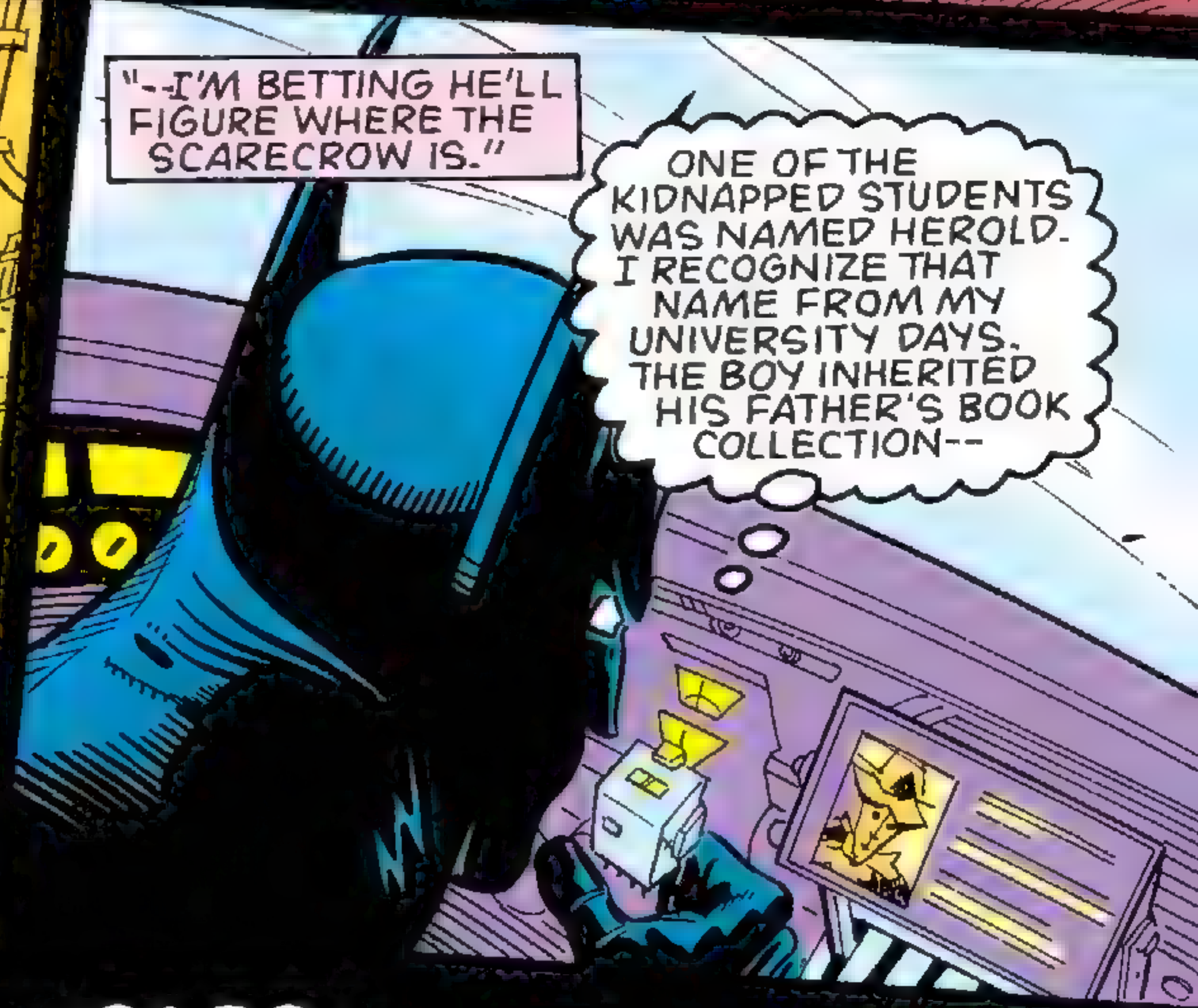
--BUT I DON'T NEED TO KNOW WHAT HE'S SAYING TO KNOW THE MAN'S CRAZY! I SHOULD TAKE HIM DOWN...



... BUT THAT'D ONLY BE A SHORT-TERM SOLUTION TO THE CITY'S WOES. WITHOUT BATMAN, THERE WOULD BE NO SCARECROW-- NO JOKER--NO BANE!



"HE ATTRACTS THEM LIKE FLIES TO ROTTEN MEAT! BUT HE'S NOT STUPID--"



"--I'M BETTING HE'LL FIGURE WHERE THE SCARECROW IS."

ONE OF THE KIDNAPPED STUDENTS WAS NAMED HEROLD. I RECOGNIZE THAT NAME FROM MY UNIVERSITY DAYS. THE BOY INHERITED HIS FATHER'S BOOK COLLECTION--

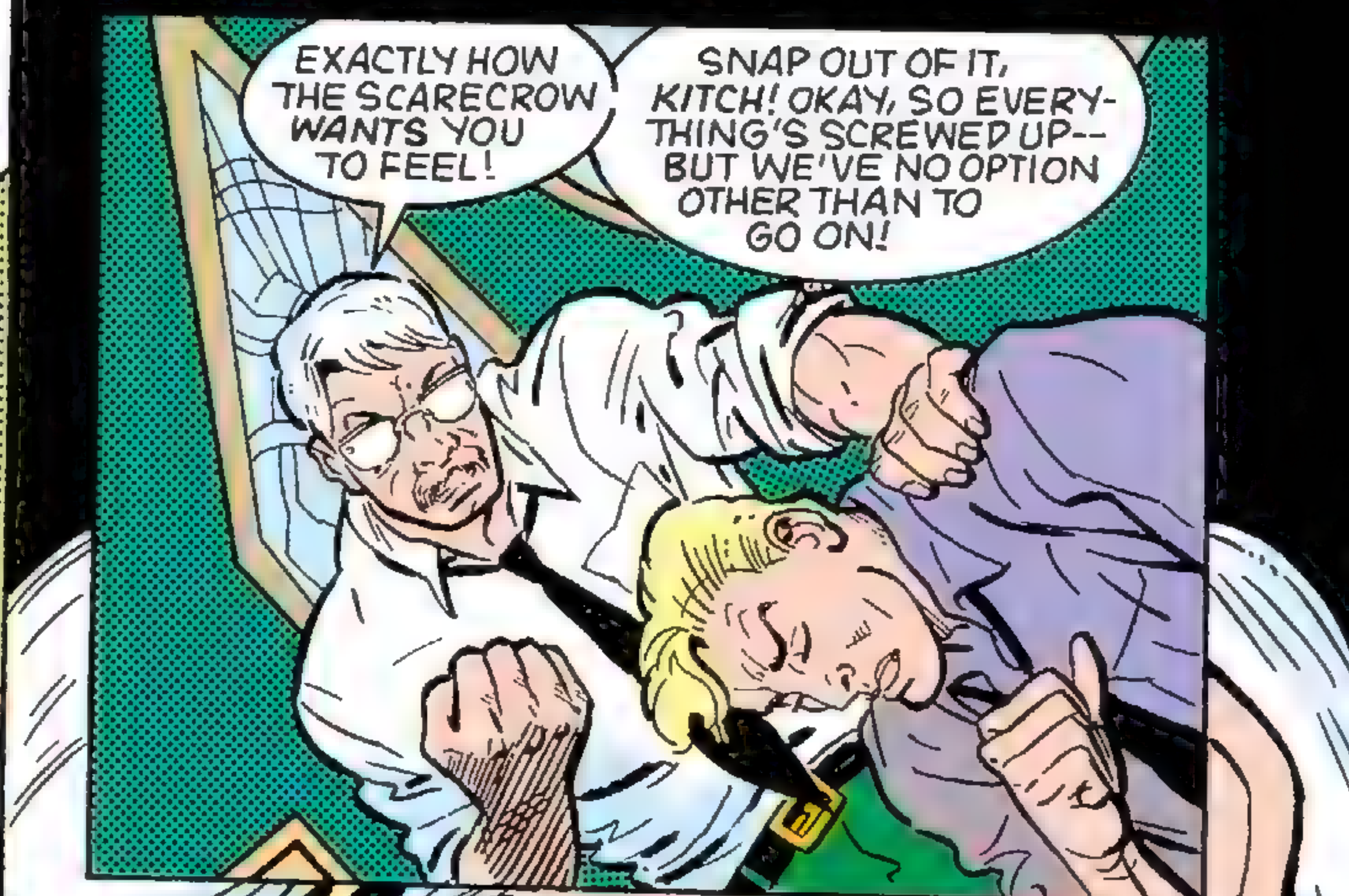
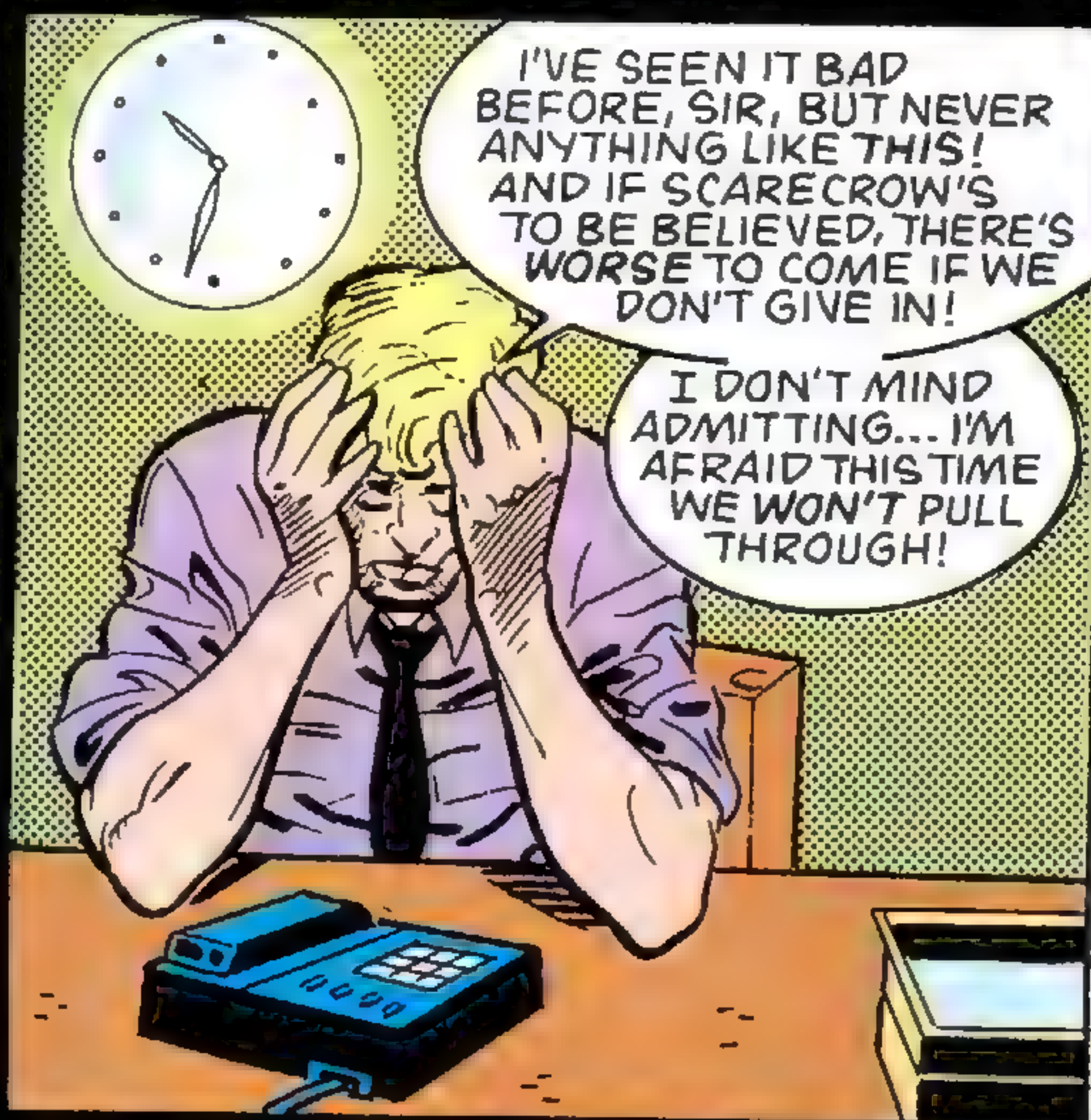
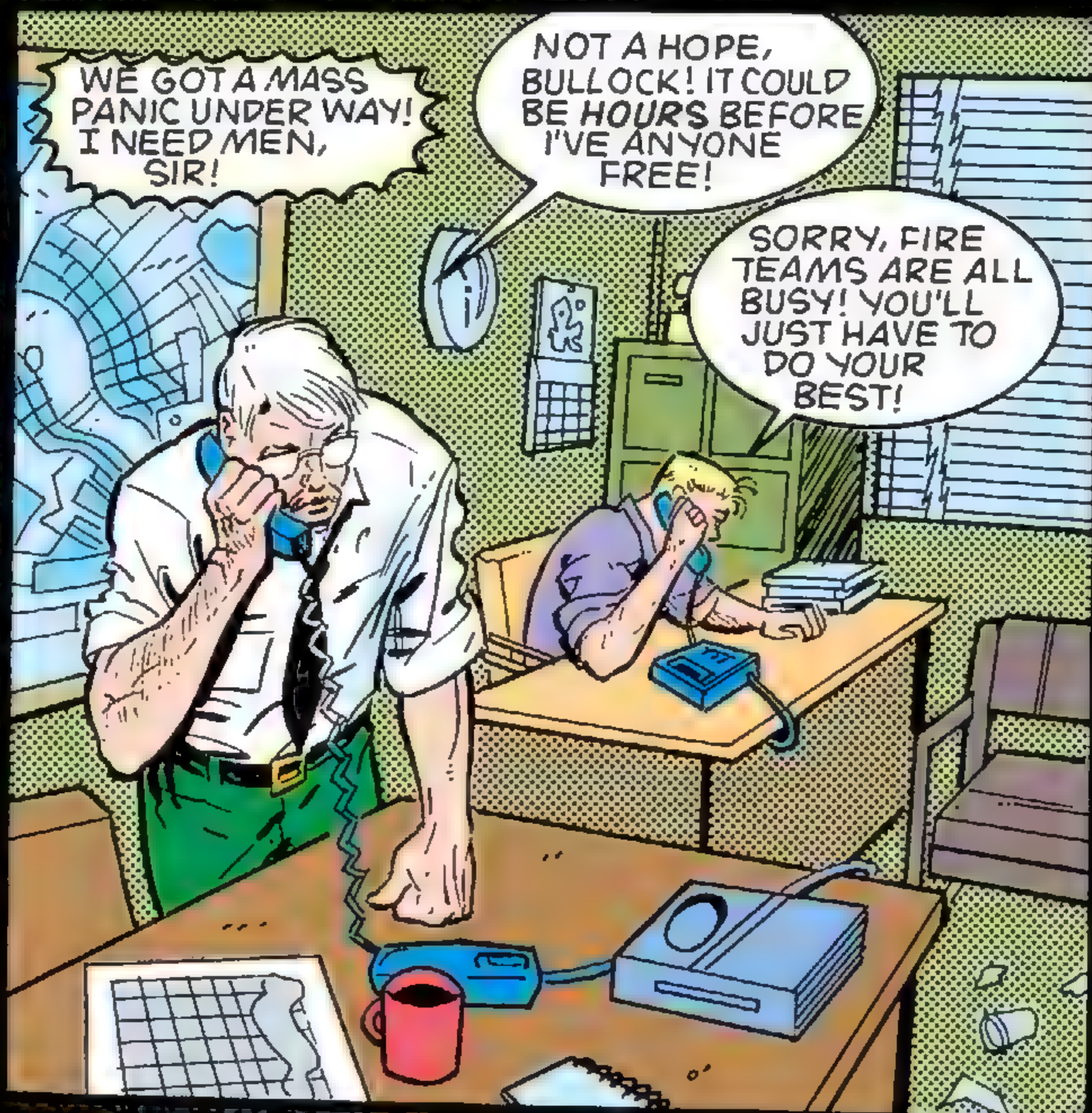
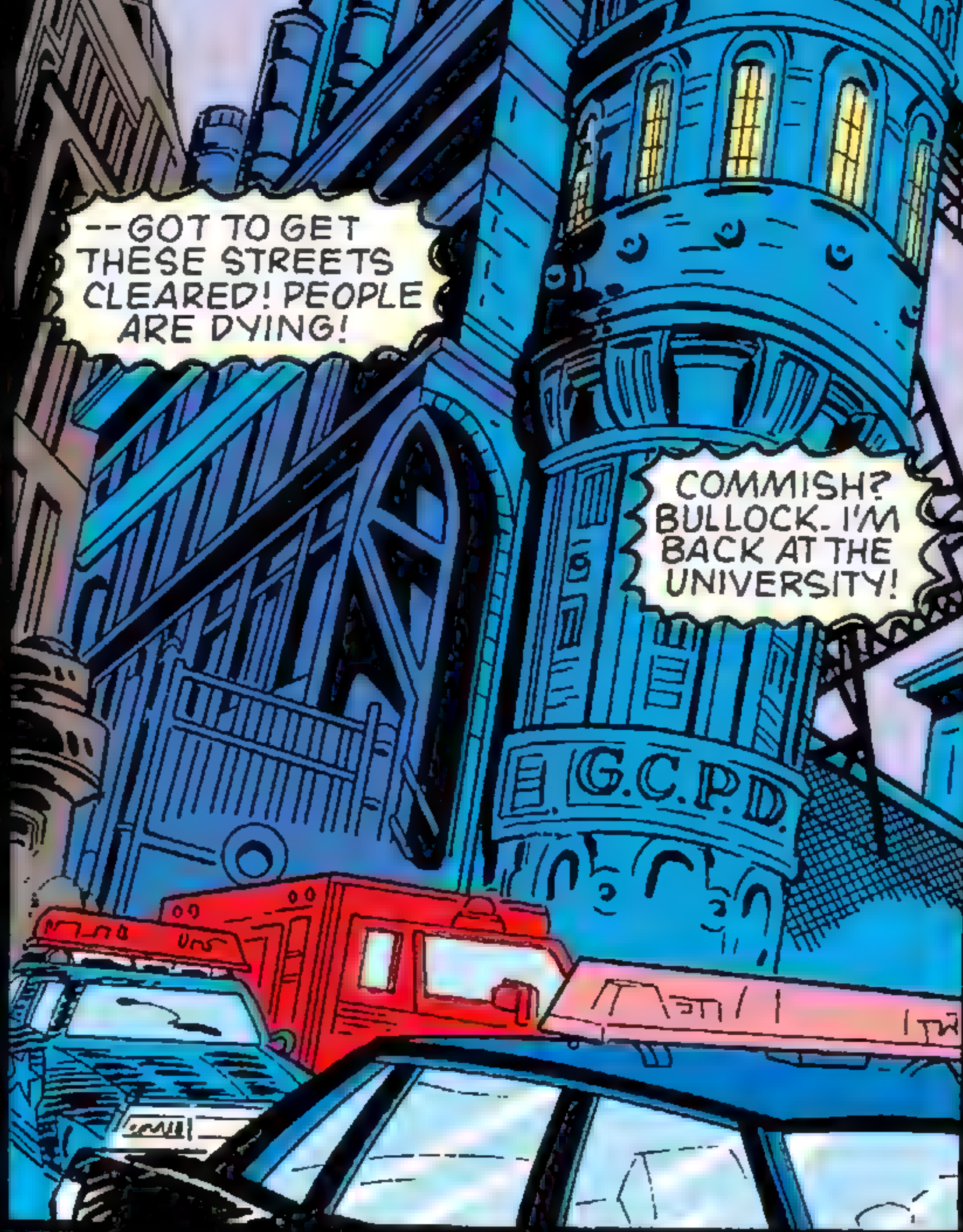


"AND WHEN HE DOES--"

--HE'LL FIND ANARKY WAITING!

--AND THE SCARECROW'S ABIDING PASSION WAS ALWAYS ANCIENT BOOKS!





HAD ENOUGH?
IS THE CITY PREPARED
TO DECLARE ME
GOD YET?

LISTEN
TO ME, YOU
MURDERING
MANIAC!
I--

NO, GORDON!
YOU WILL LISTEN
TO ME--

-- I HAVE A TANKER FULL
OF FEAR-GAS CENTRALLY
POSITIONED! UNLESS YOU
OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE MY
GODHOOD, IT WILL BE
DETONATED AT MIDNIGHT
PRECISELY!

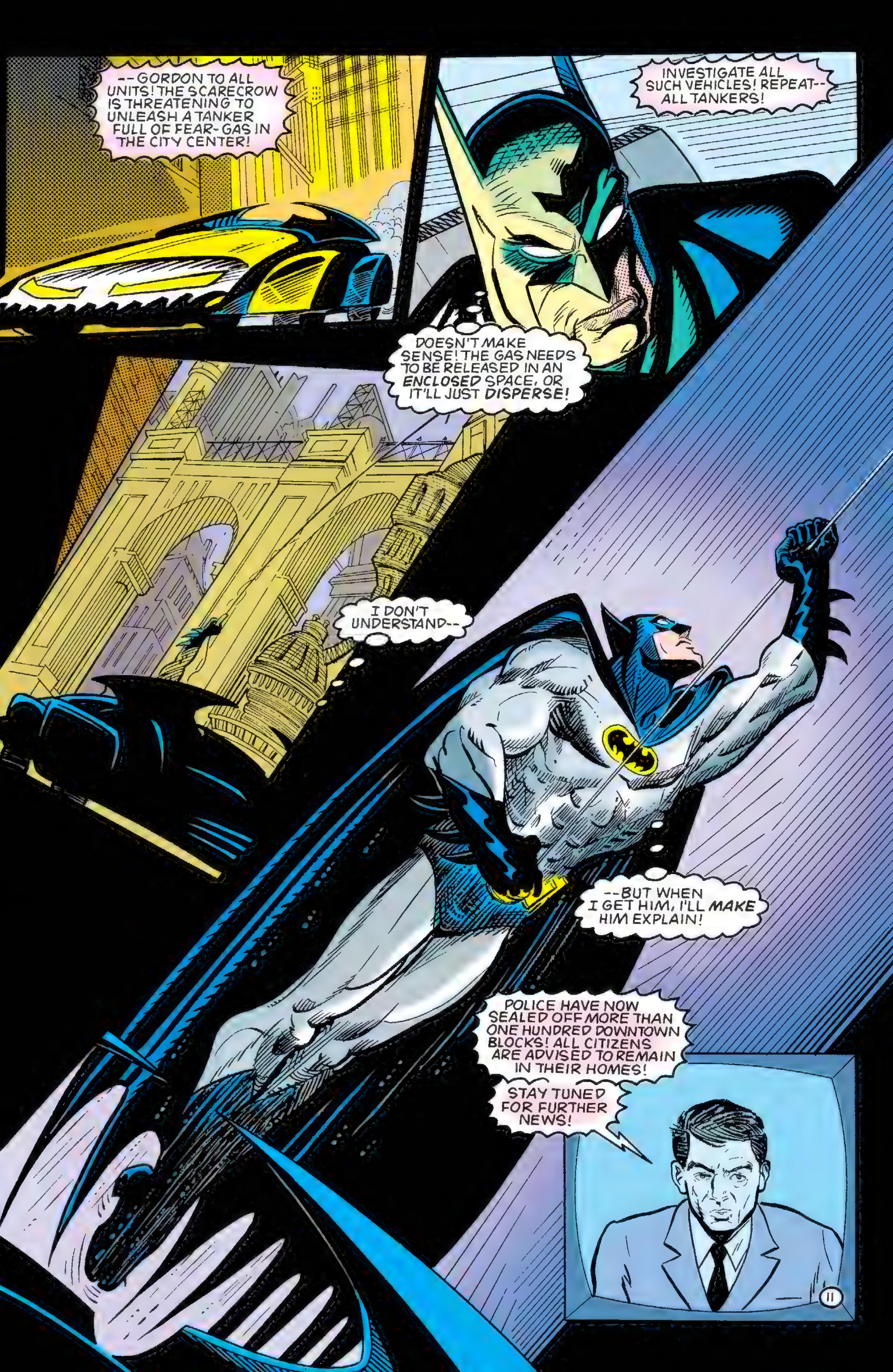
TIME IS
RUNNING OUT,
GORDON. THIS
IS YOUR LAST
WARNING!

SCARECROW--
YOU'RE BEING
ILLOGICAL! HOW
ON EARTH CAN
WE MAKE YOU
A GOD...?!

CLICK

SCARECROW...?

IT'LL WORK
OUT SOMEHOW.
IT'S GOT TO
WORK OUT!



-- GORDON TO ALL
UNITS! THE SCARECROW
IS THREATENING TO
UNLEASH A TANKER
FULL OF FEAR-GAS IN
THE CITY CENTER!

INVESTIGATE ALL
SUCH VEHICLES! REPEAT--
ALL TANKERS!

DOESN'T MAKE
SENSE! THE GAS NEEDS
TO BE RELEASED IN AN
ENCLOSED SPACE, OR
IT'LL JUST DISPERSE!

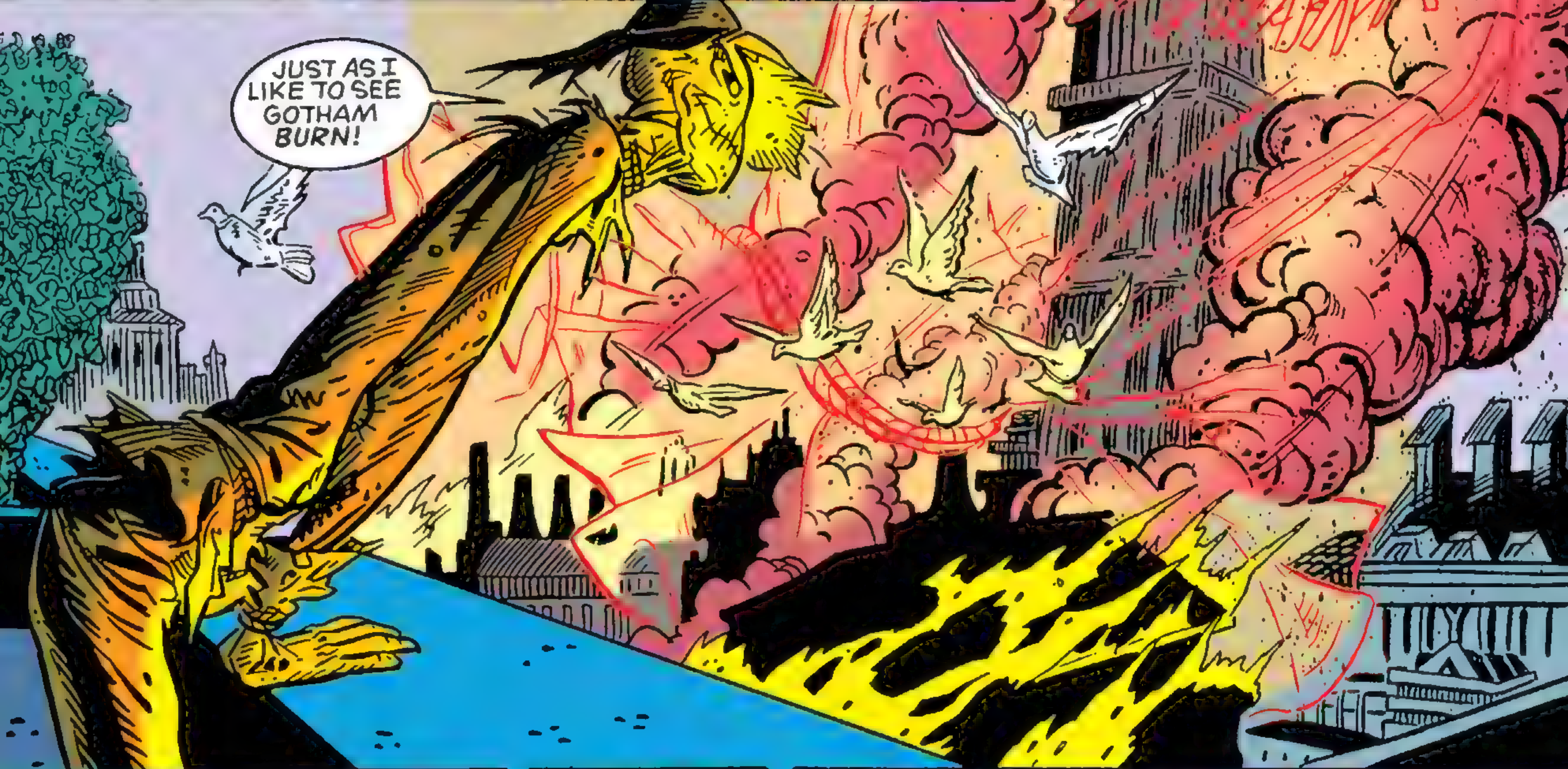
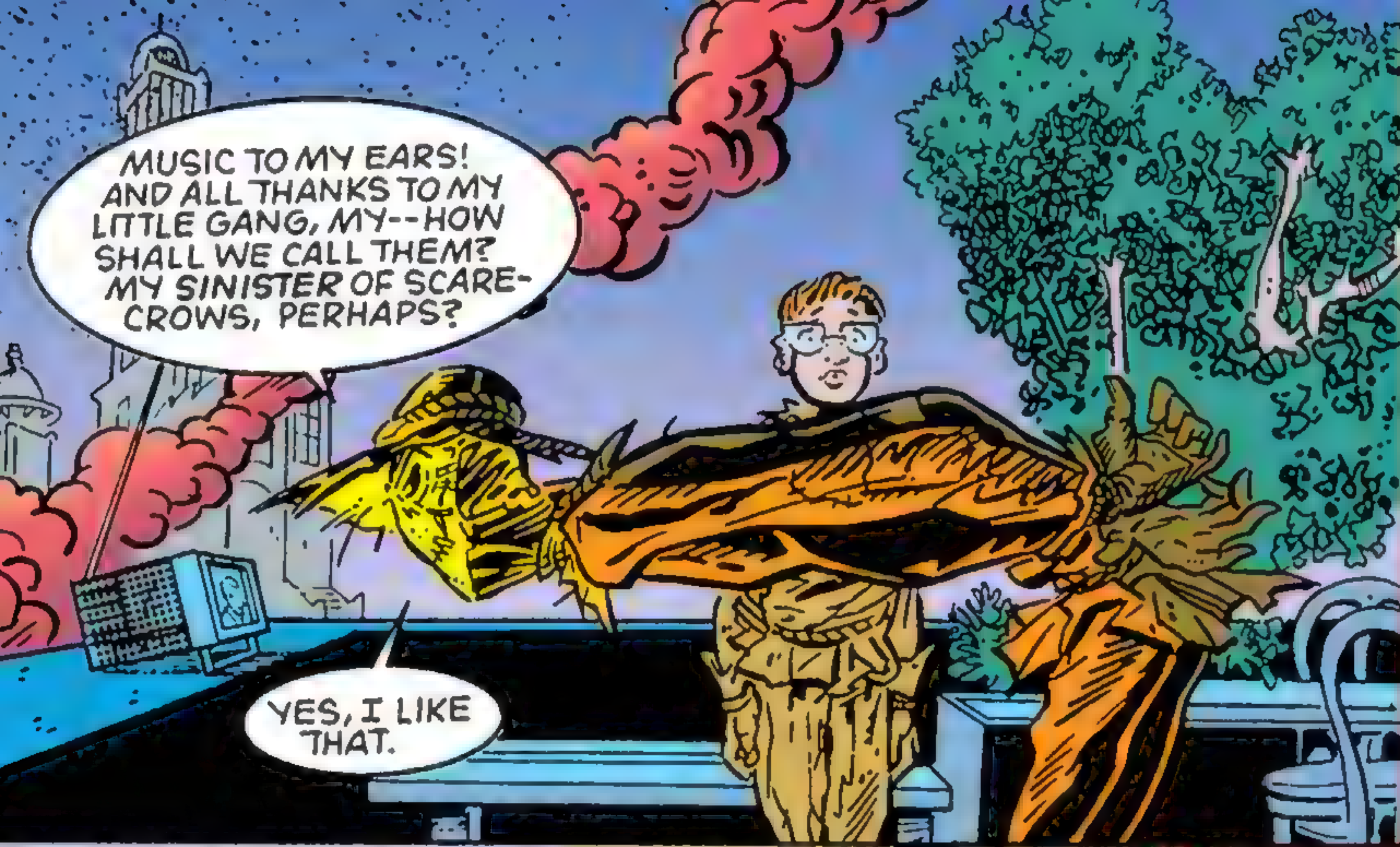
I DON'T
UNDERSTAND--

--BUT WHEN
I GET HIM, I'LL MAKE
HIM EXPLAIN!

POLICE HAVE NOW
SEALED OFF MORE THAN
ONE HUNDRED DOWNTOWN
BLOCKS! ALL CITIZENS
ARE ADVISED TO REMAIN
IN THEIR HOMES!

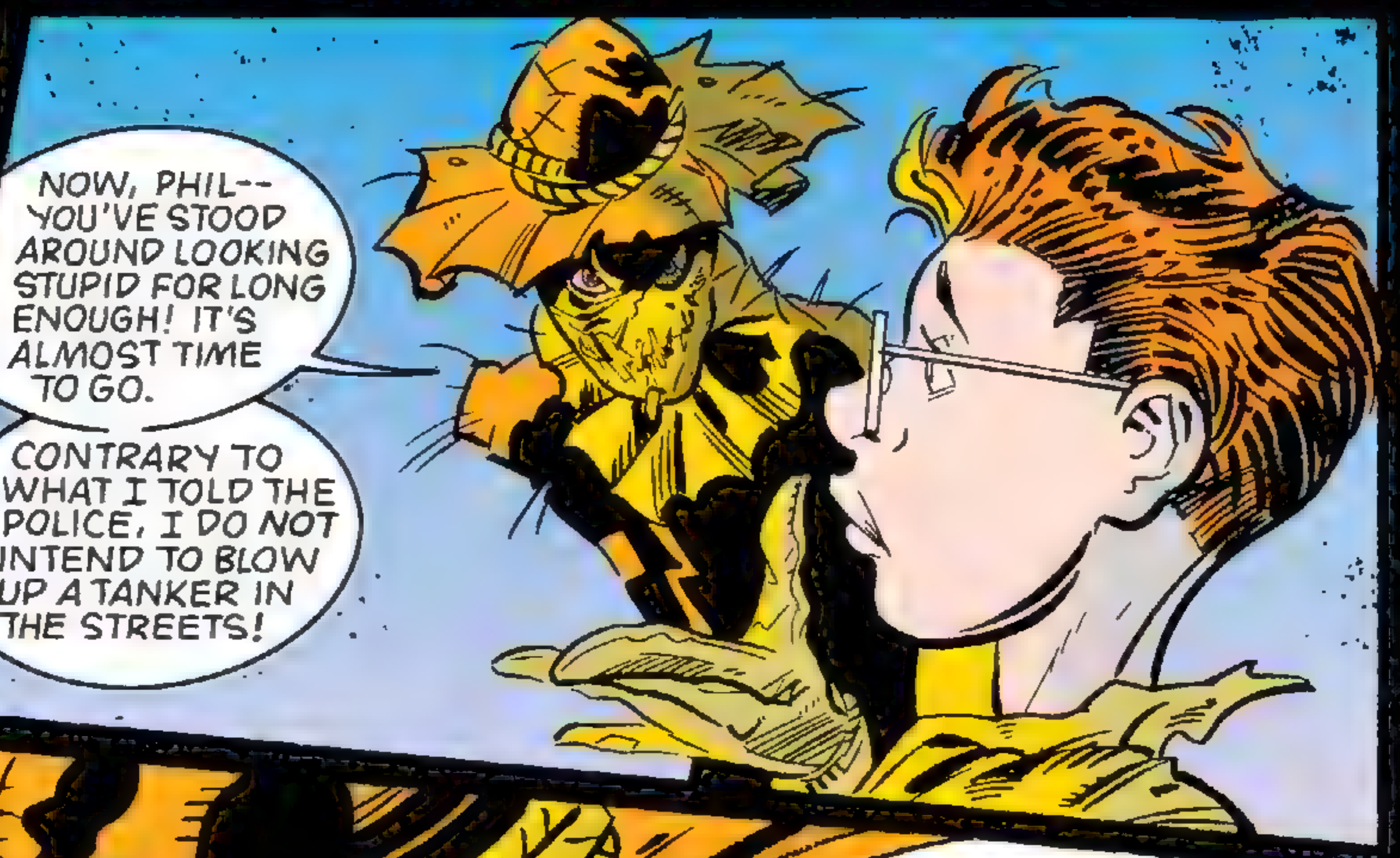
STAY TUNED
FOR FURTHER
NEWS!





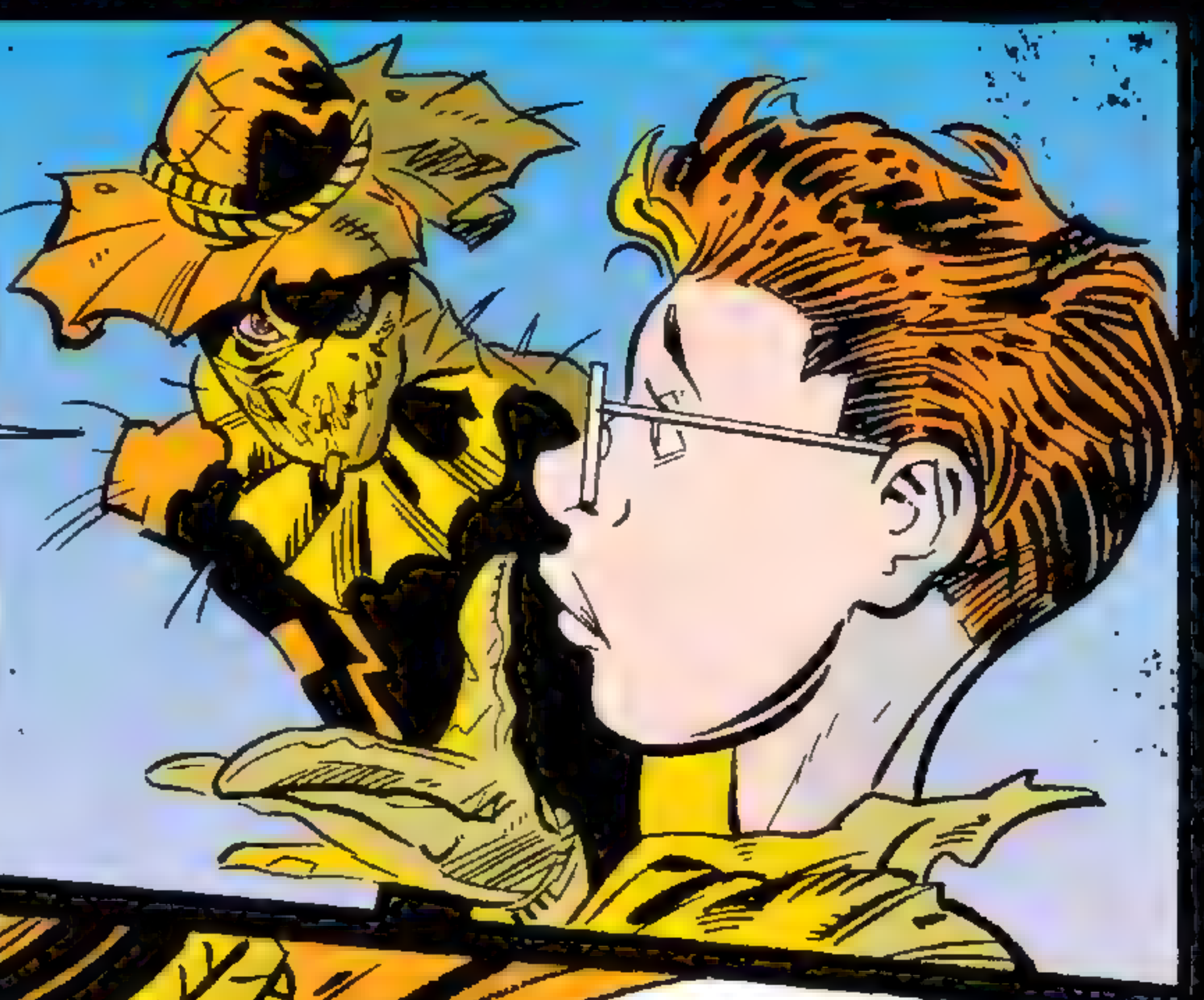


MAYBE I'M CREDITING HIM WITH TOO MUCH! MAYBE HE WON'T FIGURE OUT WHERE SCARECROW IS...!

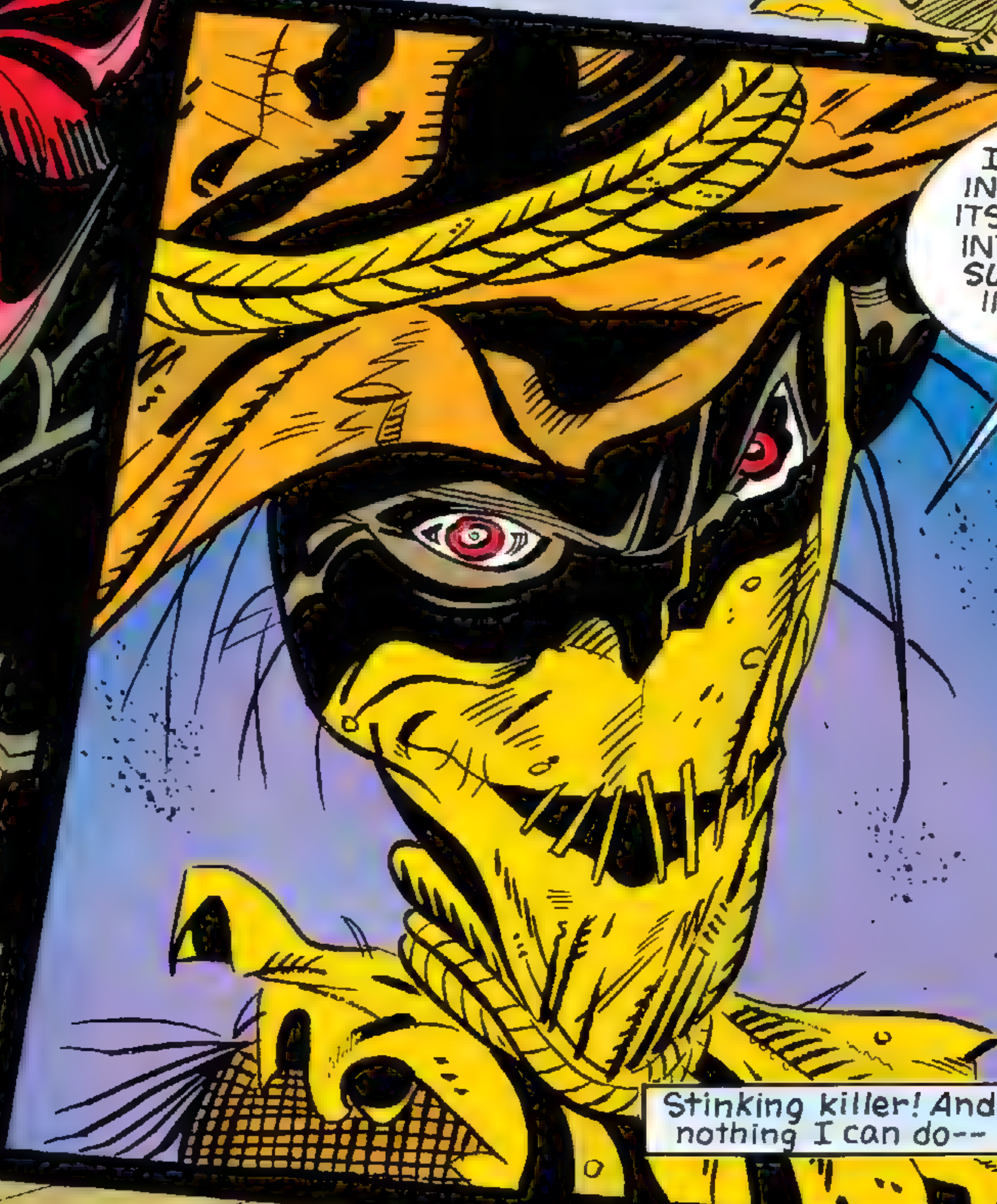


NOW, PHIL-- YOU'VE STOOD AROUND LOOKING STUPID FOR LONG ENOUGH! IT'S ALMOST TIME TO GO.

CONTRARY TO WHAT I TOLD THE POLICE, I DO NOT INTEND TO BLOW UP A TANKER IN THE STREETS!



I DO, HOWEVER, INTEND TO DISCHARGE ITS ODIOS CONTENTS INTO GOTHAM'S WATER SUPPLY! EVERYONE IN THE CITY WILL BE AFFECTED!



Stinking killer! And there's nothing I can do--



--nothing!

I CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER! THE FLARE BROUGHT HIM LAST TIME I USED IT--



--EUREKA!
AS THE SPIDER SAID TO THE FLY!



SCARECROW'S SEEN HIM!

CURSES!



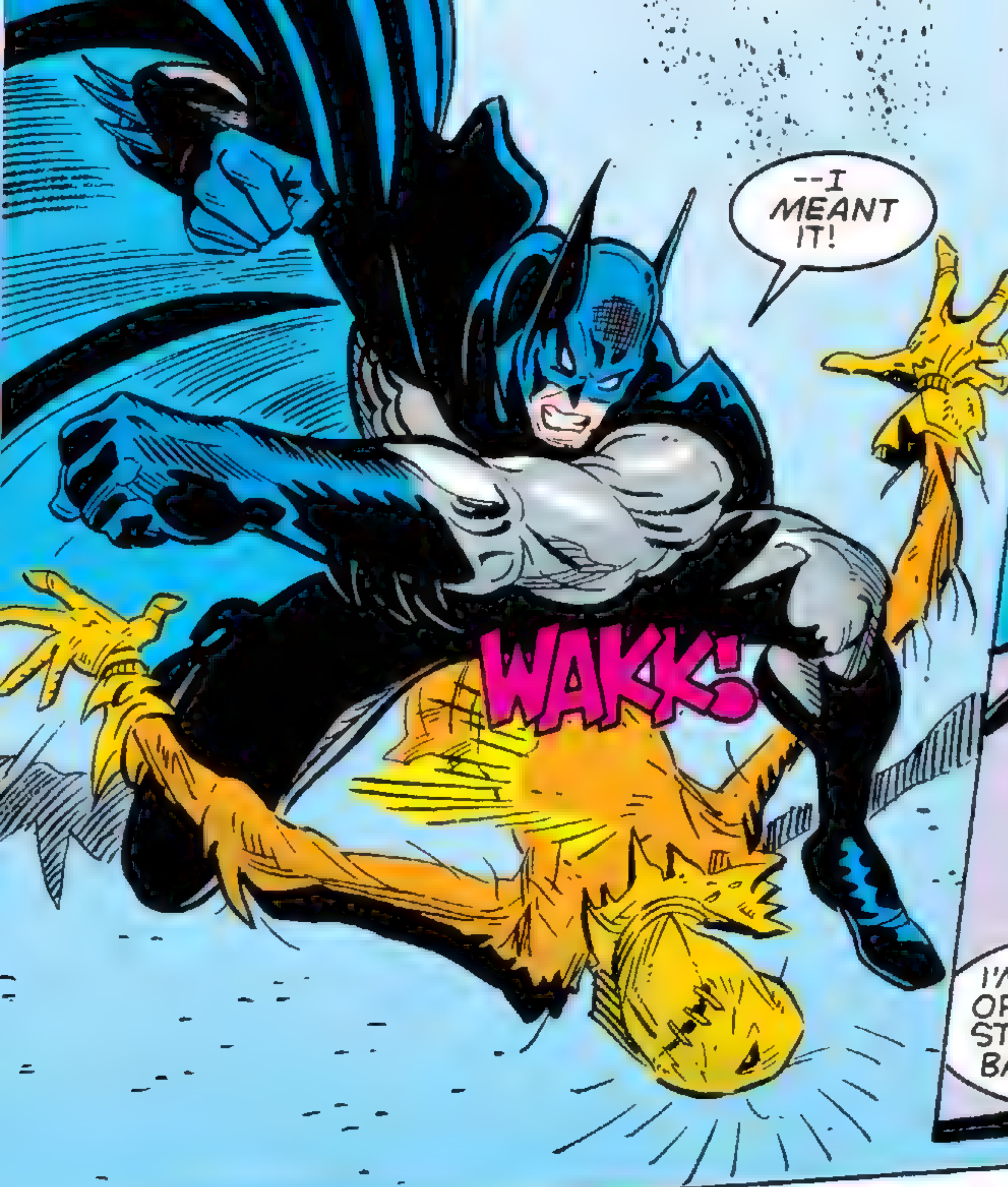
HE'S GOING TO GET AWAY!



FWOOOMFF!

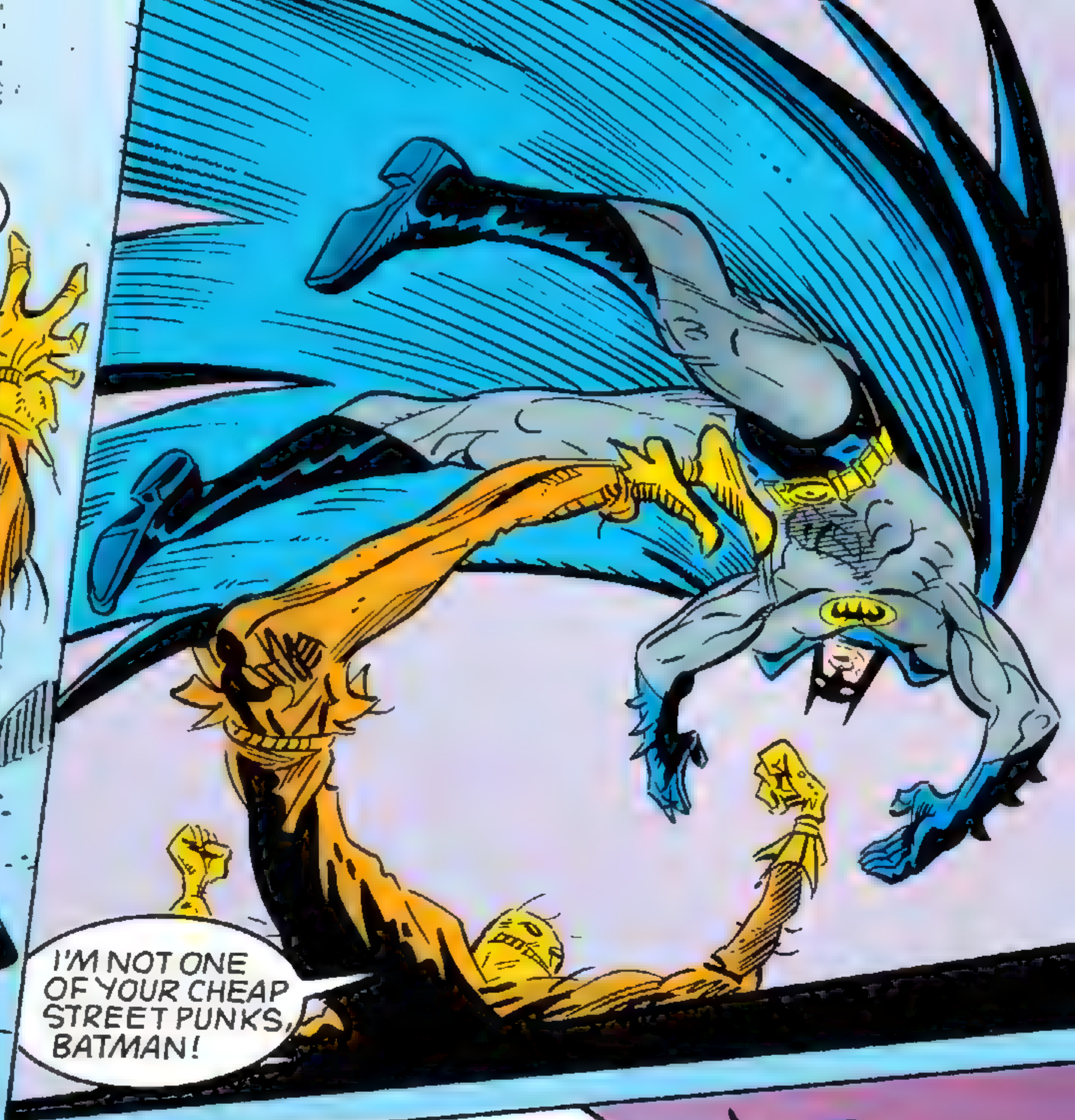
WHAT THE--?!





--I
MEANT
IT!

WAKK!



I'M NOT ONE
OF YOUR CHEAP
STREET PUNKS,
BATMAN!



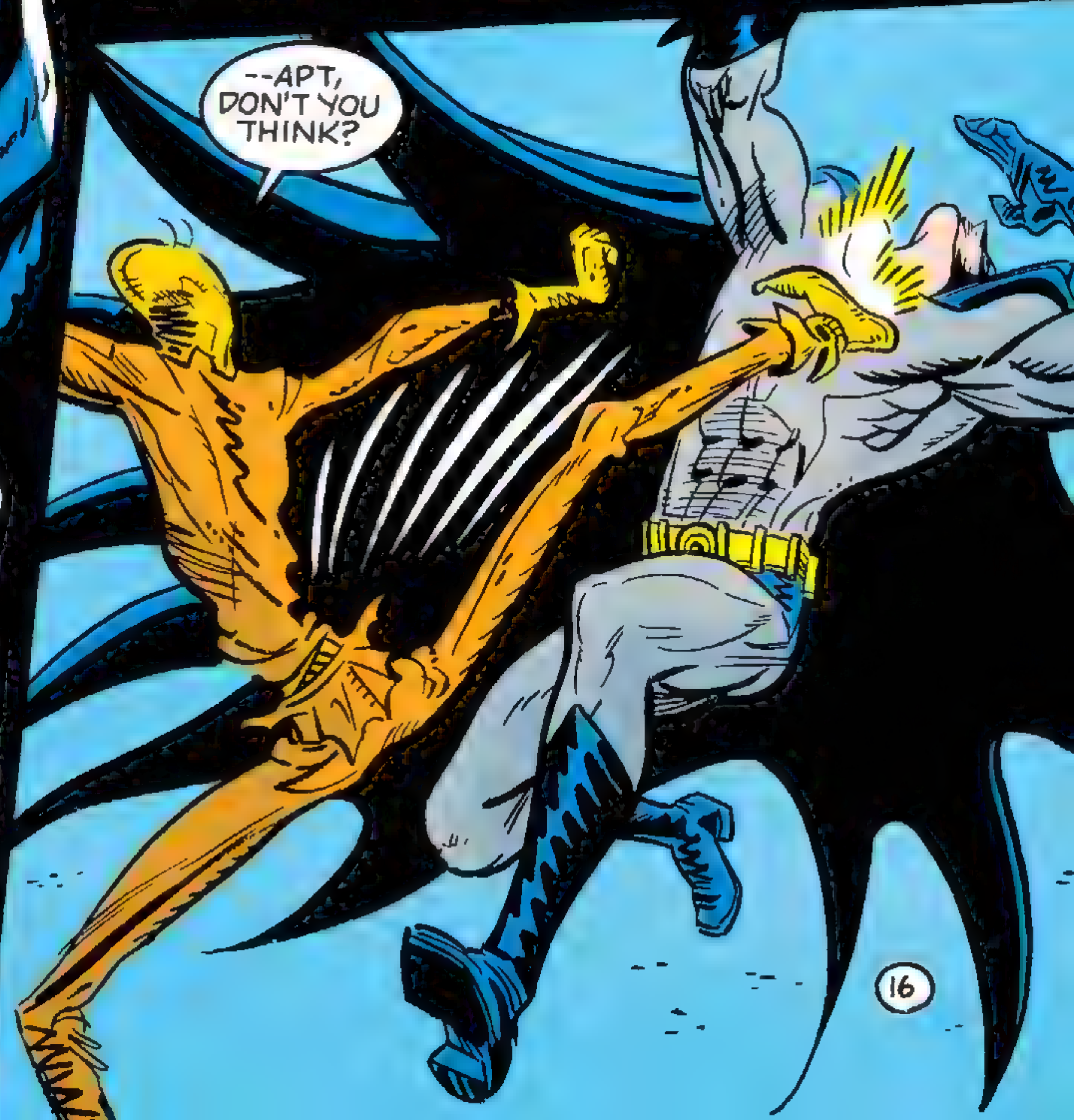
I STAND
POISED ON THE
EDGE OF
GODHOOD--

--AND NO
MERE MORTAL
WILL STOP
ME!

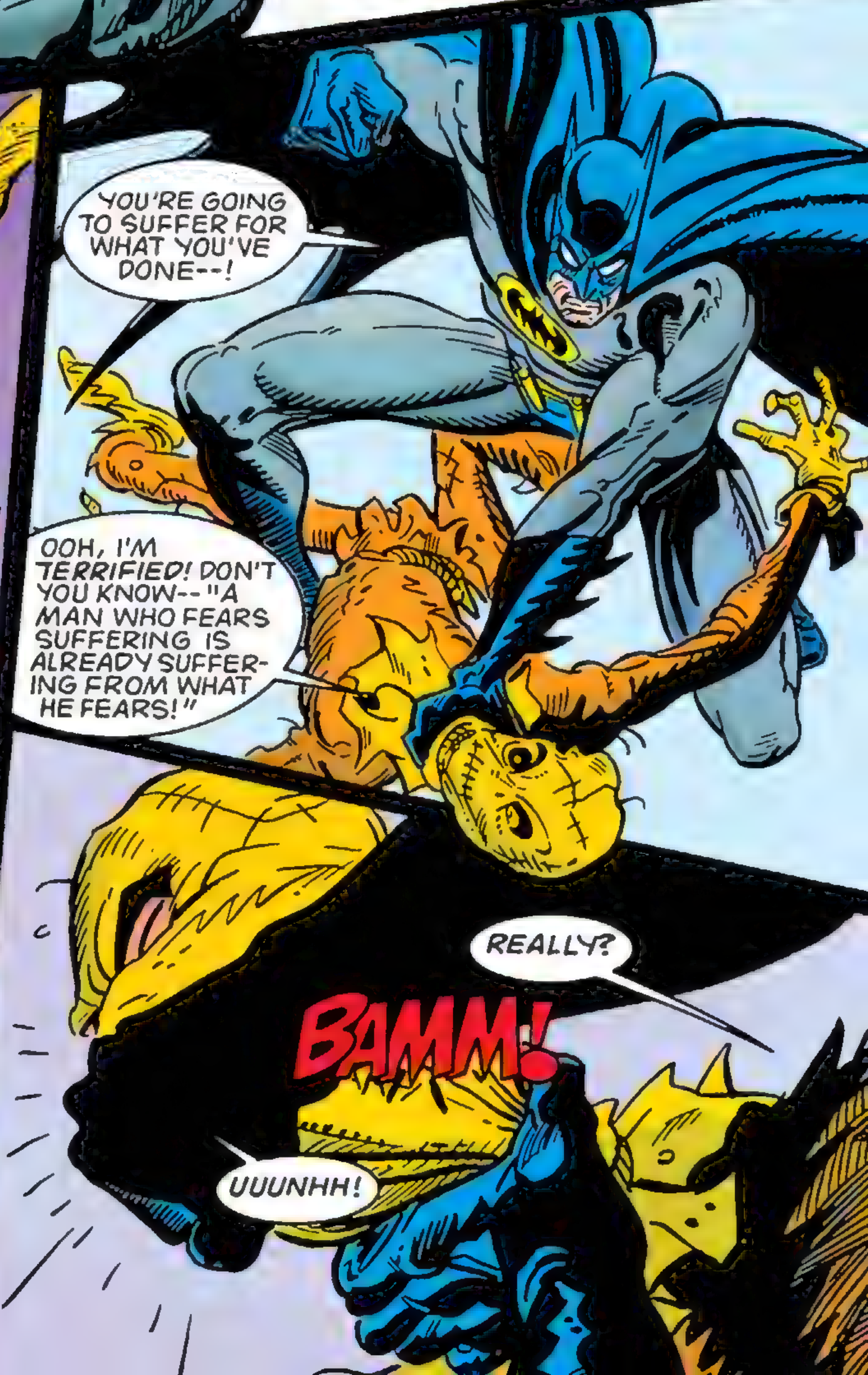
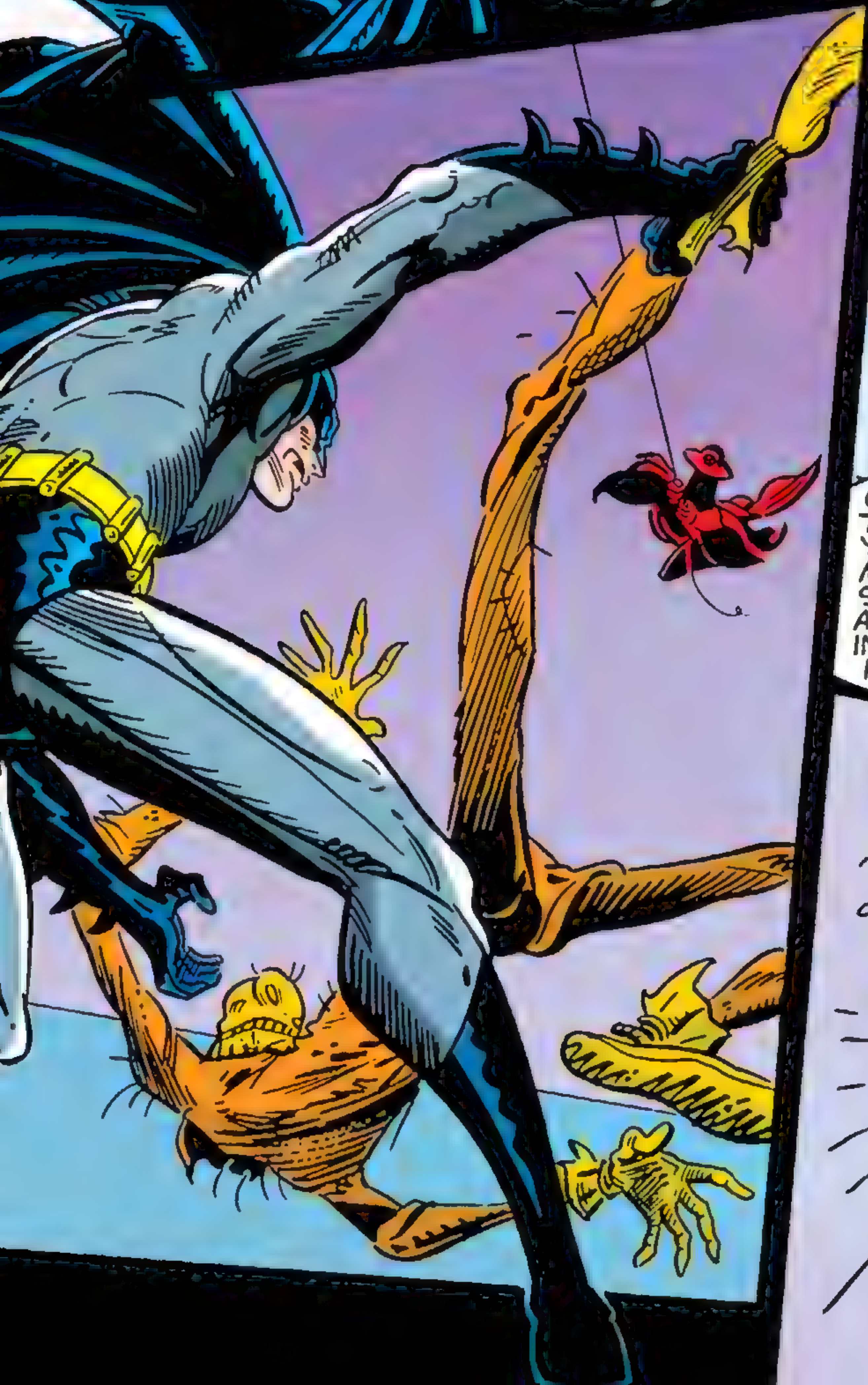
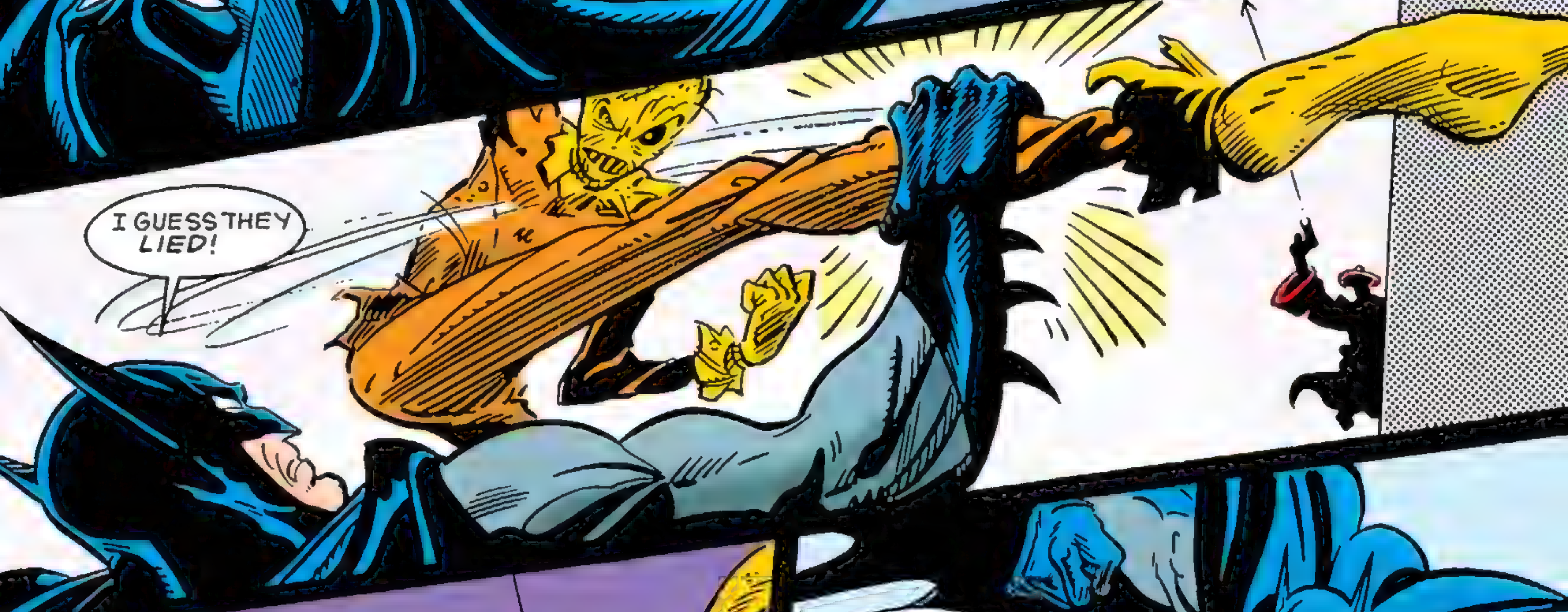


I'VE ALWAYS PREFERRED
TO RELY ON MY MIND'S
NATURAL GENIUS-- BUT
I'M NOT AVERSE TO
A SPOT OF ROUGH
AND TUMBLE!

THE CRANE
STYLE--



--APT,
DON'T YOU
THINK?



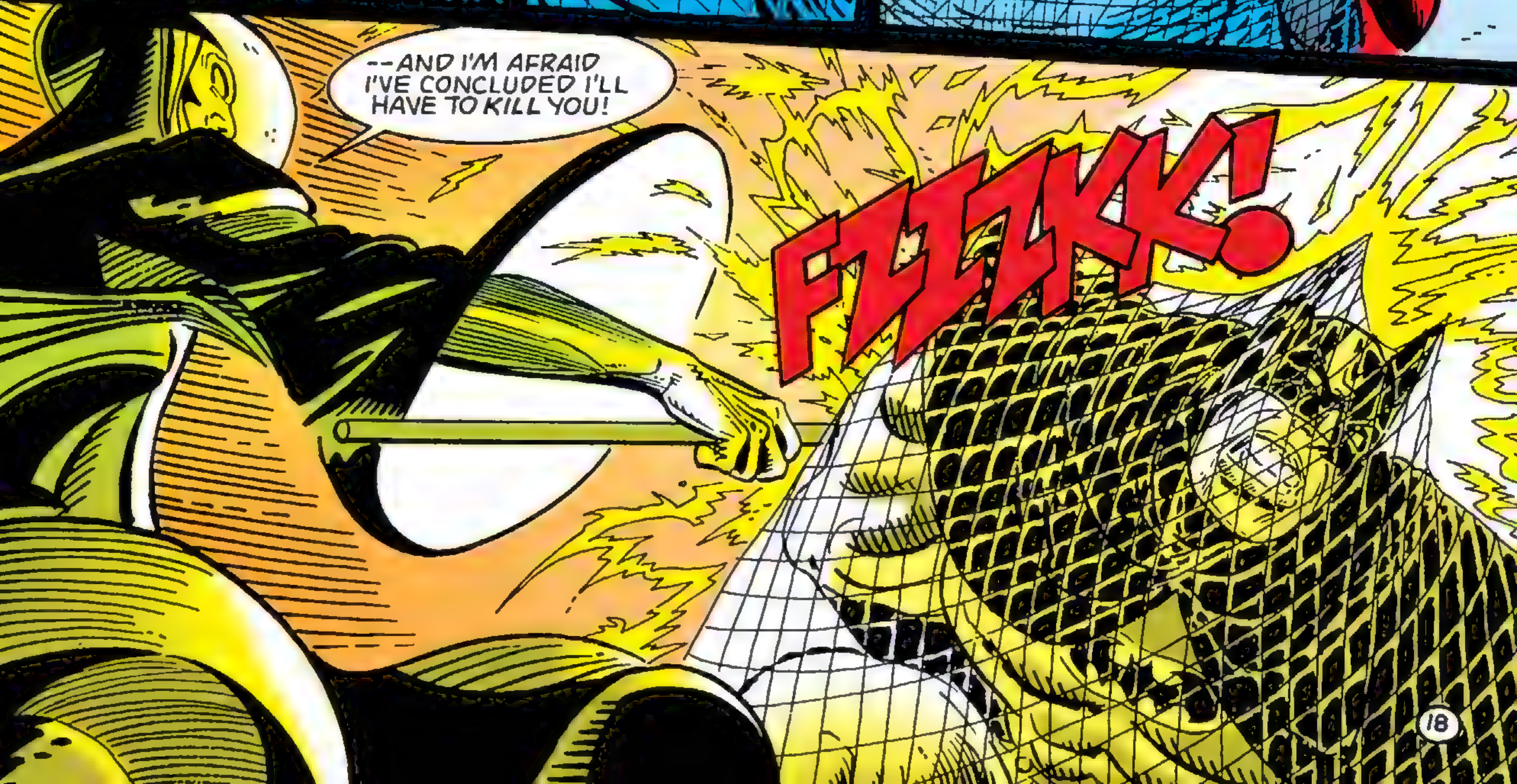
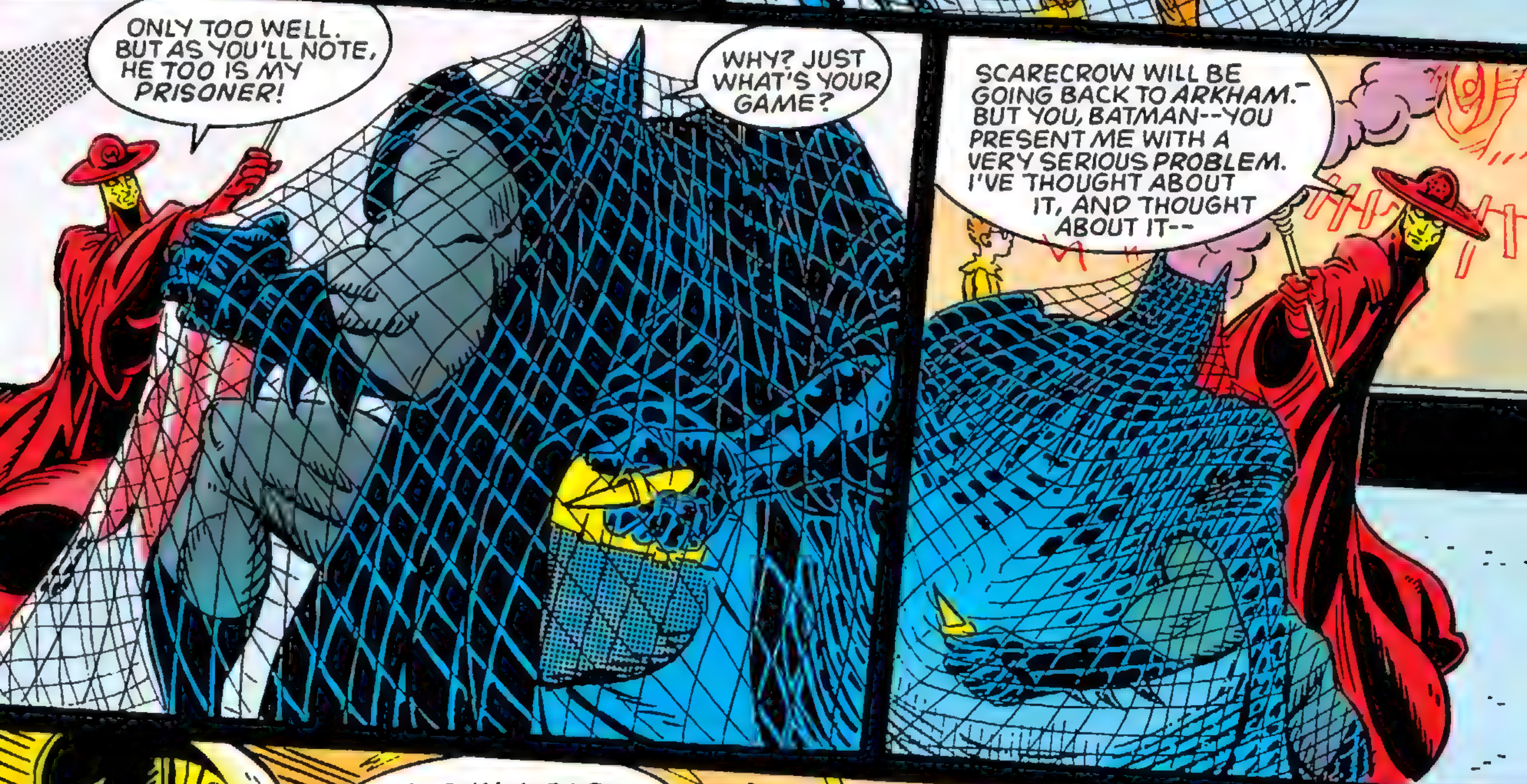
YOU'RE GOING TO SUFFER FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE--!

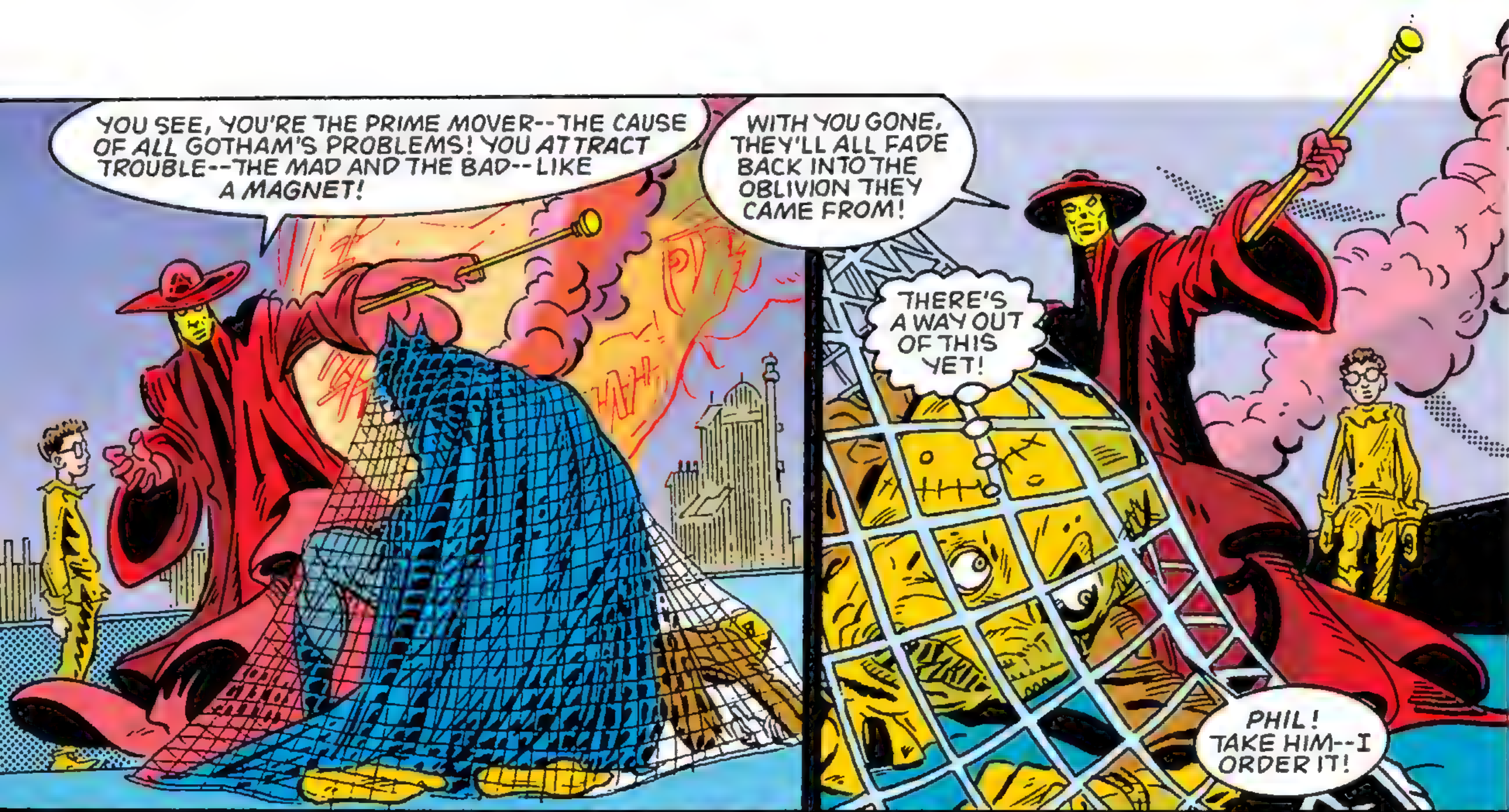
OOH, I'M TERRIFIED! DON'T YOU KNOW-- "A MAN WHO FEARS SUFFERING IS ALREADY SUFFERING FROM WHAT HE FEARS!"

REALLY?

BAMM!

UUUNHH!



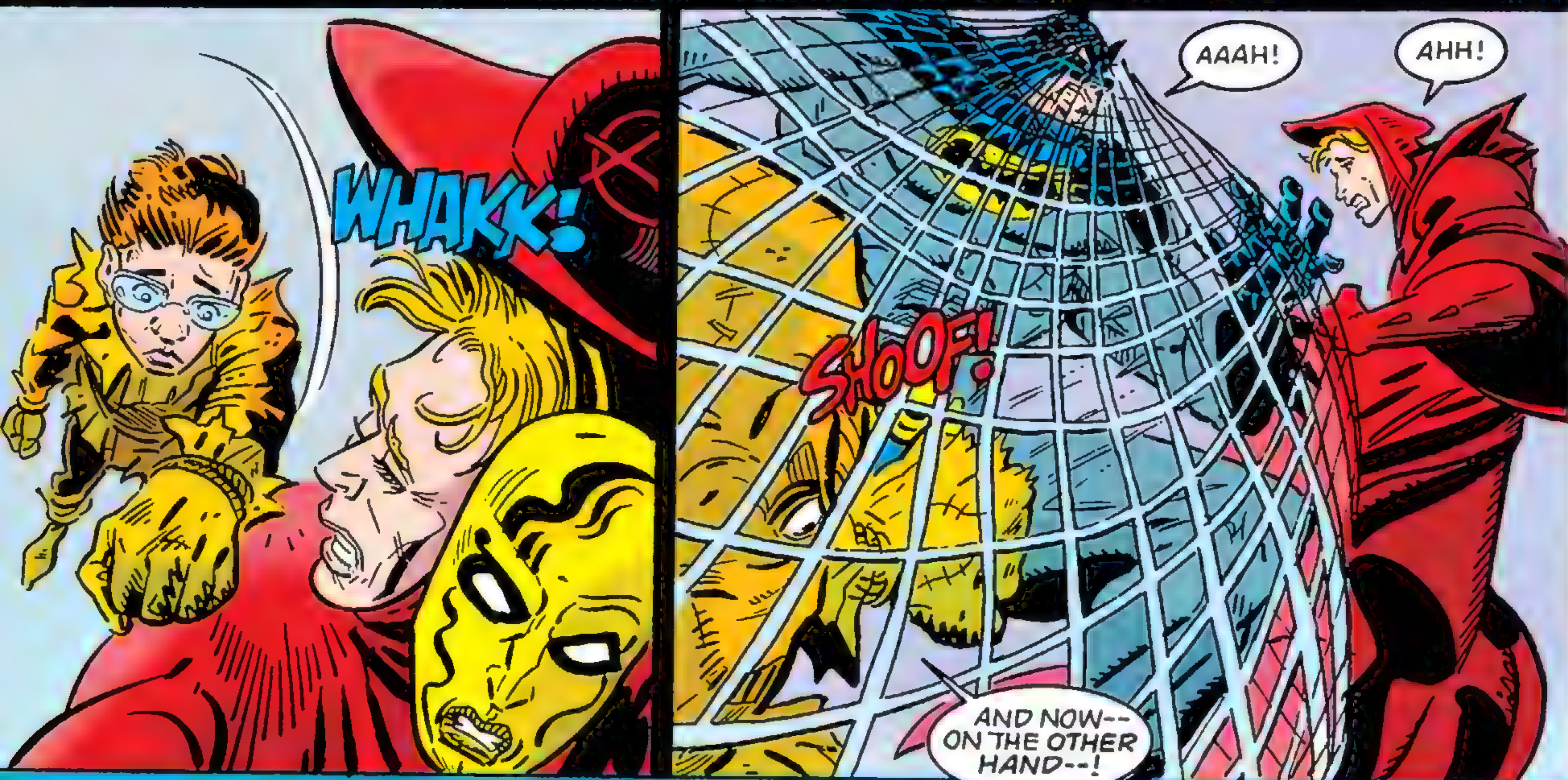


YOU SEE, YOU'RE THE PRIME MOVER--THE CAUSE OF ALL GOTHAM'S PROBLEMS! YOU ATTRACT TROUBLE--THE MAD AND THE BAD--LIKE A MAGNET!

WITH YOU GONE, THEY'LL ALL FADE BACK INTO THE OBLIVION THEY CAME FROM!

THERE'S A WAY OUT OF THIS YET!

PHIL! TAKE HIM--I ORDER IT!



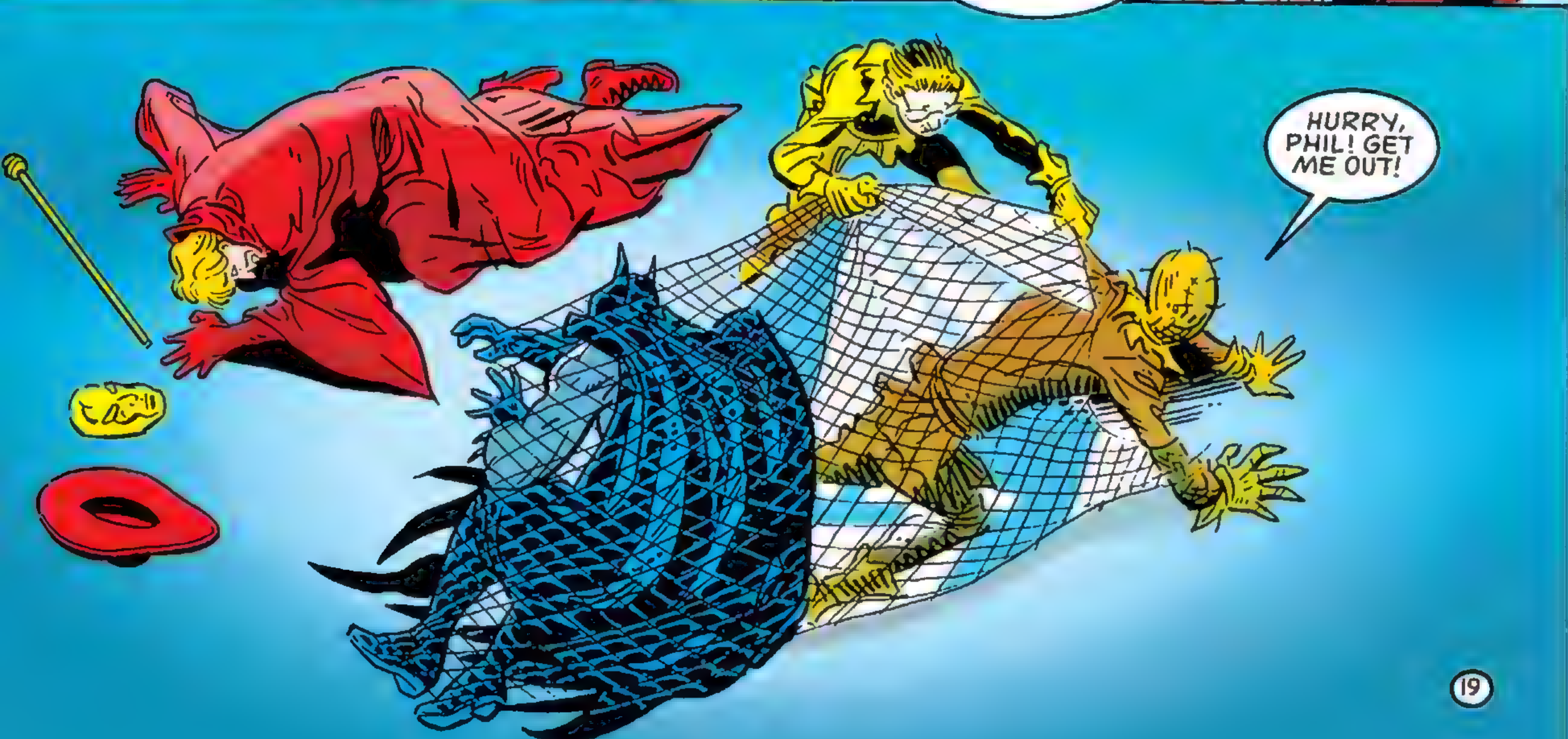
WHACK!

SHOOOF!

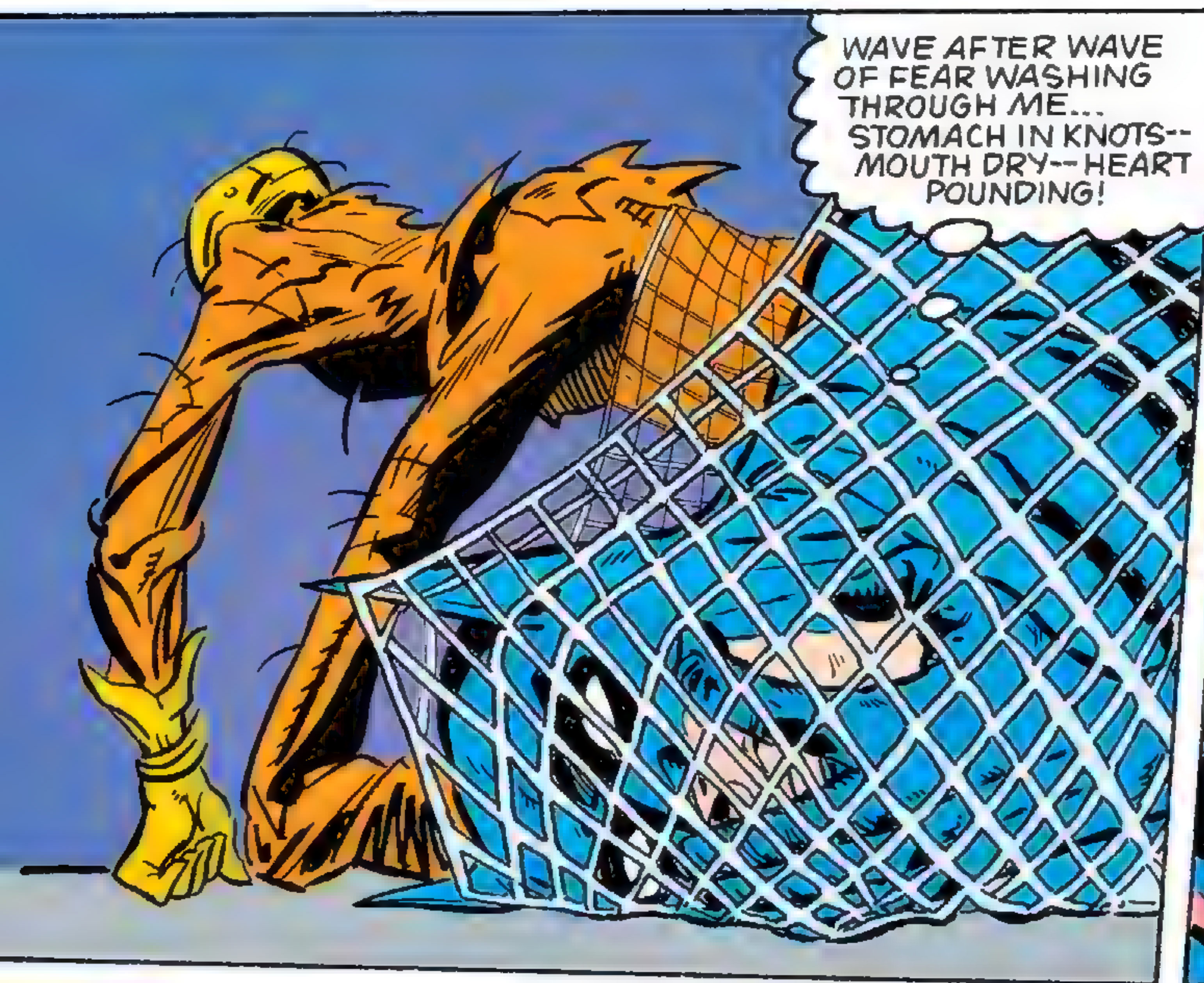
AAAH!

AHH!

AND NOW--ON THE OTHER HAND--!



HURRY, PHIL! GET ME OUT!



WAVE AFTER WAVE
OF FEAR WASHING
THROUGH ME...
STOMACH IN KNOTS--
MOUTH DRY-- HEART
POUNDING!



WHO AM I? I DON'T KNOW MYSELF!
I'M CLAY, TO BE MOLDED-- A ROBOT,
PROGRAMMED BY THE ORDER OF
SAINT DUMAS! MY MIND-- MY VERY
BEING-- BELONG TO SOME-
ONE ELSE!



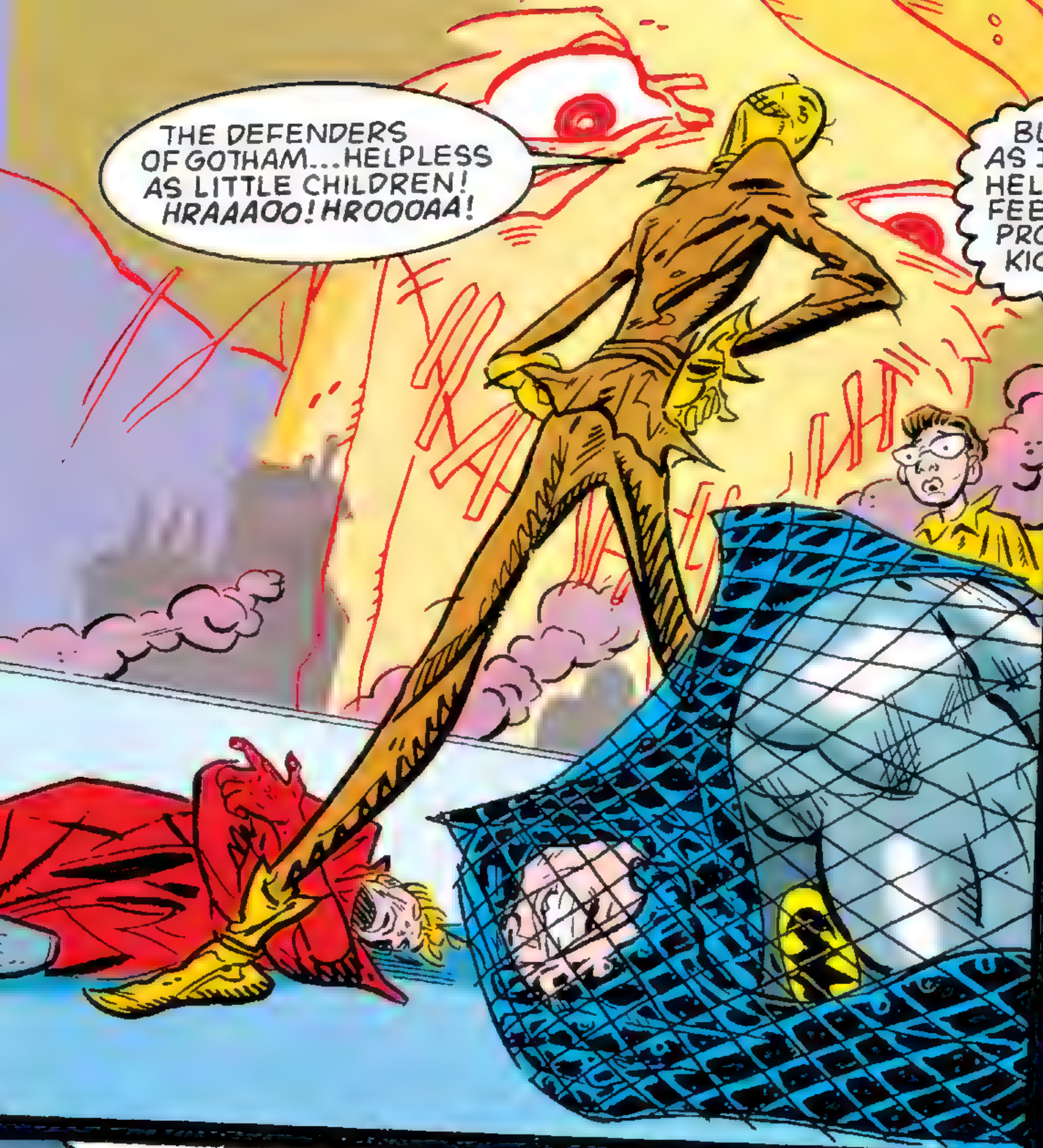
THE WORLD'S
DYING! POISONED SEAS-- CAN'T
BREATHE THE AIR! THE POLITICIANS--
THE BANKERS-- THE CRIMINALS--
THEY'RE SACRIFICING US ALL ON
THE ALTAR OF THEIR GREED!

AND UNDERNEATH
THE MASKS-- WHAT
AM I?

THE ANSWER
ECHOES, SPINNING
IN MY TORTURED
BRAIN--

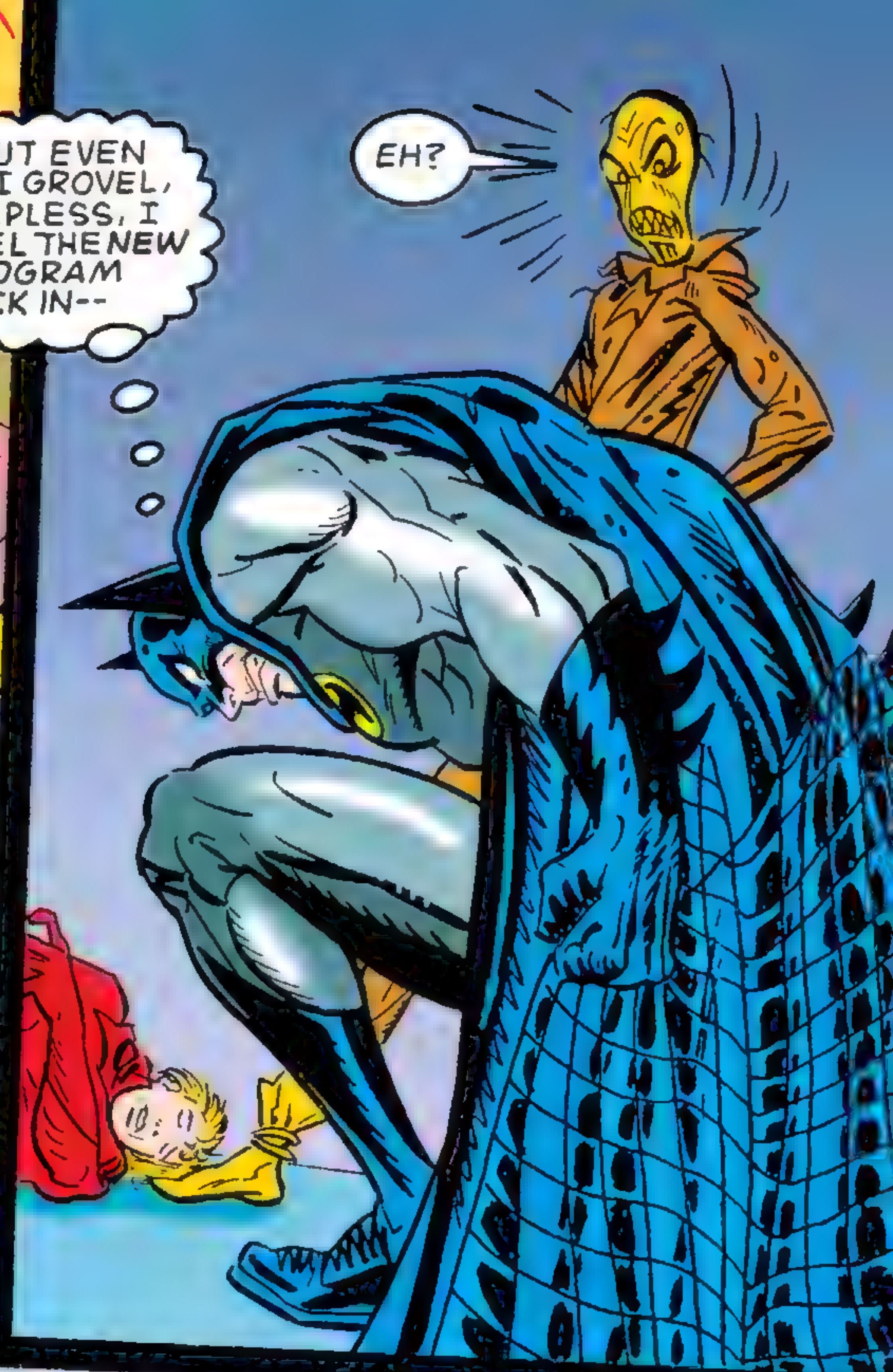
--NOTHING!
YOU'RE
NOTHING AT
ALL!

PLEASE...
PLEASE DON'T
KILL OUR
PLANET...!



THE DEFENDERS
OF GOTHAM...HELPLESS
AS LITTLE CHILDREN!
HRAAAOO! HROOOAA!

BUT EVEN
AS I GROVEL,
HELPLESS, I
FEEL THE NEW
PROGRAM
KICK IN--



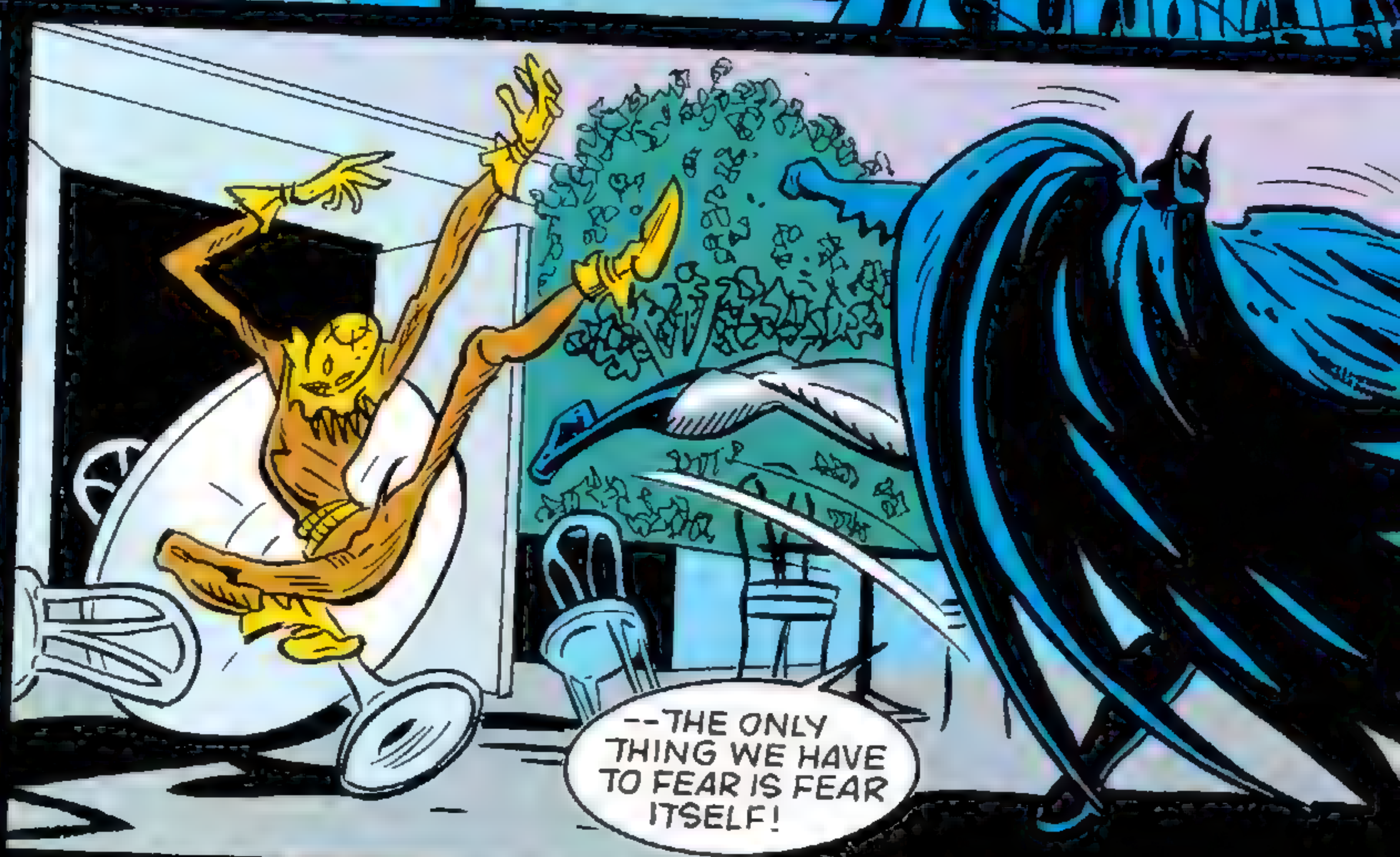
EH?



--DAMN YOU,
SAINT DUMAS! CAN'T I
EVEN BE AFRAID?

BUT-- IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE! THAT'S
CONCENTRATED FEAR!
THE AMOUNT YOU
TOOK, YOU SHOULD
BE OUT FOR AN
HOUR!

SOMEONE
ONCE SAID--



--THE ONLY
THING WE HAVE
TO FEAR IS FEAR
ITSELF!



ON YOUR FEET.
YOU MAY BE
INSANE-- BUT
YOU'RE NOT
SO CRAZY I
CAN'T GIVE
YOU THE
BEATING
YOU
DESERVE!

GUESS AGAIN,
BATMAN! ONE THING
I CAN ALWAYS COUNT
ON-- YOUR CODE
OF HONOR!

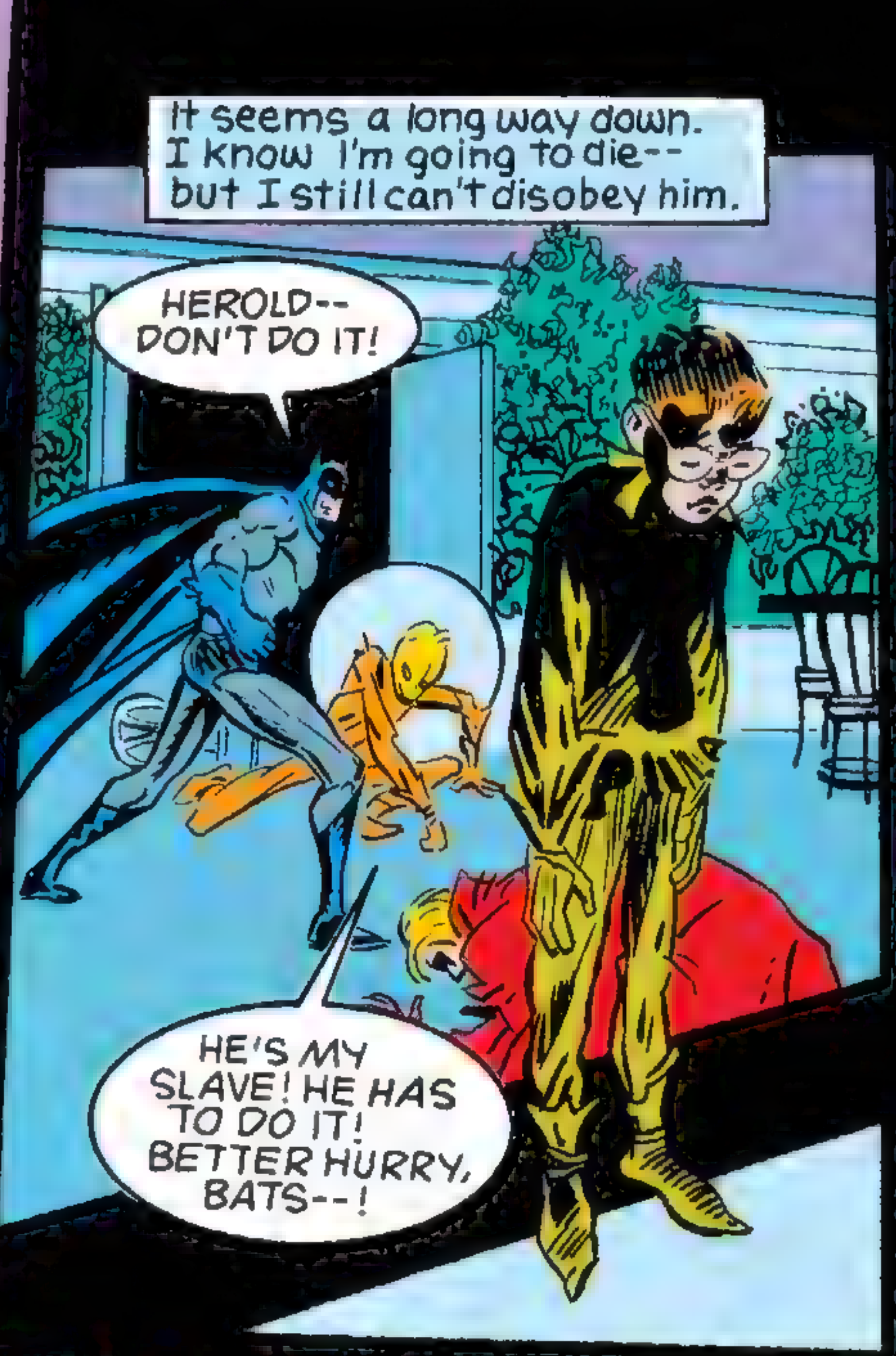


PHIL!
THROW
YOURSELF
OFF THE
ROOF!



NO!

HIM OR ME? WHICH'LL IT BE?



It seems a long way down. I know I'm going to die-- but I still can't disobey him.

HEROLD-- DON'T DO IT!

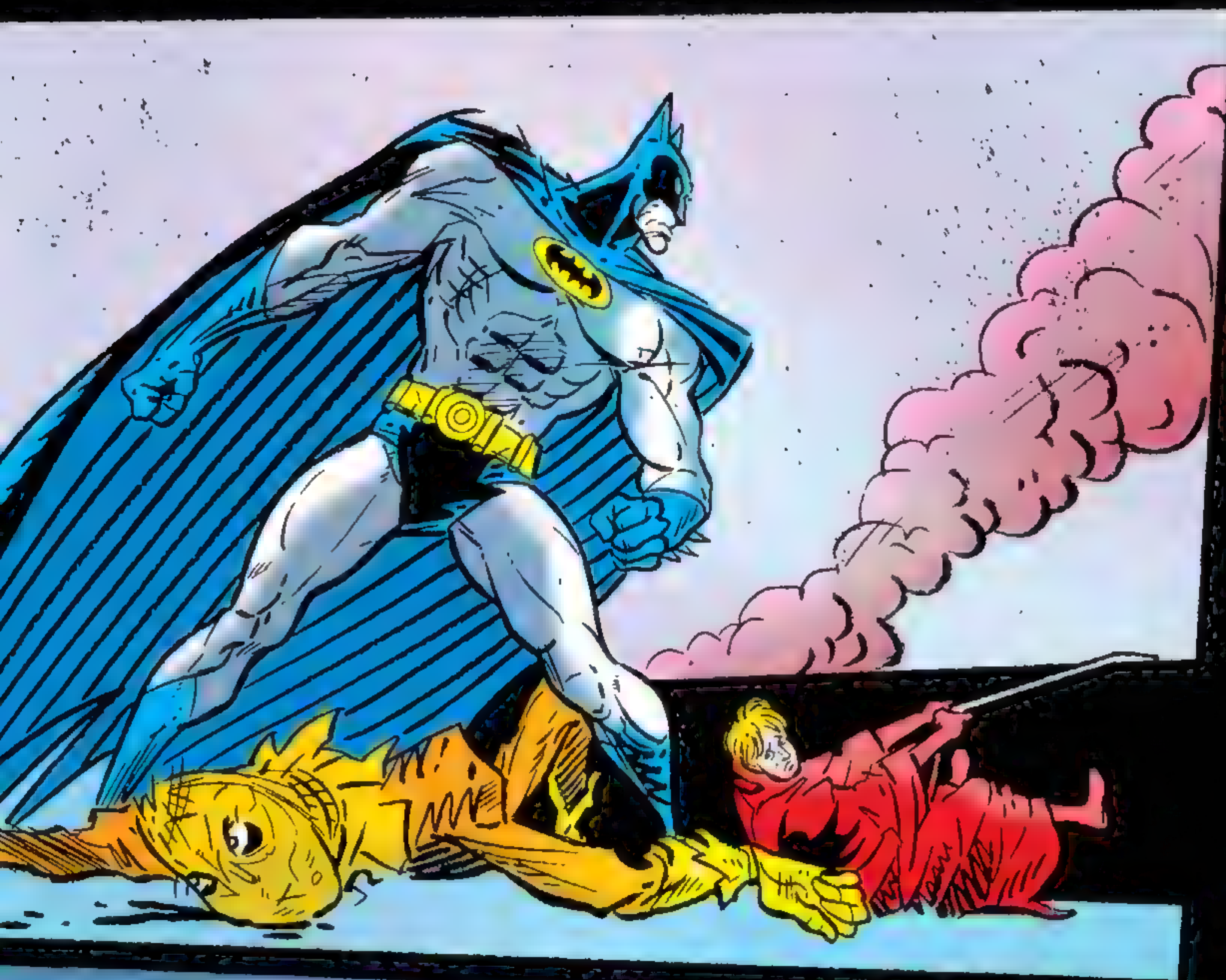
HE'S MY SLAVE! HE HAS TO DO IT! BETTER HURRY, BAT--!



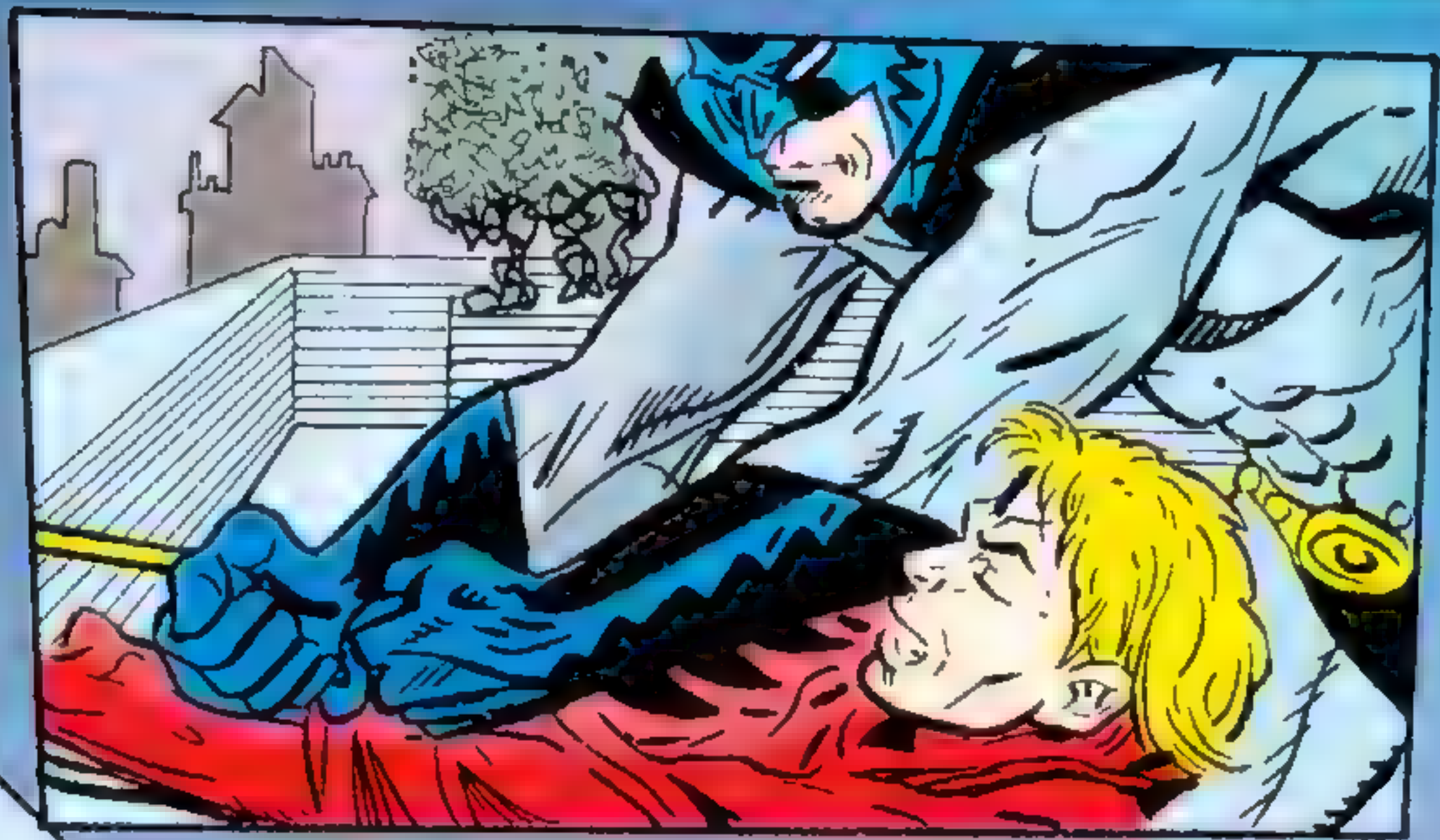
I don't even feel that sad.

YOU LET HIM DIE! I DON'T BELIEVE IT--!

BELIEVE THIS!

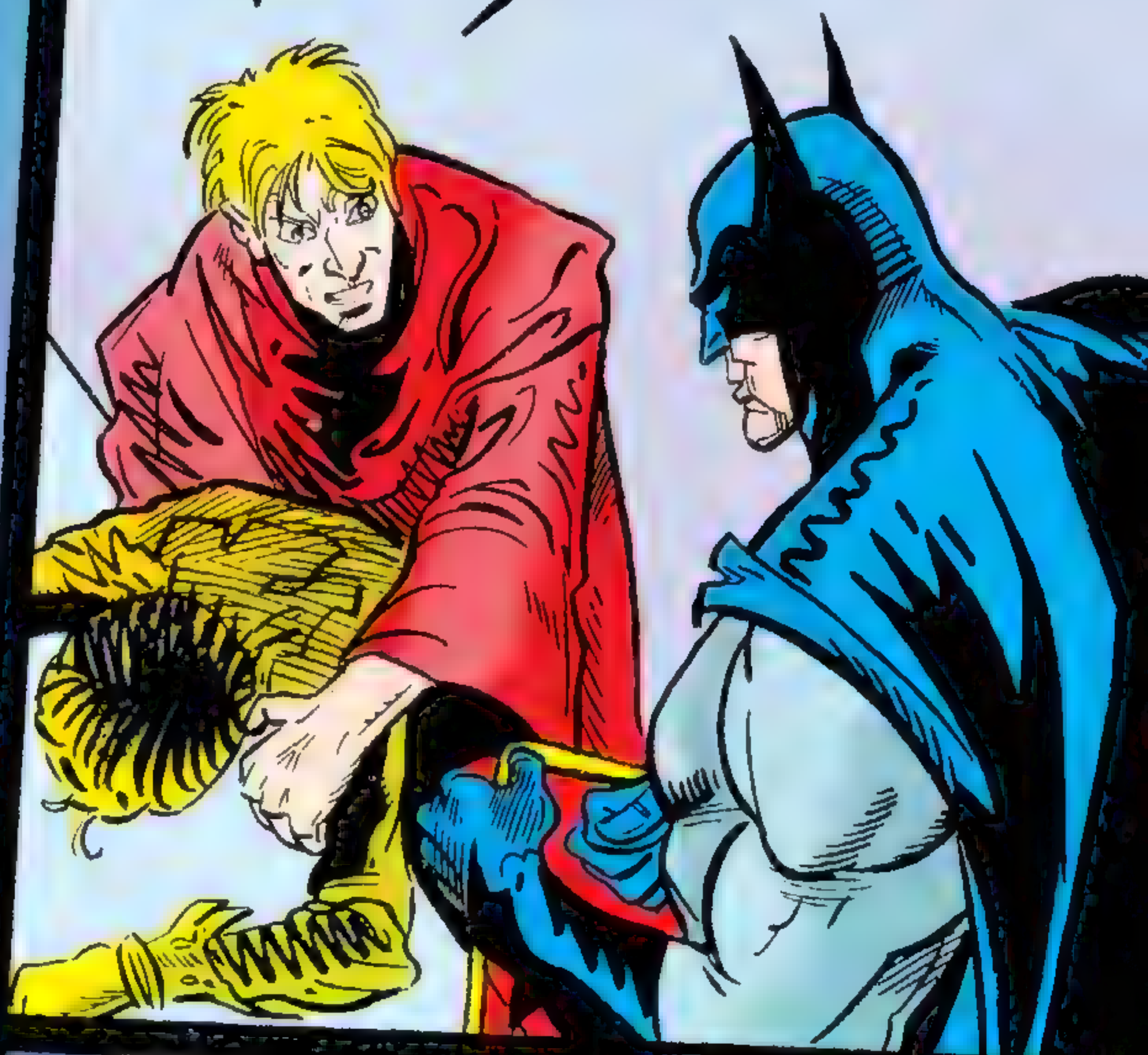


DON'T JUST STAND THERE, MAN! I CAN'T HOLD HIM--!



YOU DIDN'T KNOW I'D GET TO HIM IN TIME.

YOU WERE GOING TO LET HIM DIE, WEREN'T YOU?



IF SCARECROW HAD ESCAPED, THE WHOLE CITY WOULD HAVE SUFFERED.



HE'S STILL HYPNOTIZED-- RIGID WITH TERROR!

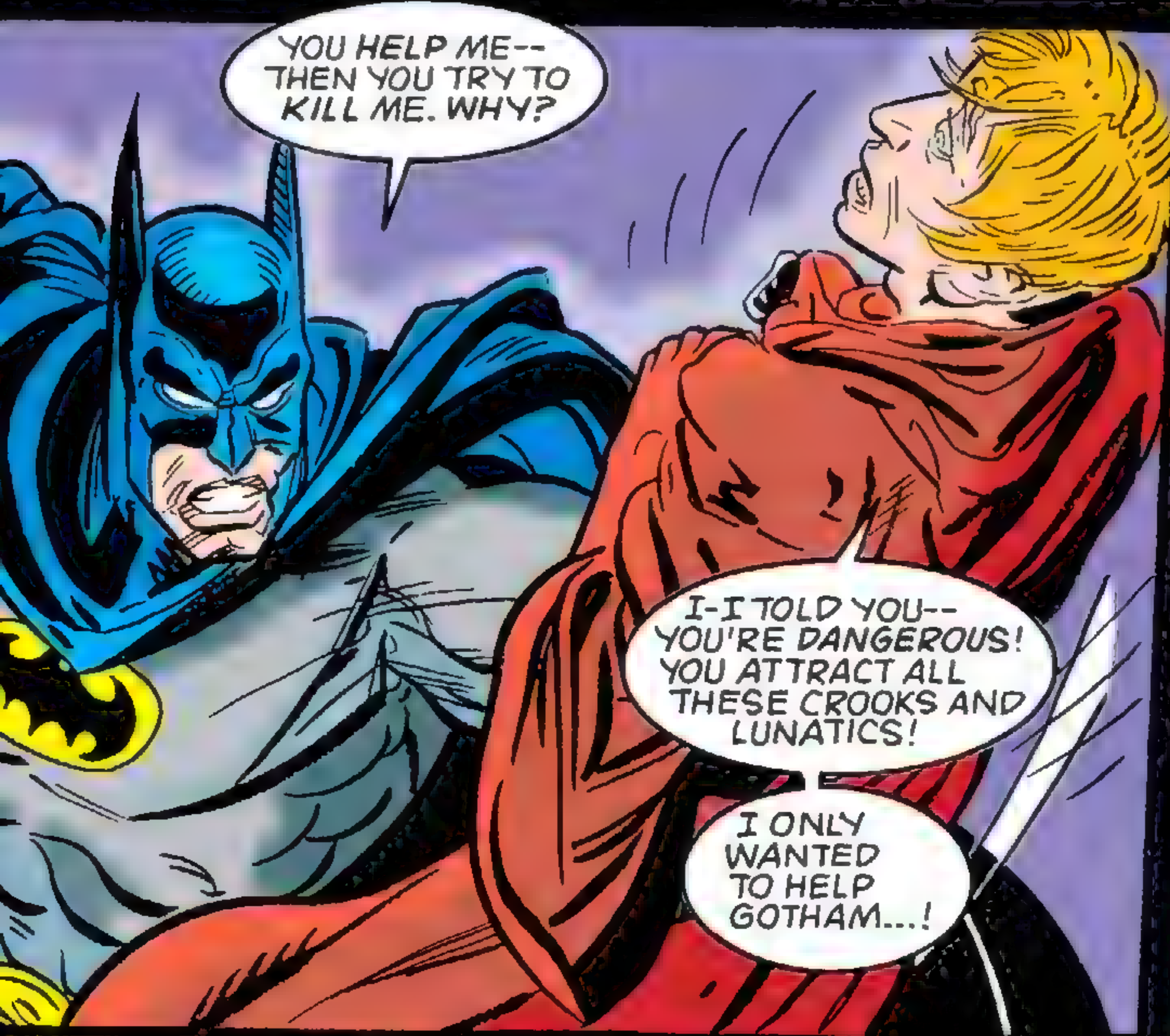
IT WAS NO CONTEST.





IT WAS YOU WHO FIRED THE FLARE EARLIER TONIGHT-- WHEN I CAUGHT THE HOOD BROTHERS?

YULK!! Y-YEAH! THEY WERE TOO MUCH FOR ME TO TAKE!



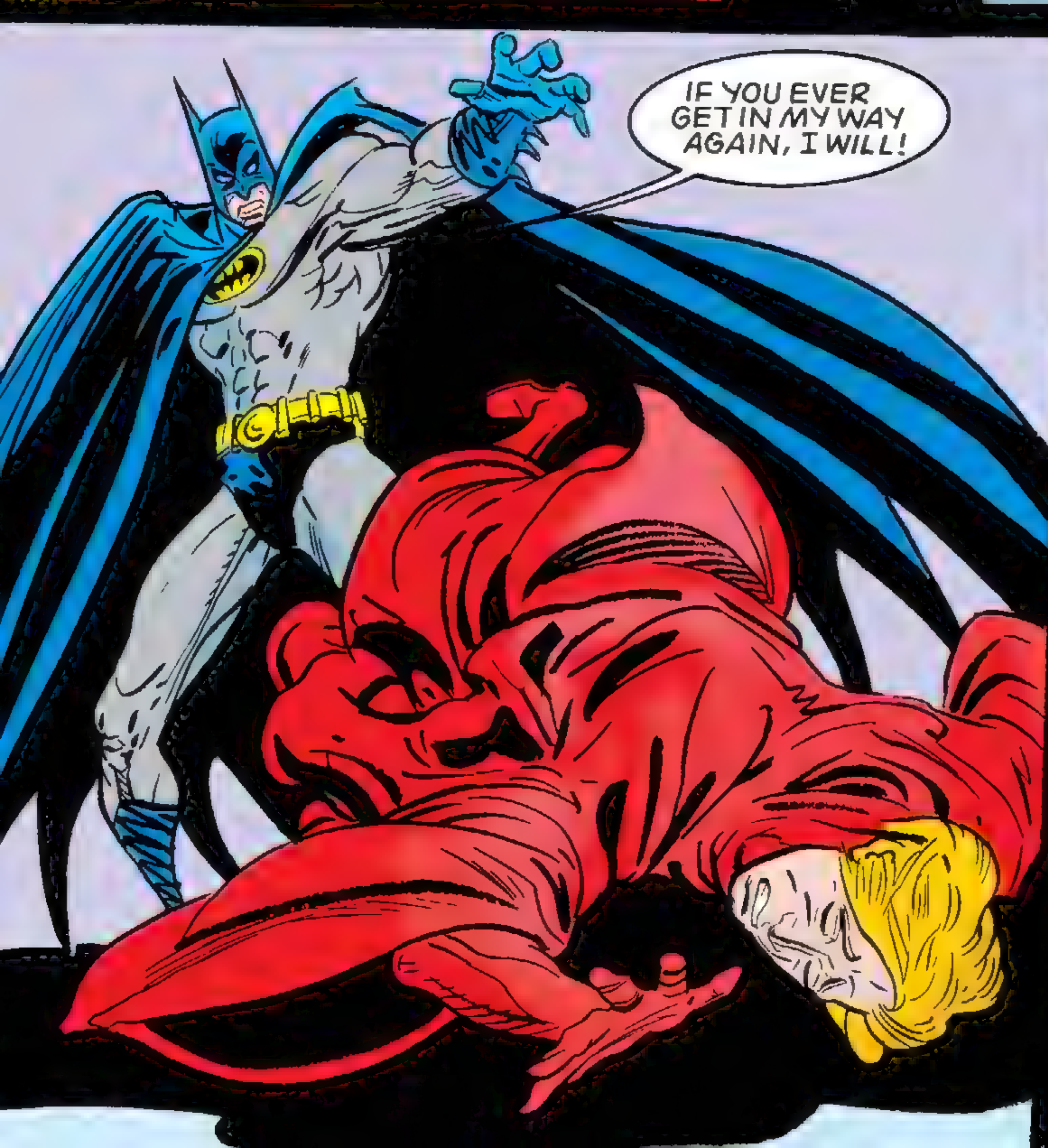
YOU HELP ME-- THEN YOU TRY TO KILL ME. WHY?

I-I TOLD YOU-- YOU'RE DANGEROUS! YOU ATTRACT ALL THESE CROOKS AND LUNATICS!

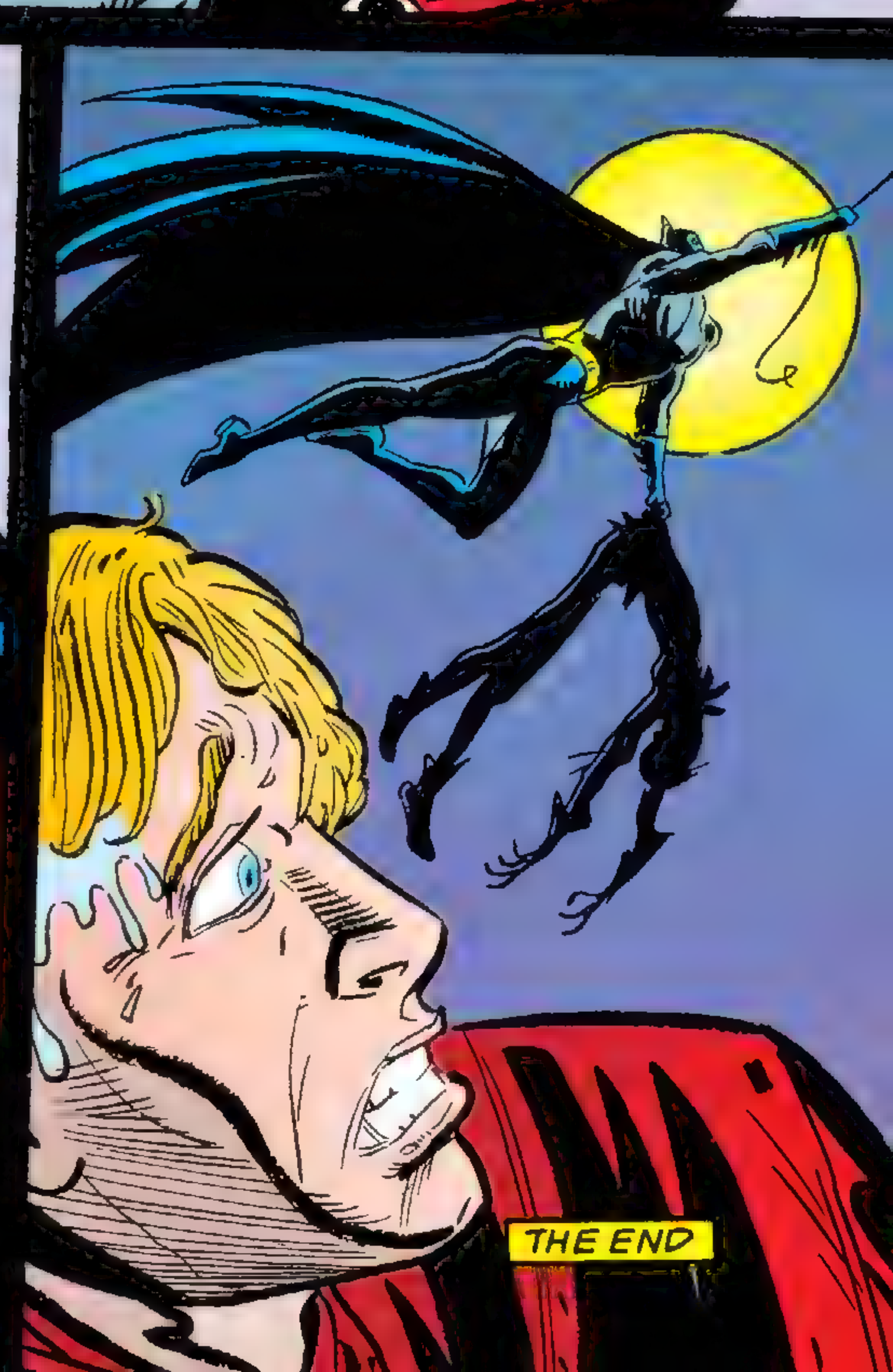
I ONLY WANTED TO HELP GOTHAM....!



I COULD CRUSH YOUR HEAD LIKE AN EGG!

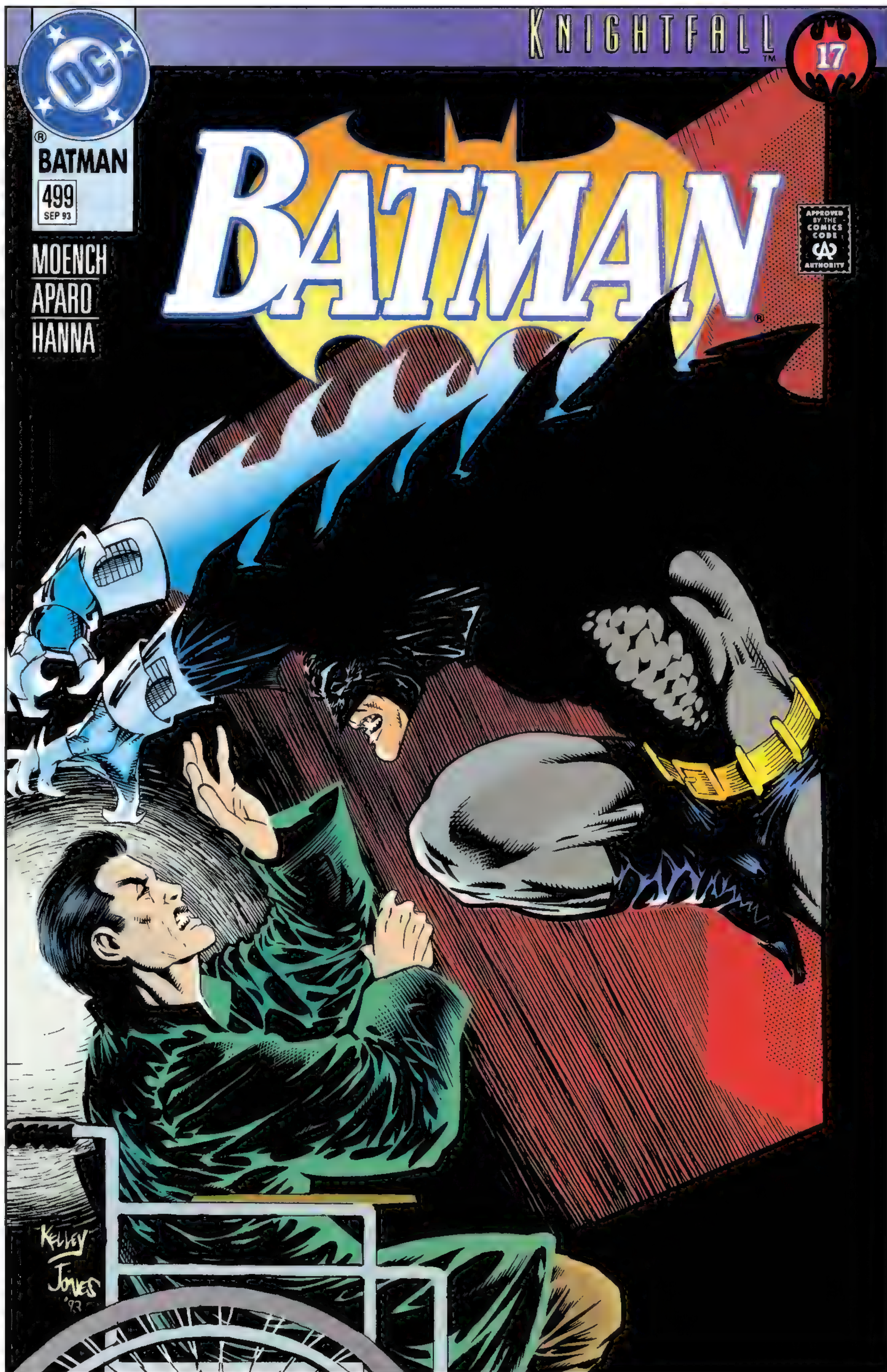


IF YOU EVER GET IN MY WAY AGAIN, I WILL!



THE END

Cover art by KELLEY JONES



THE VANDOM CONSPIRACY

AS THE BATMAN, BRUCE WAYNE STRUCK TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF CRIMINALS.

DO WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, TOUGH TONY?

JEAN PAUL VALLEY PREFERS FACES.

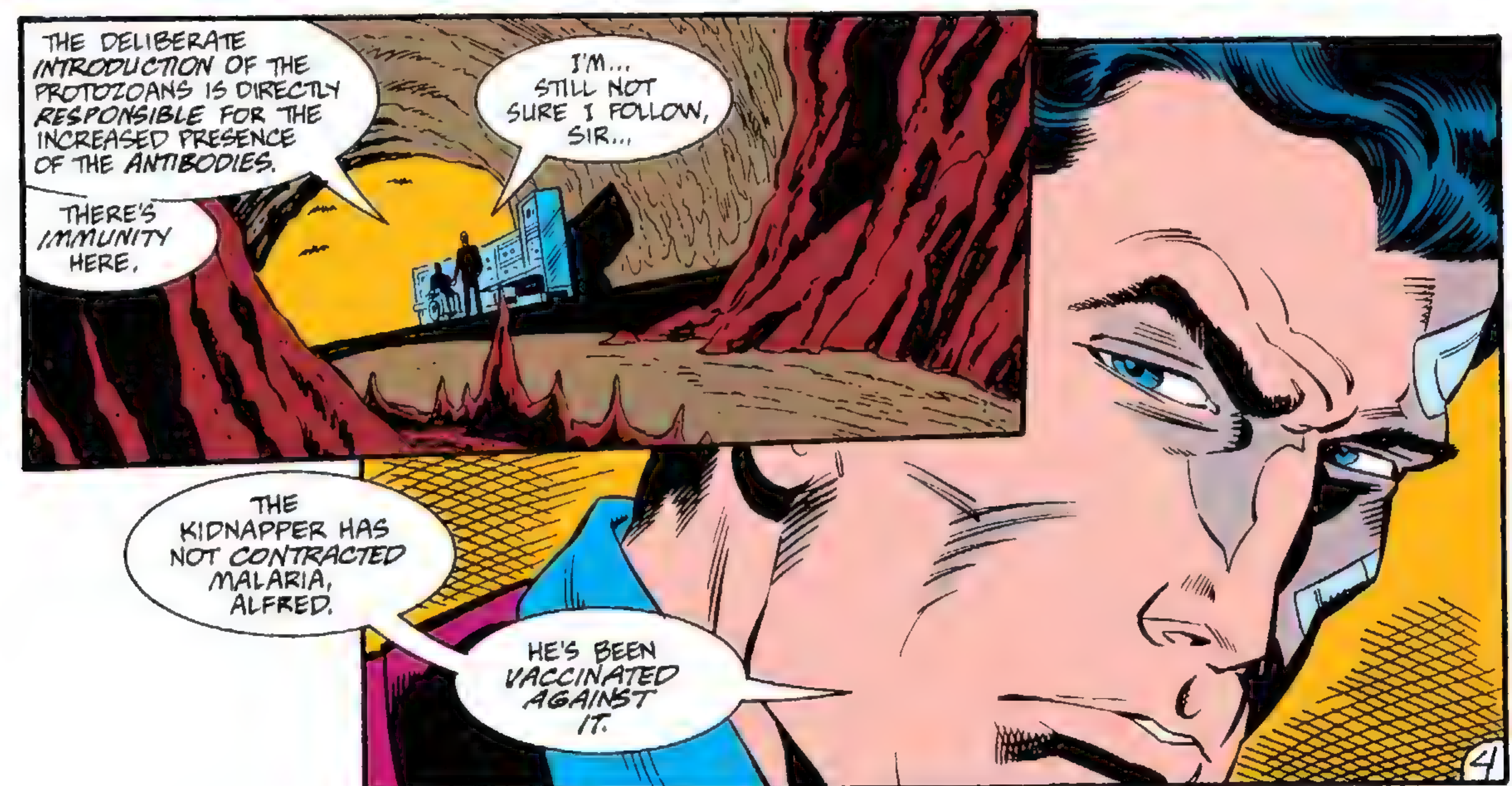
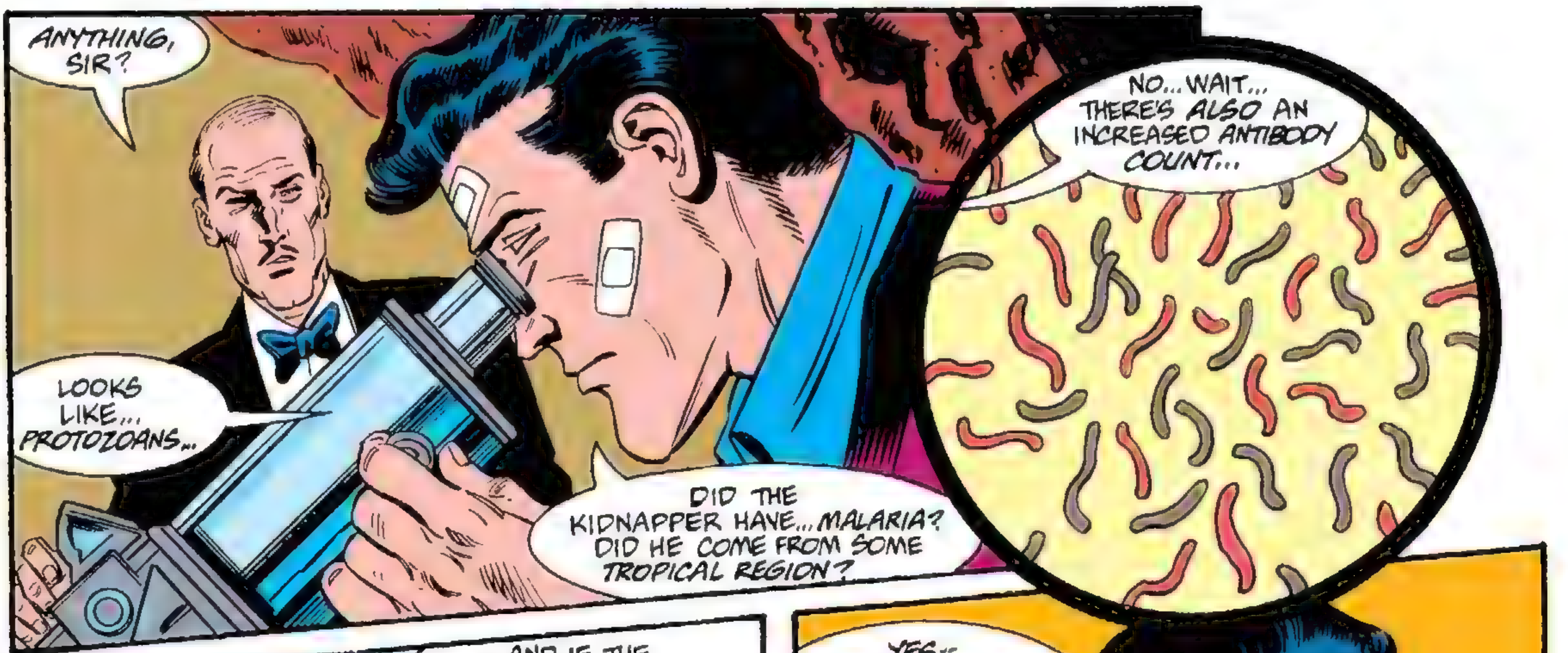
STOP IT!

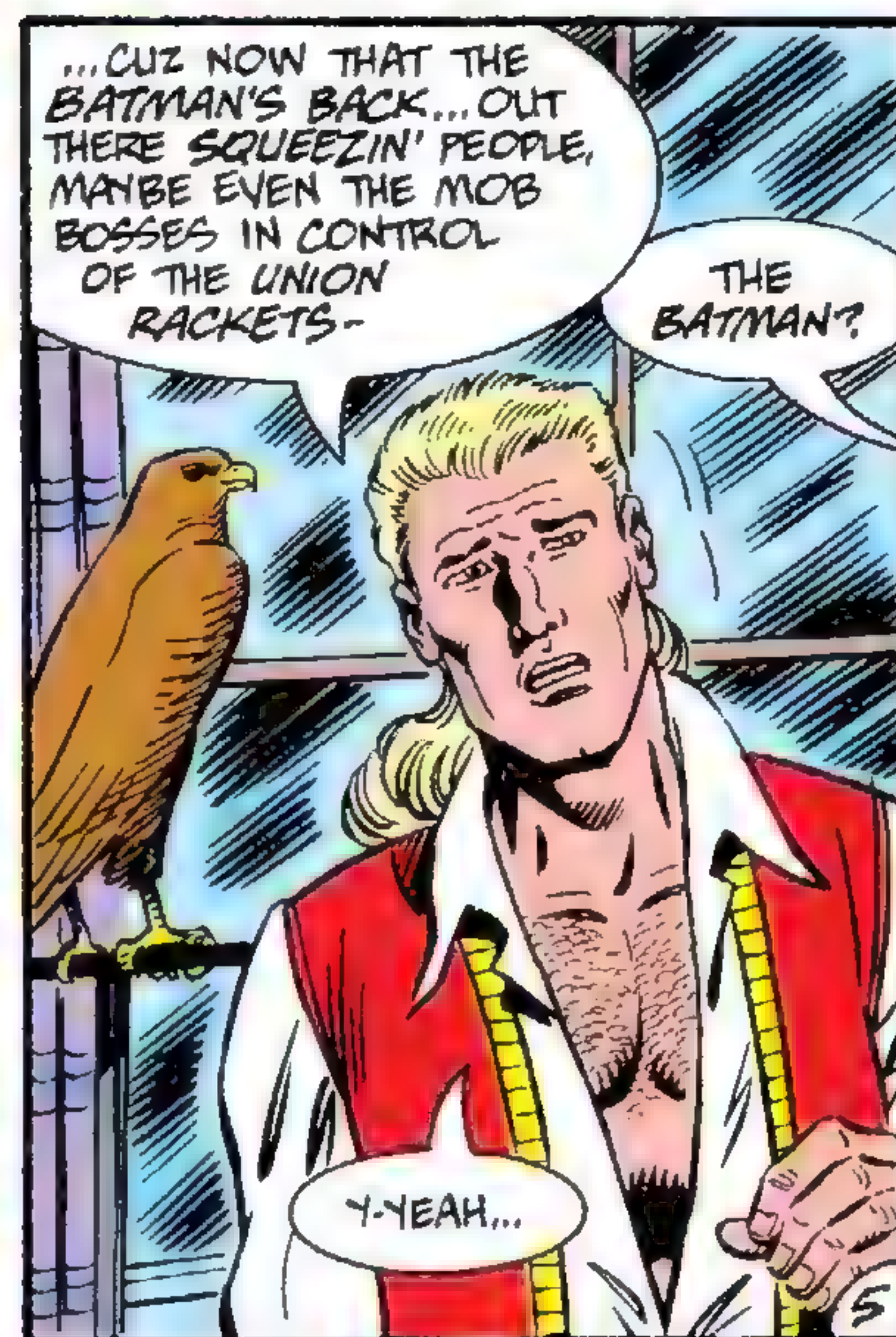
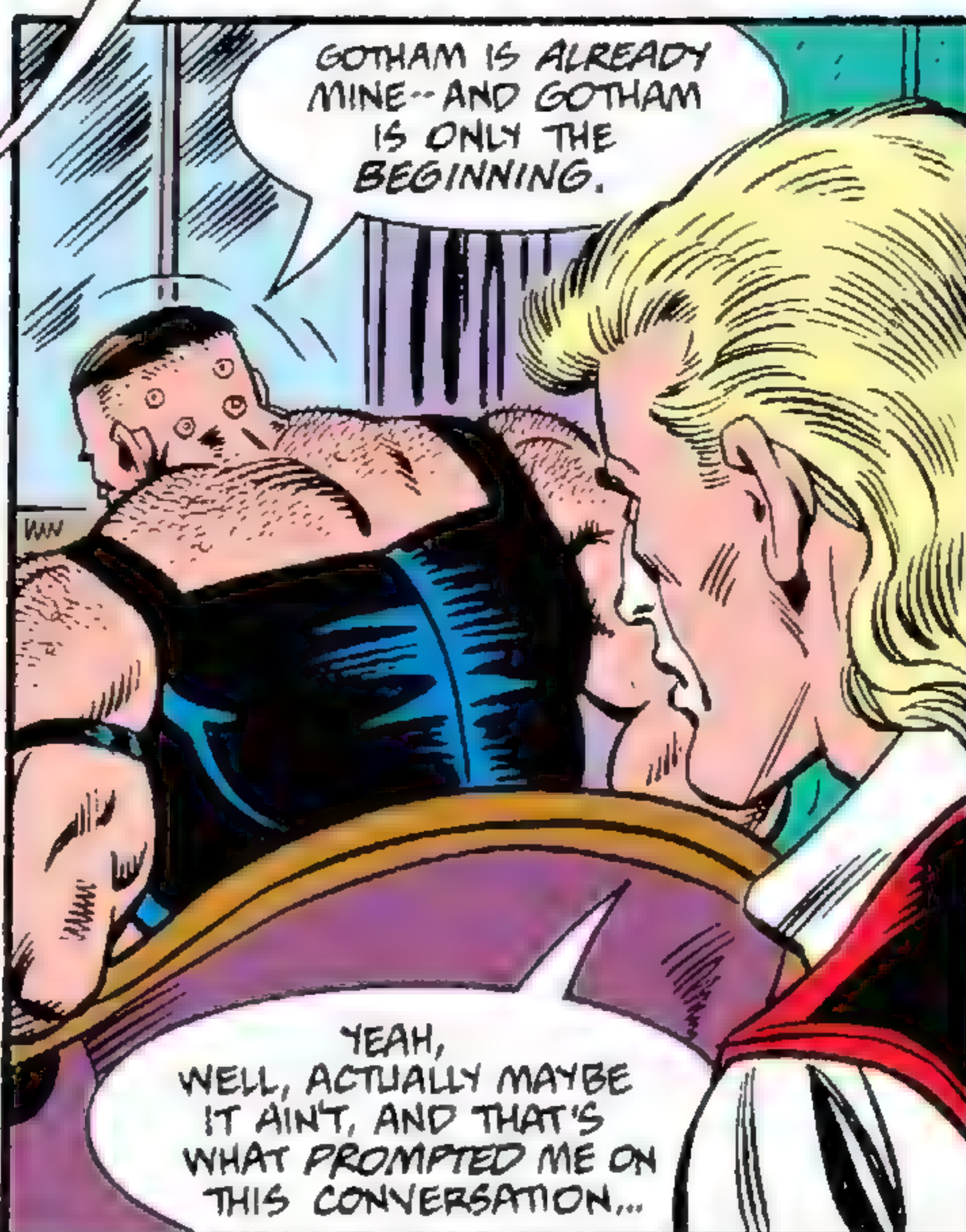
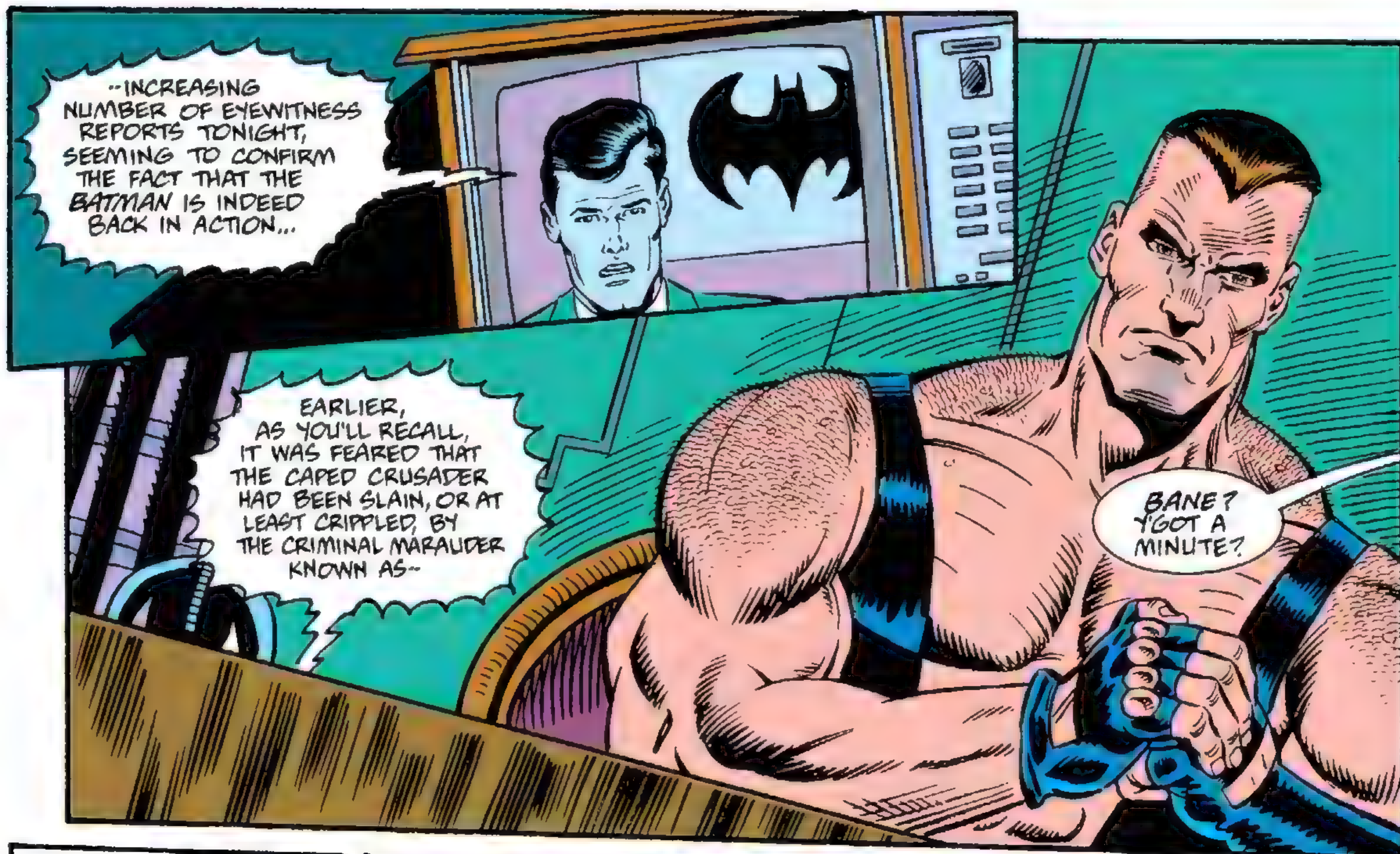
FWIAKK

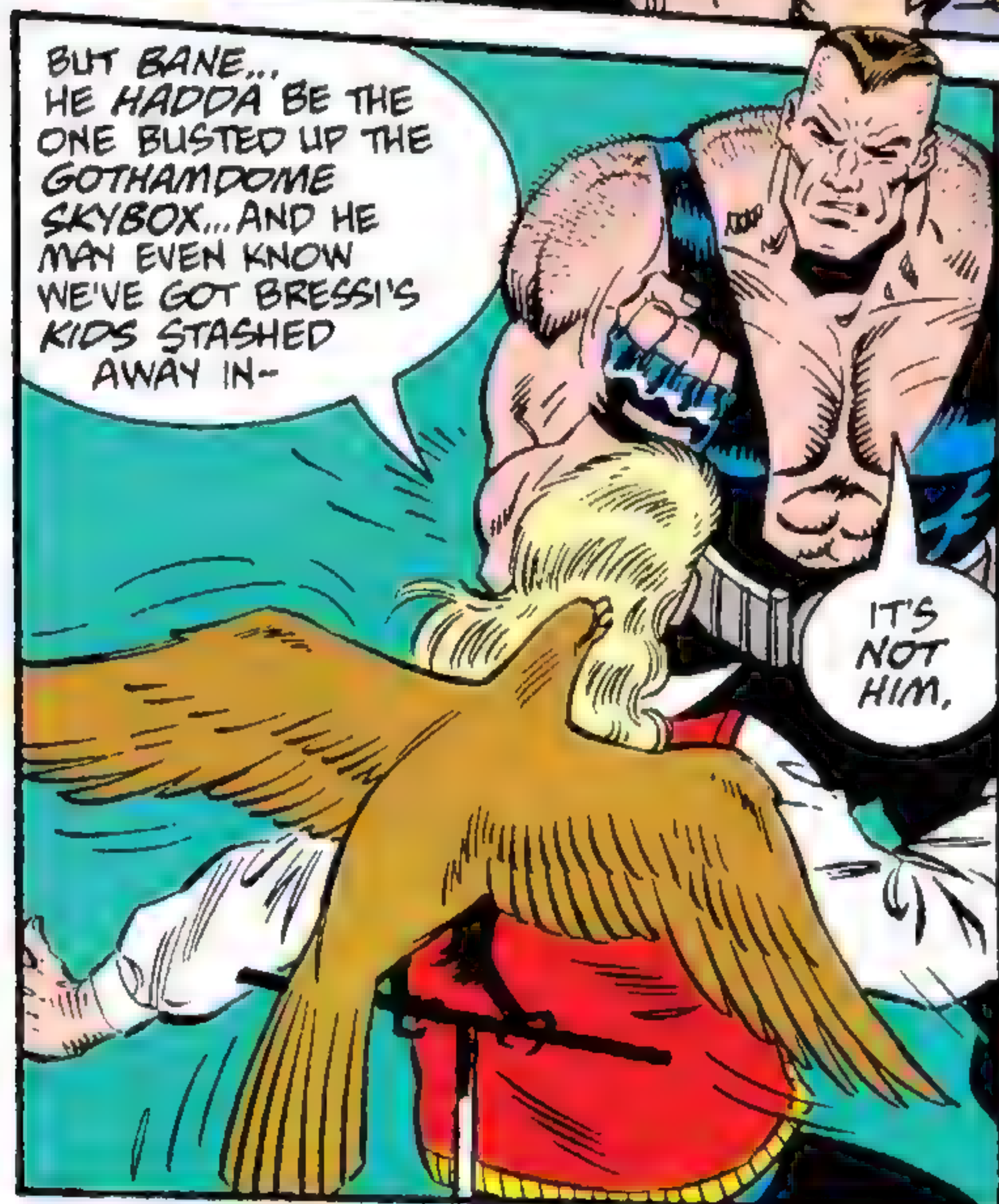
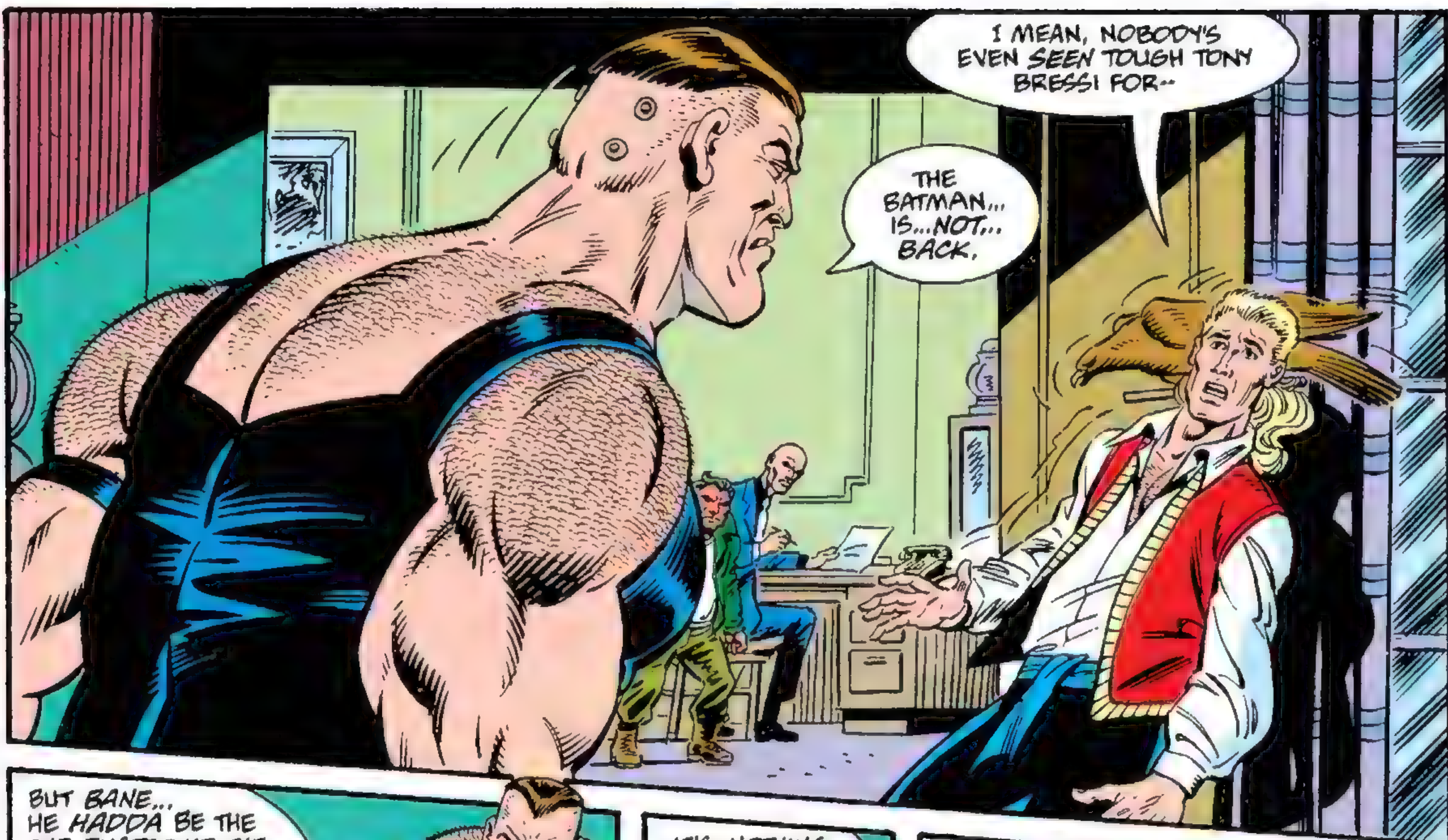
DOUG MOENCH--JIM APARO--SCOTT HANNA--ADRIENNE ROY--KEN BRUZENAK--JORDAN B. GORFINKEL--DENNIS O'NEIL--BOB KANE
writer artist inker colorist letterer vaccine creator editor Batman creator

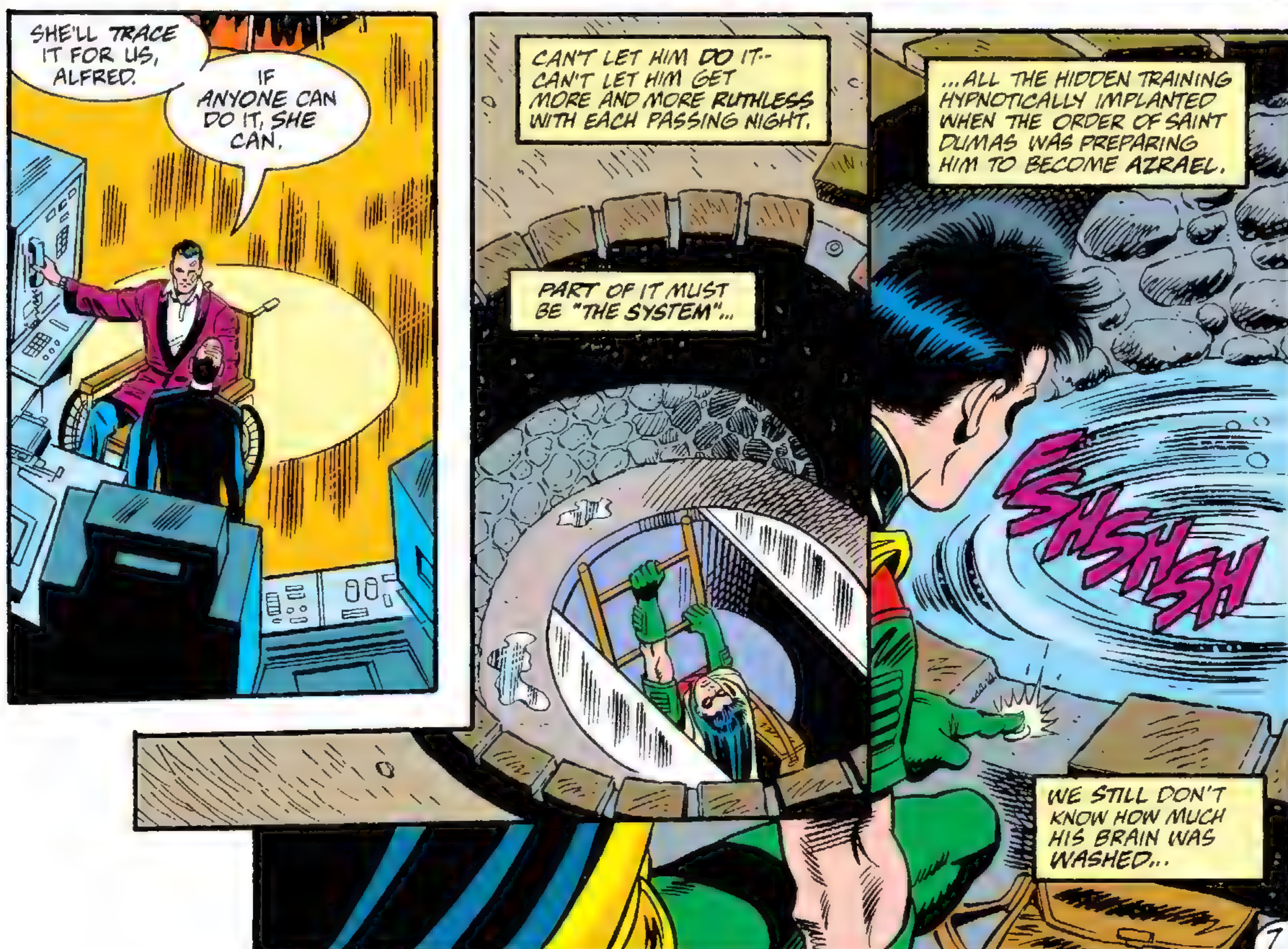
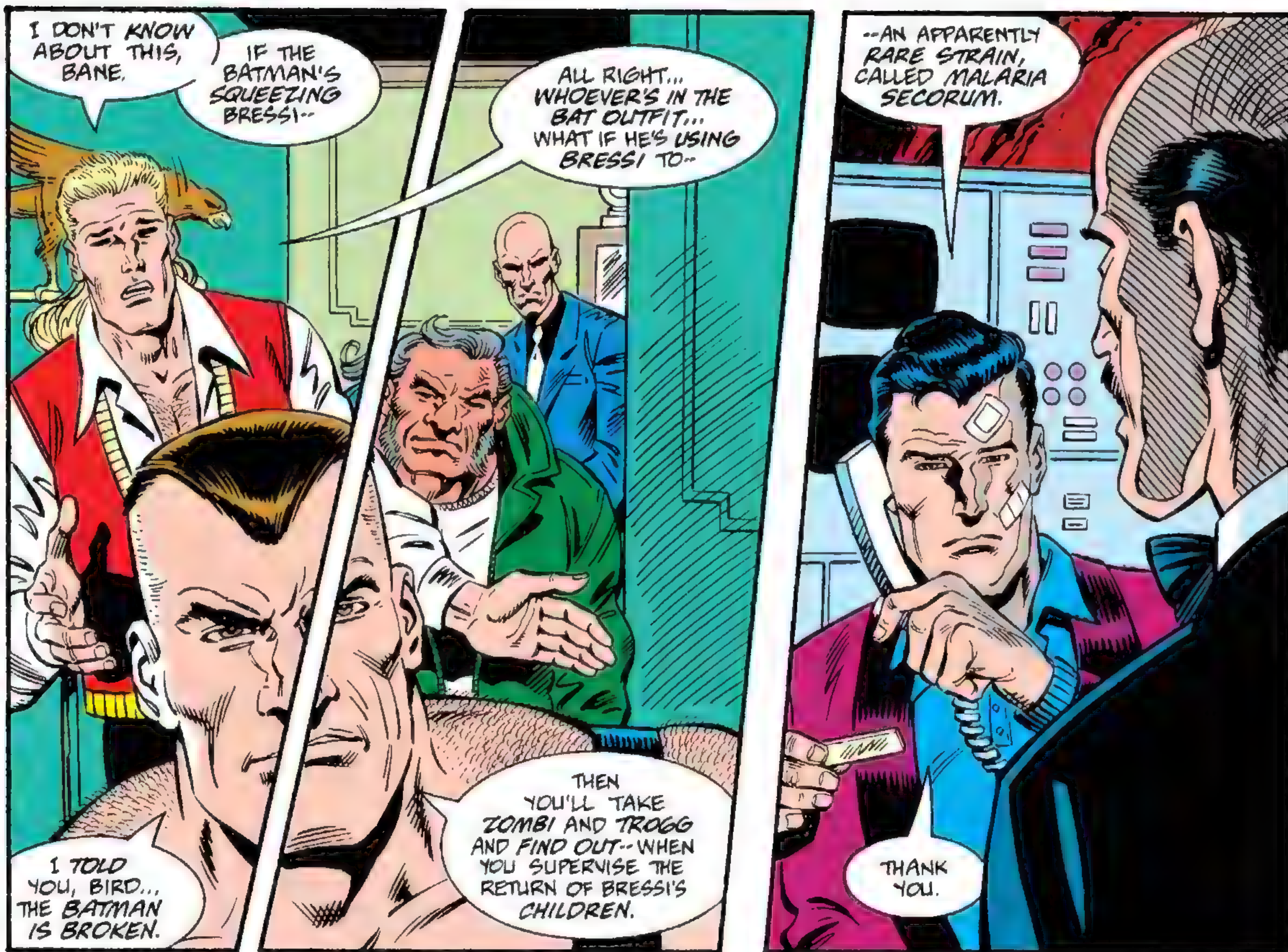


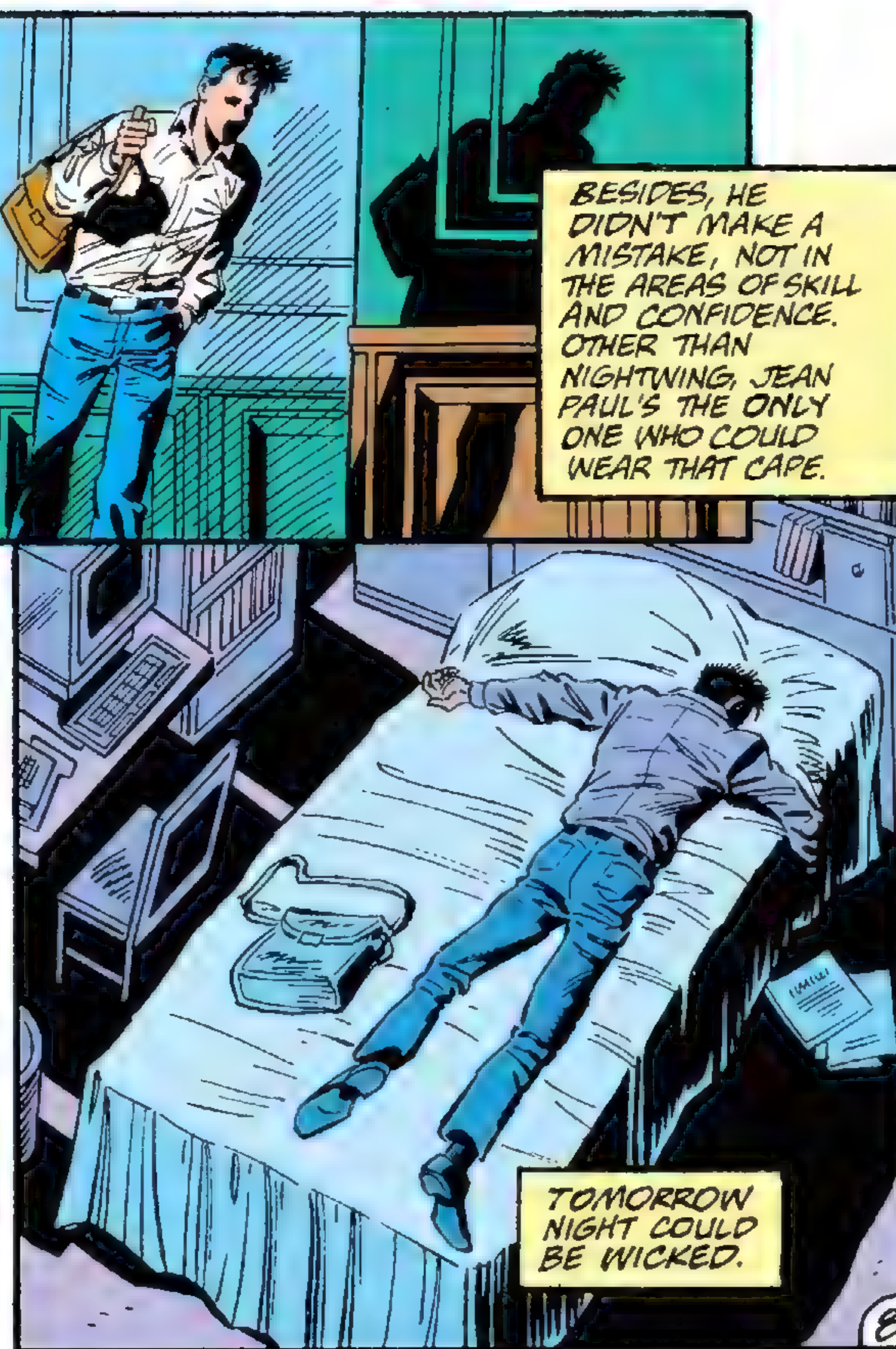
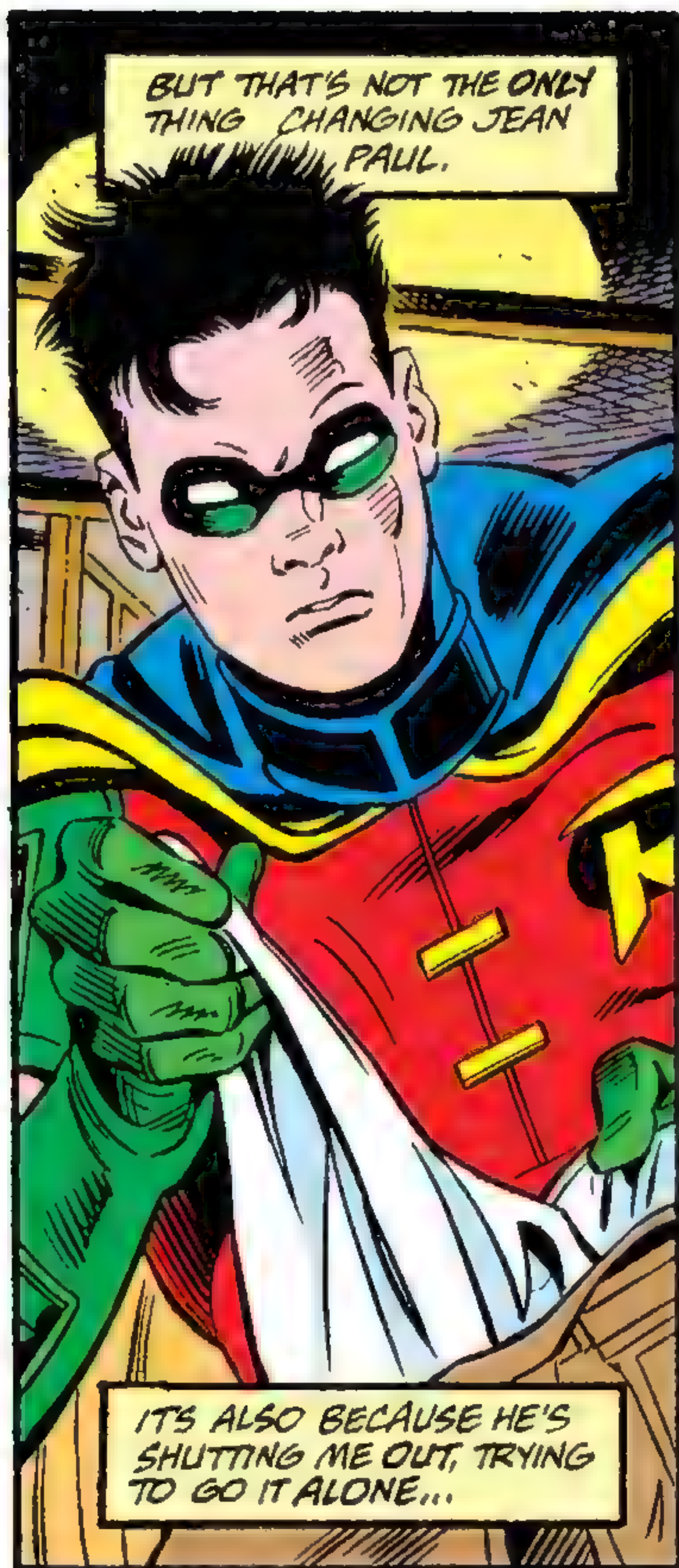


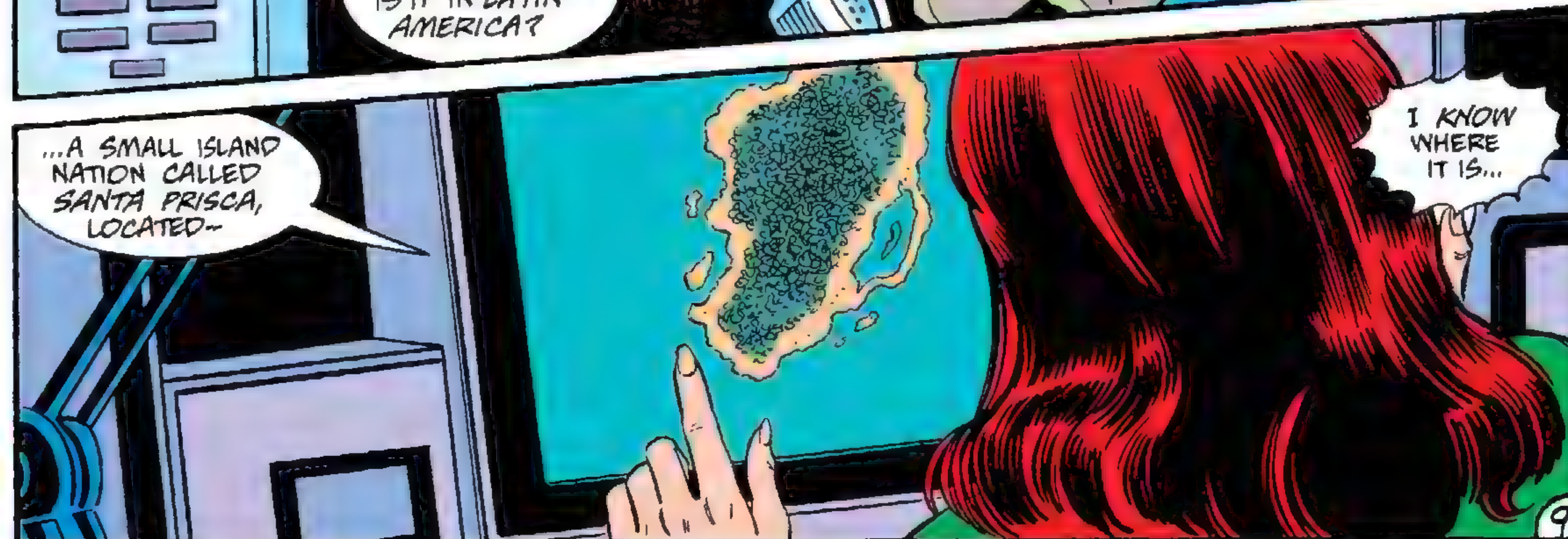
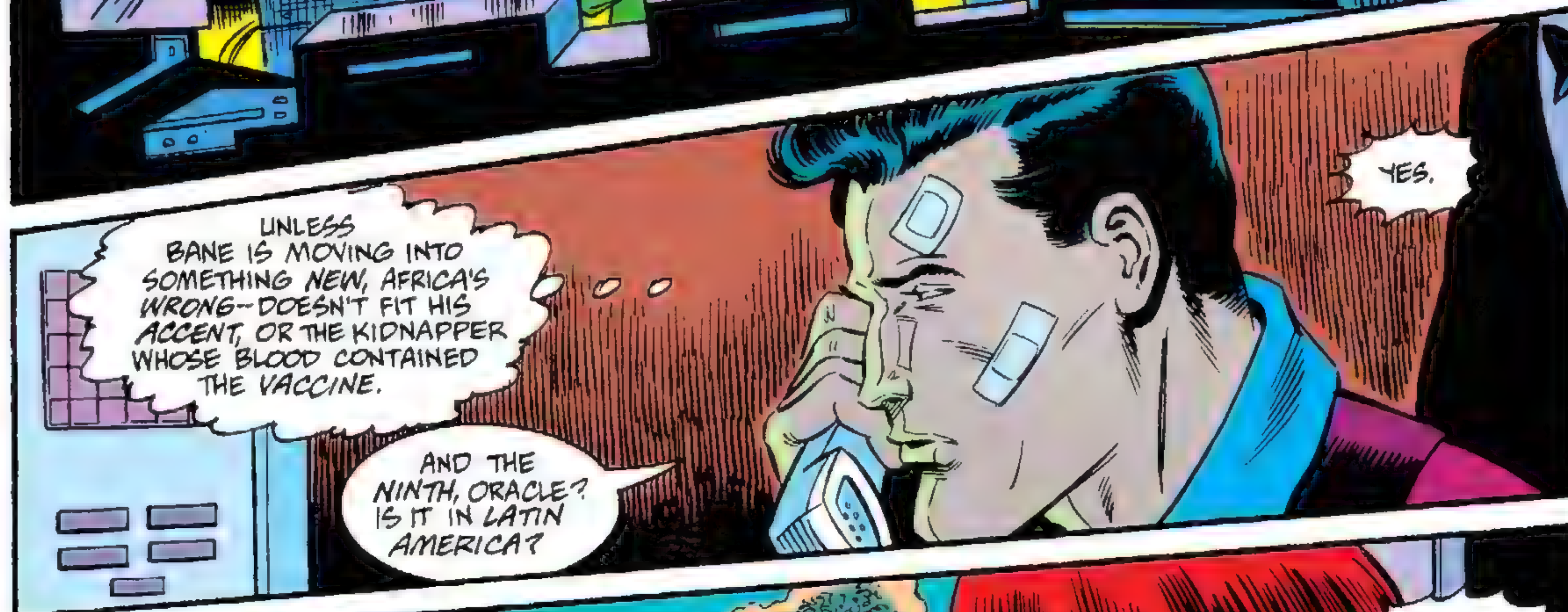


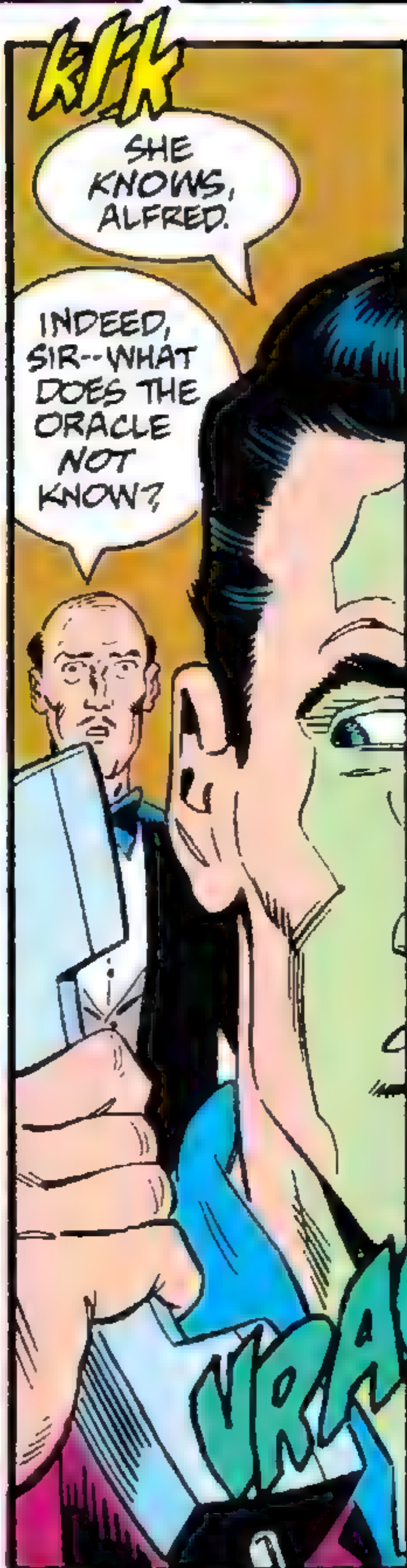


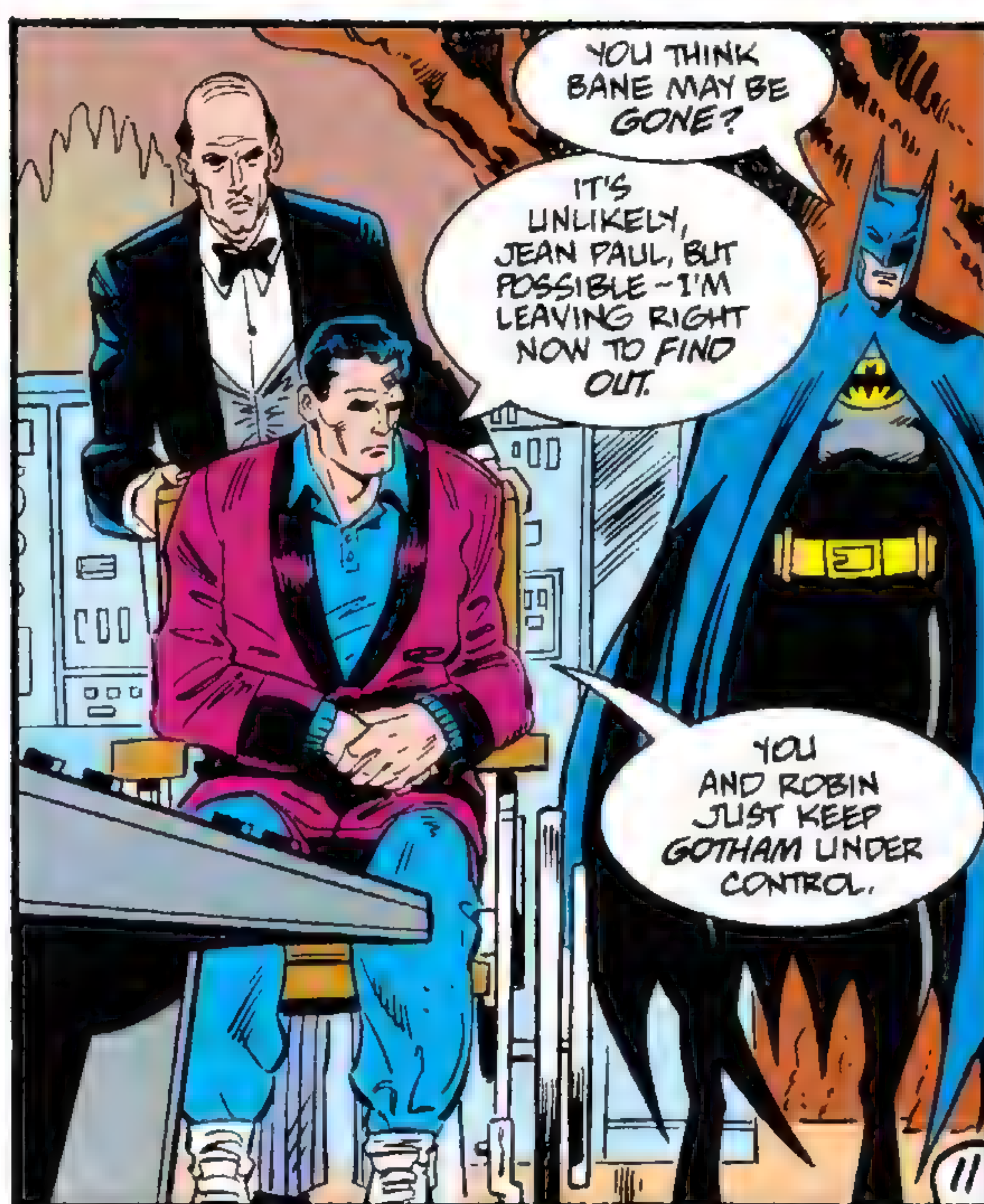
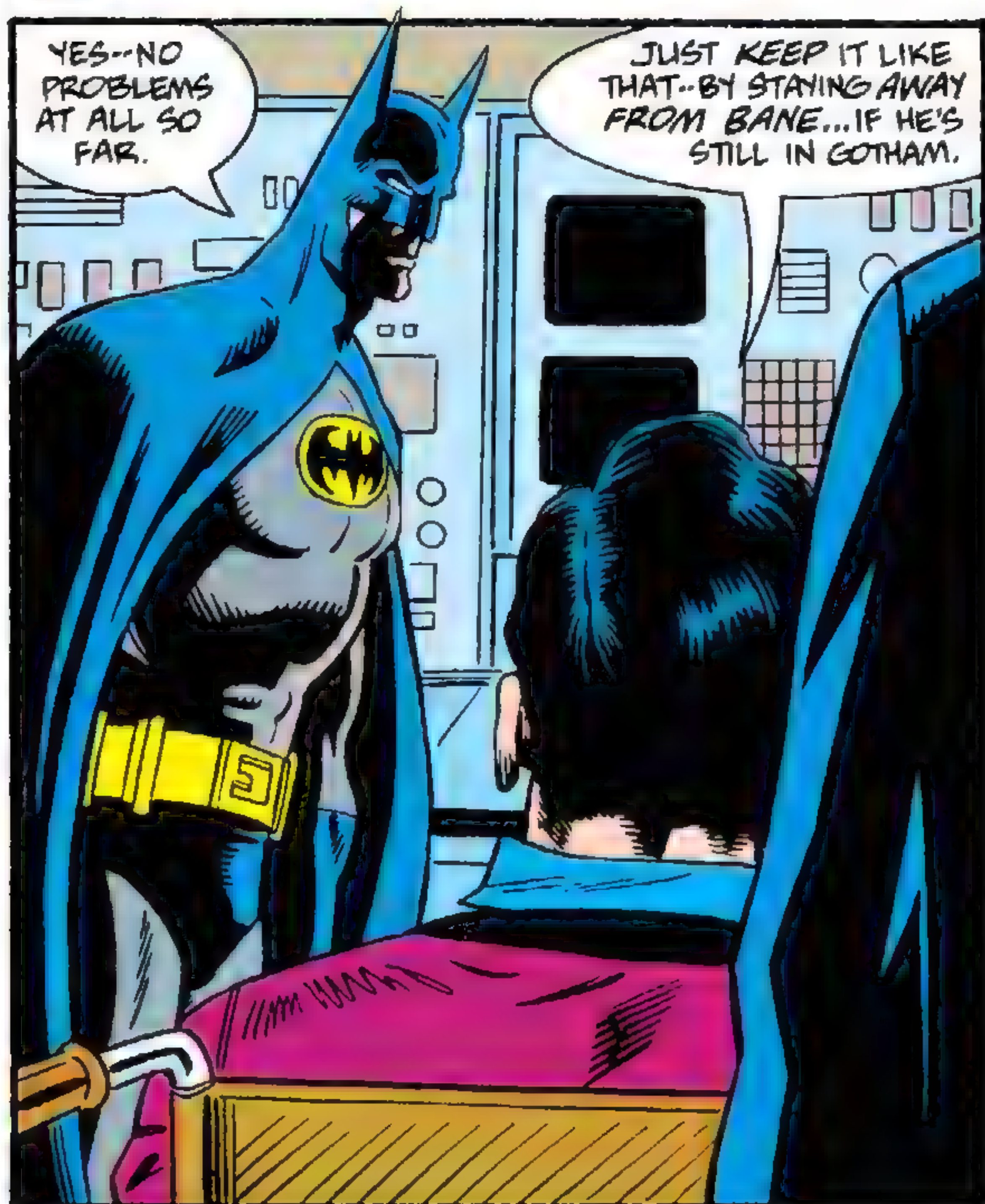
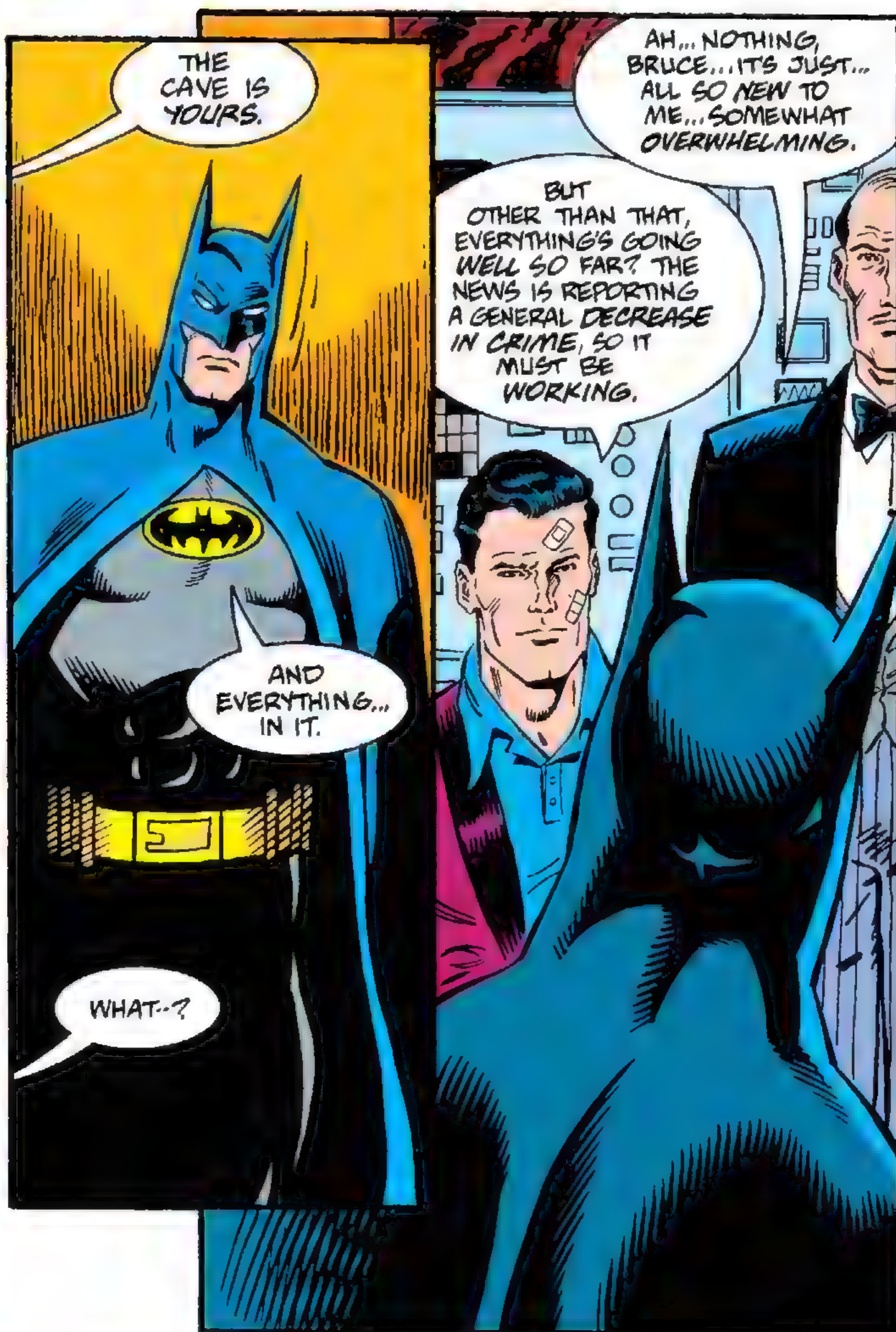


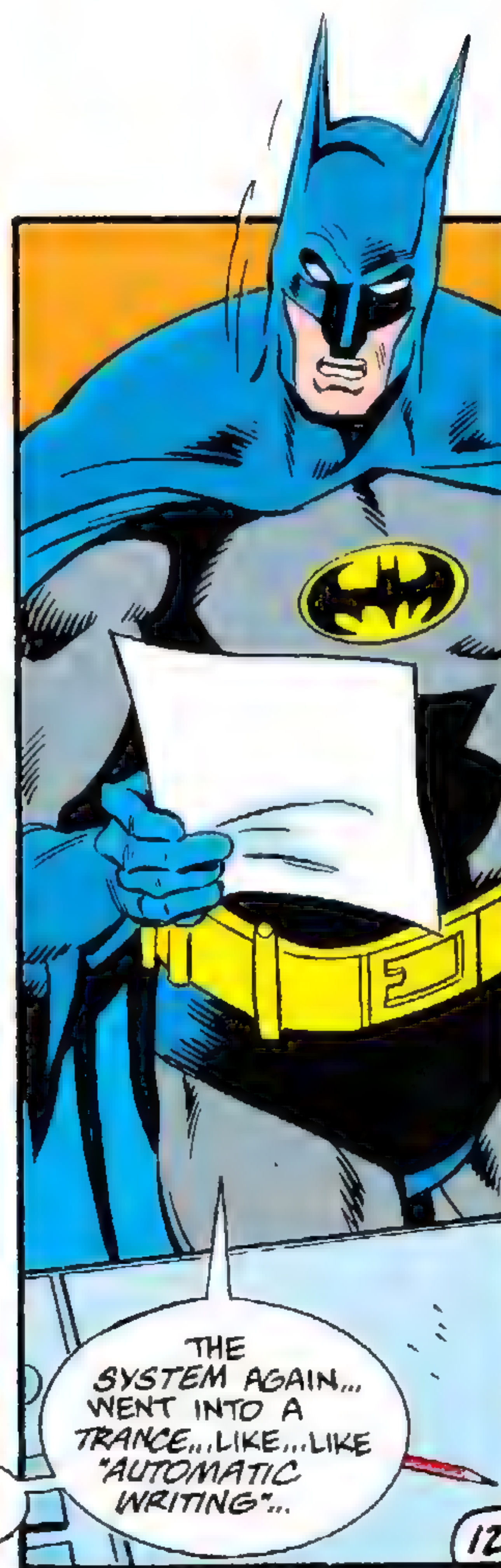
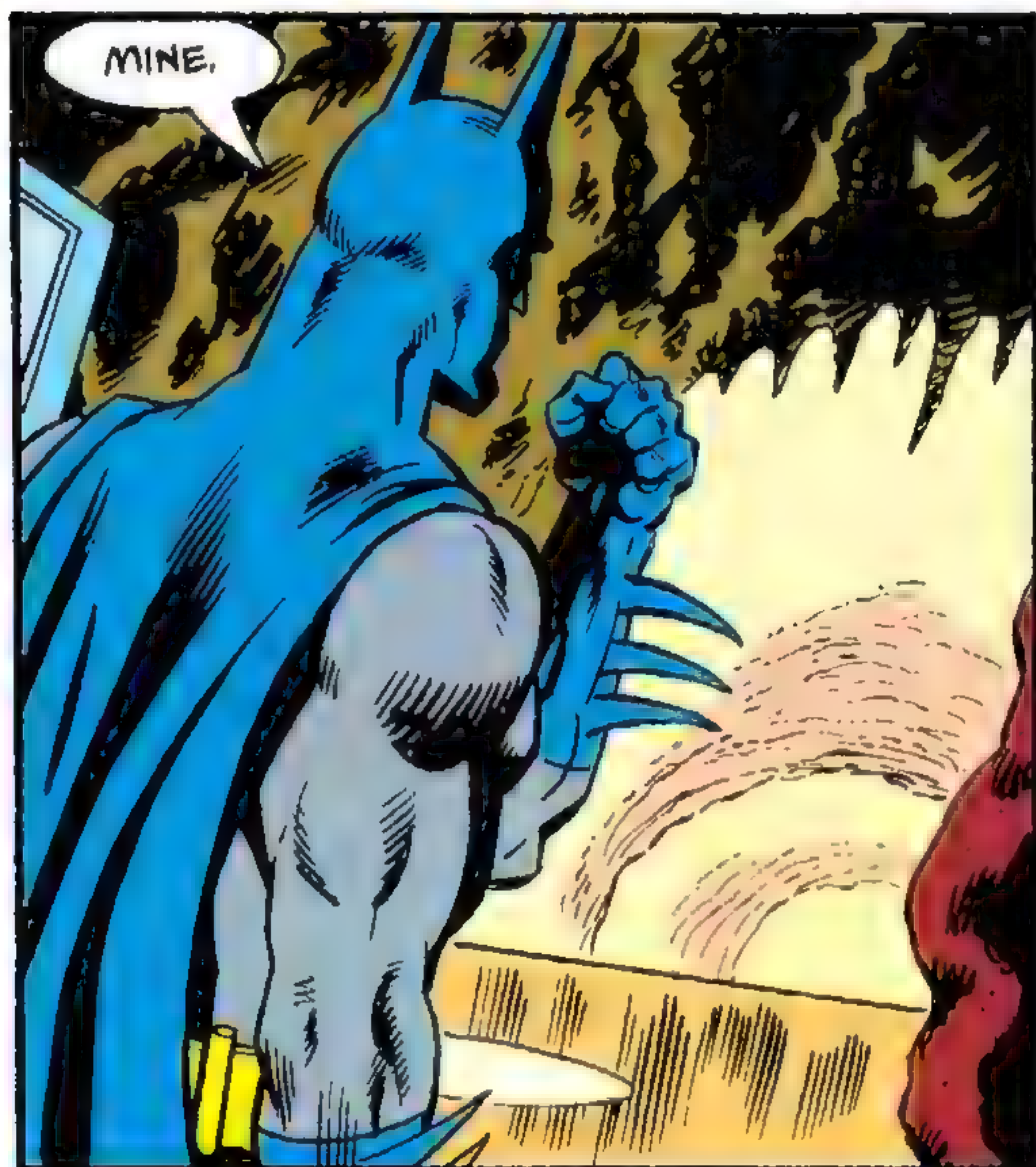
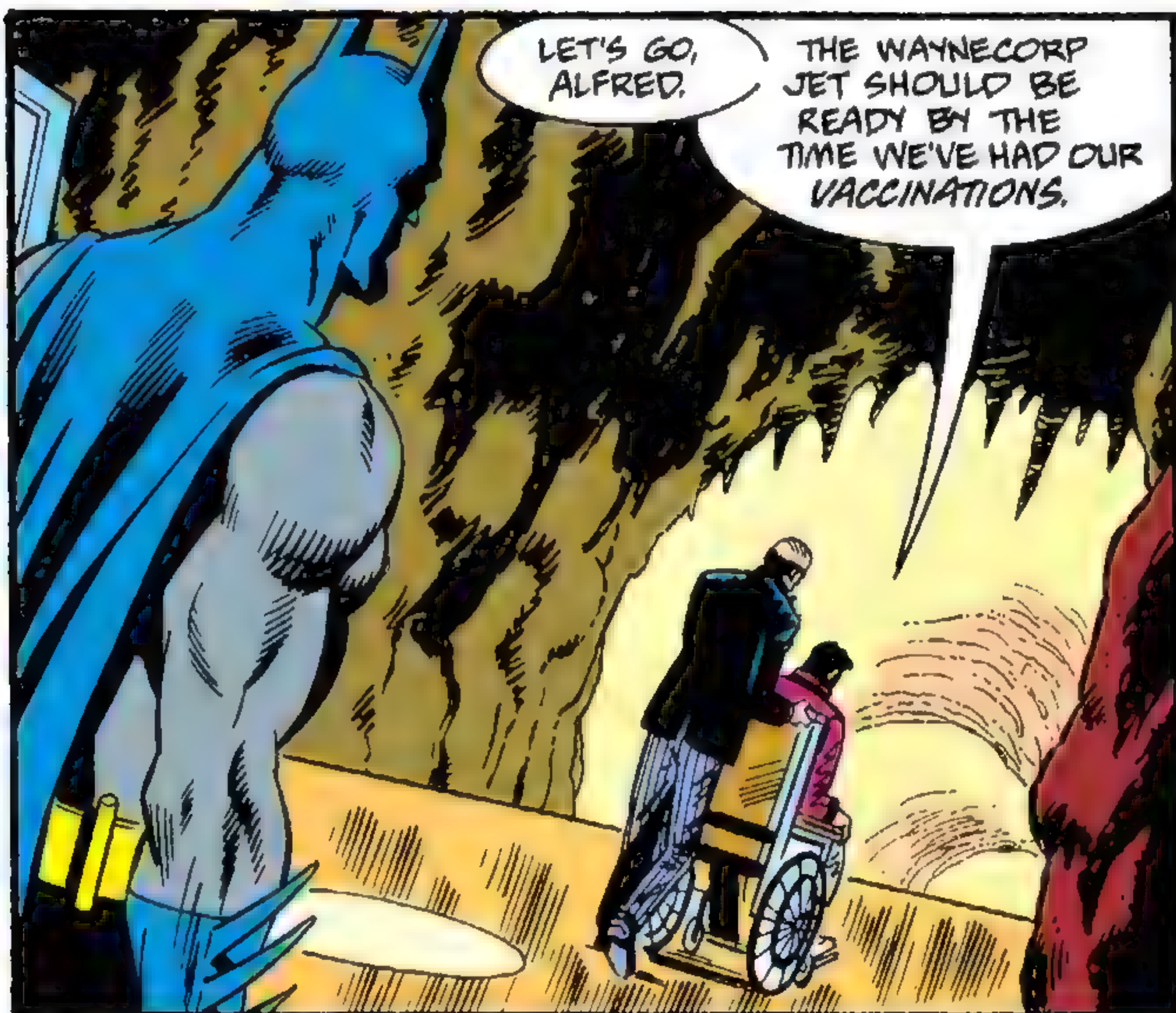


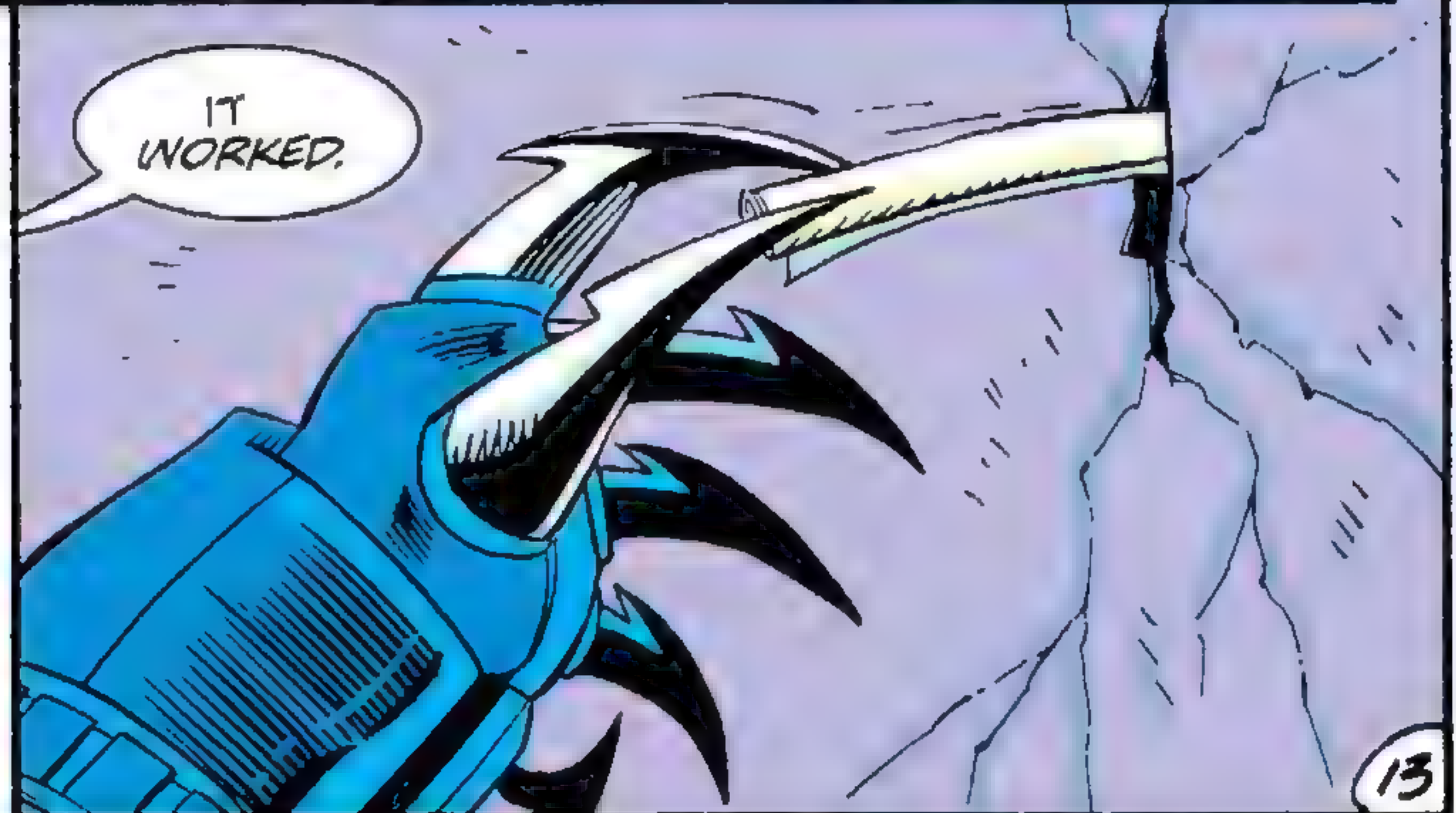
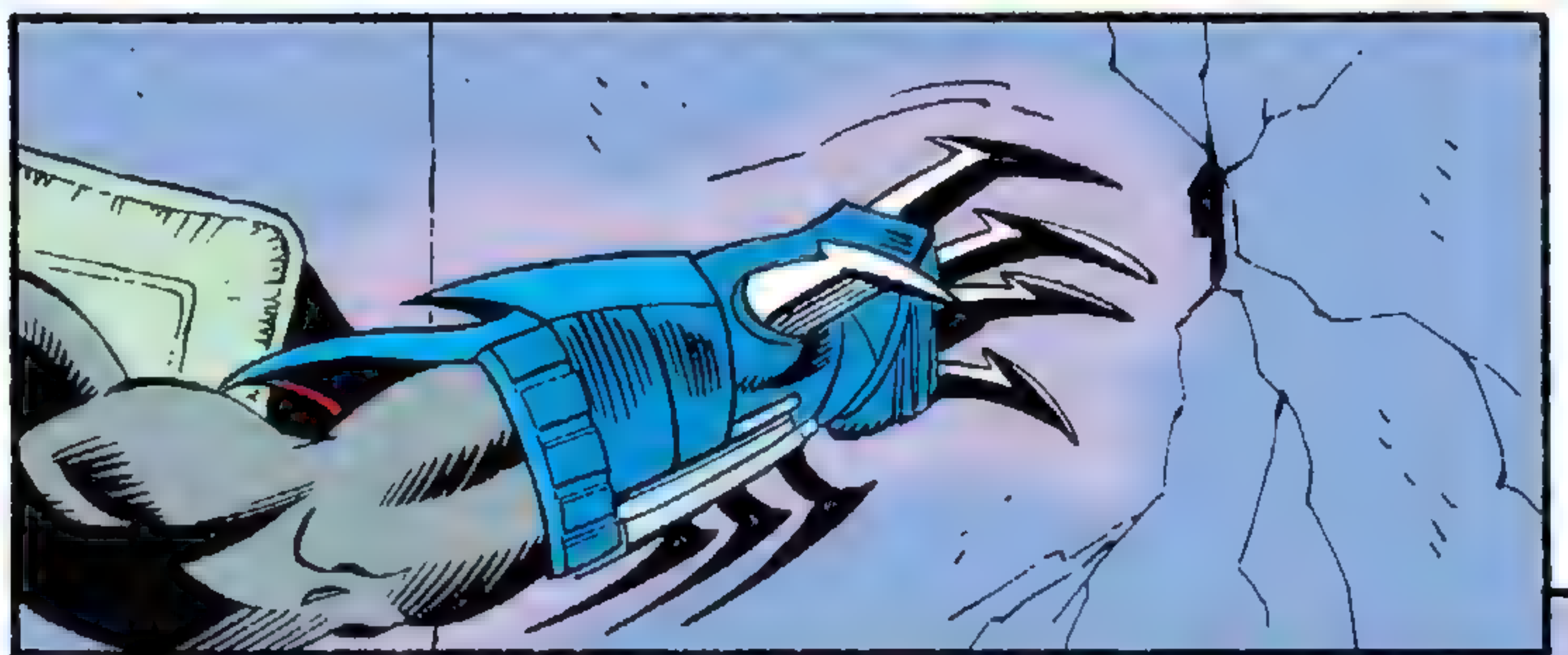
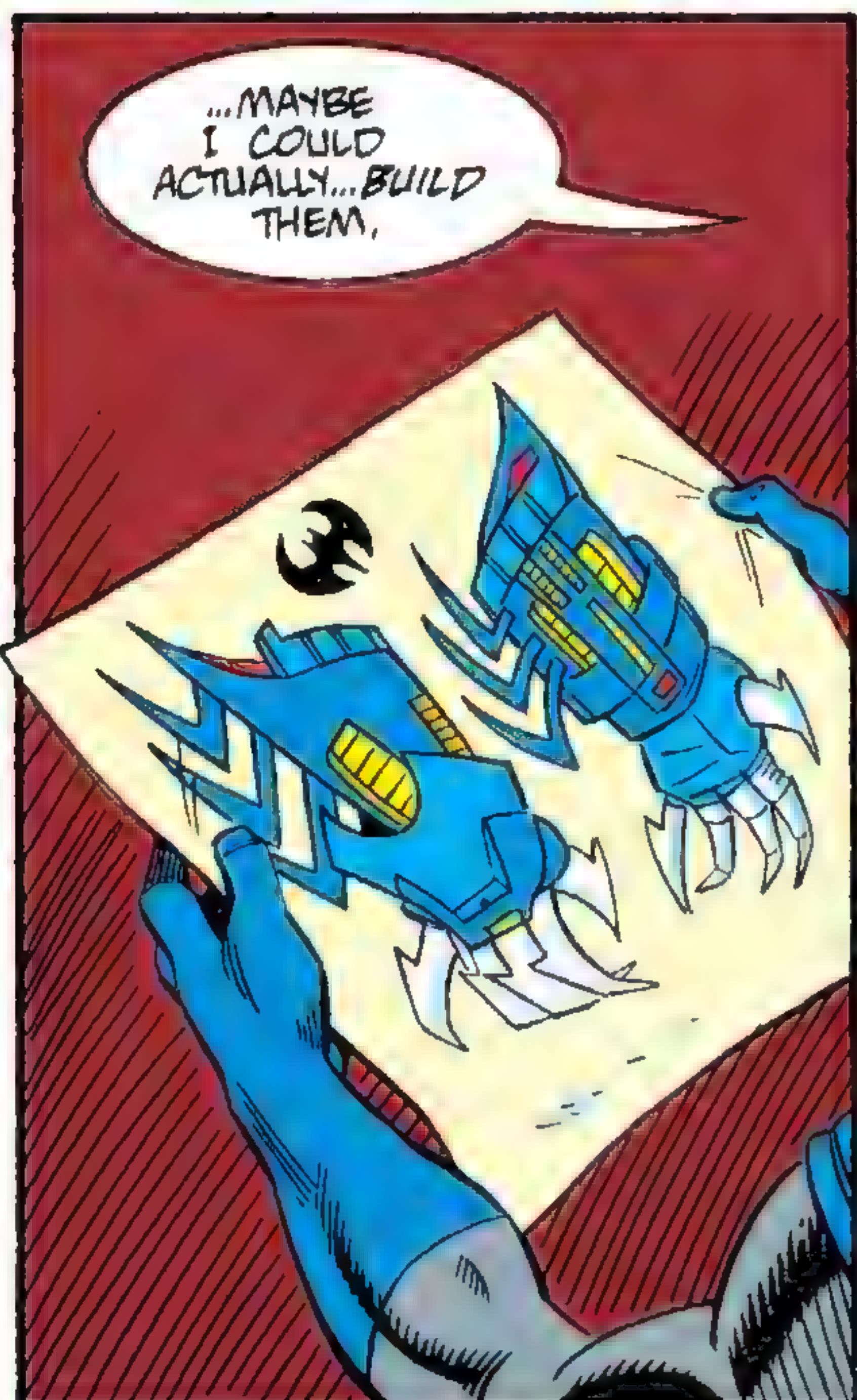
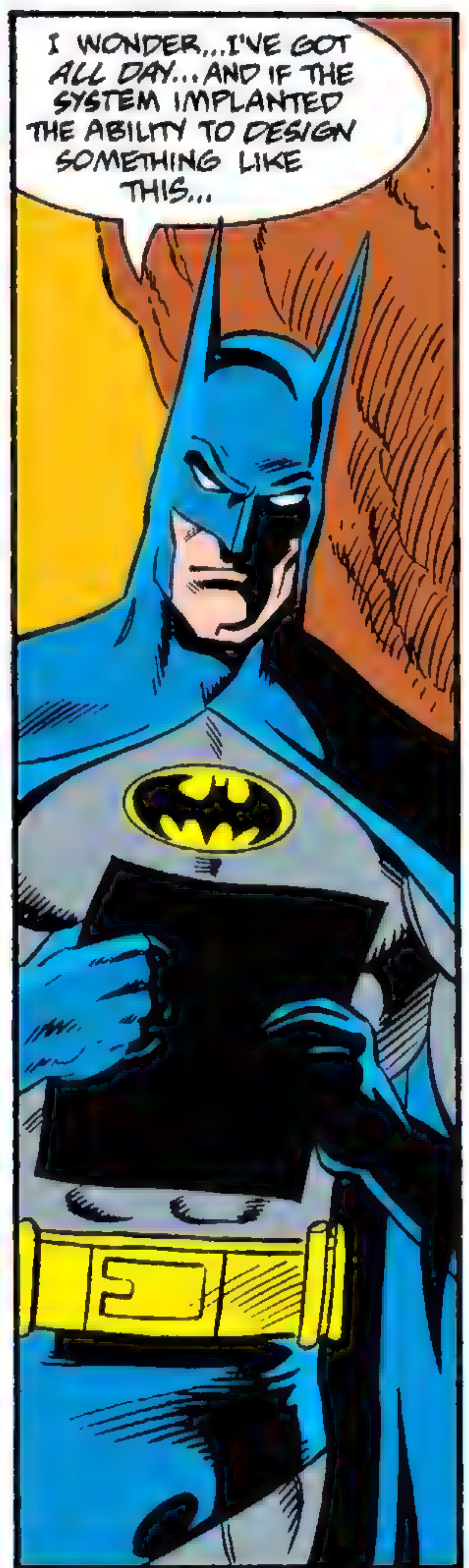
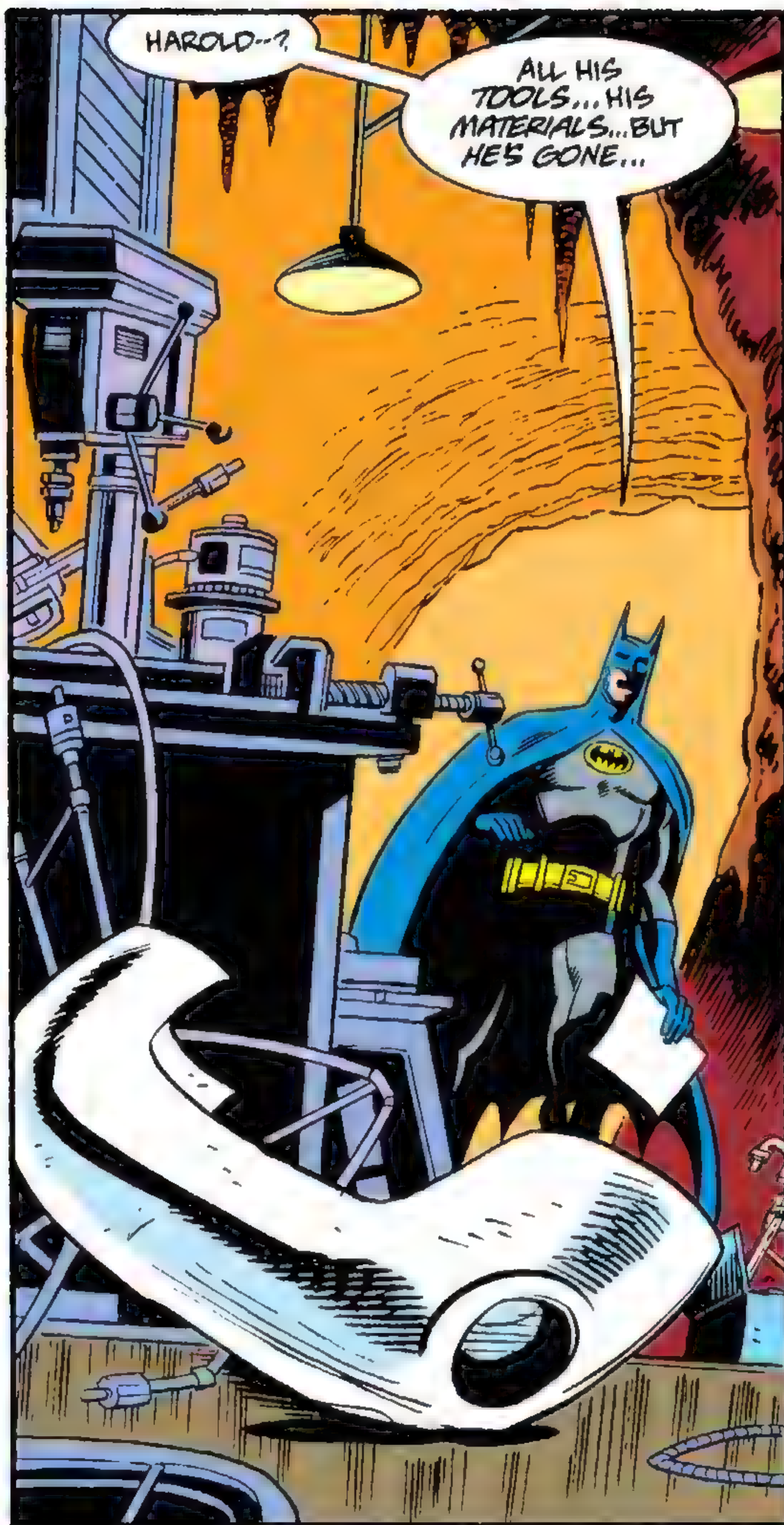
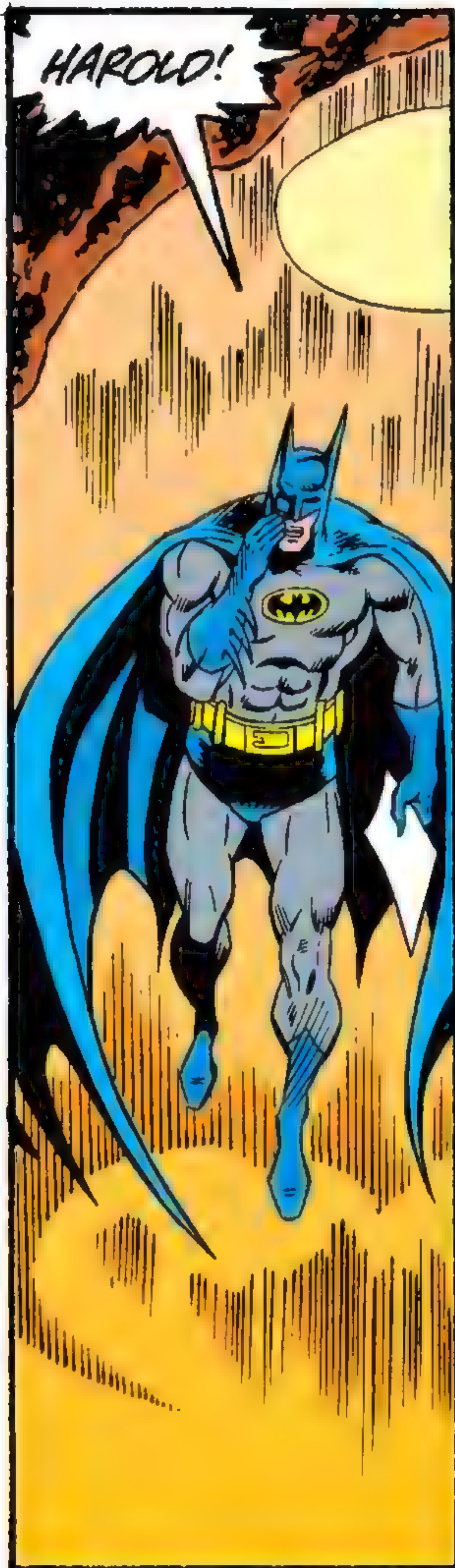


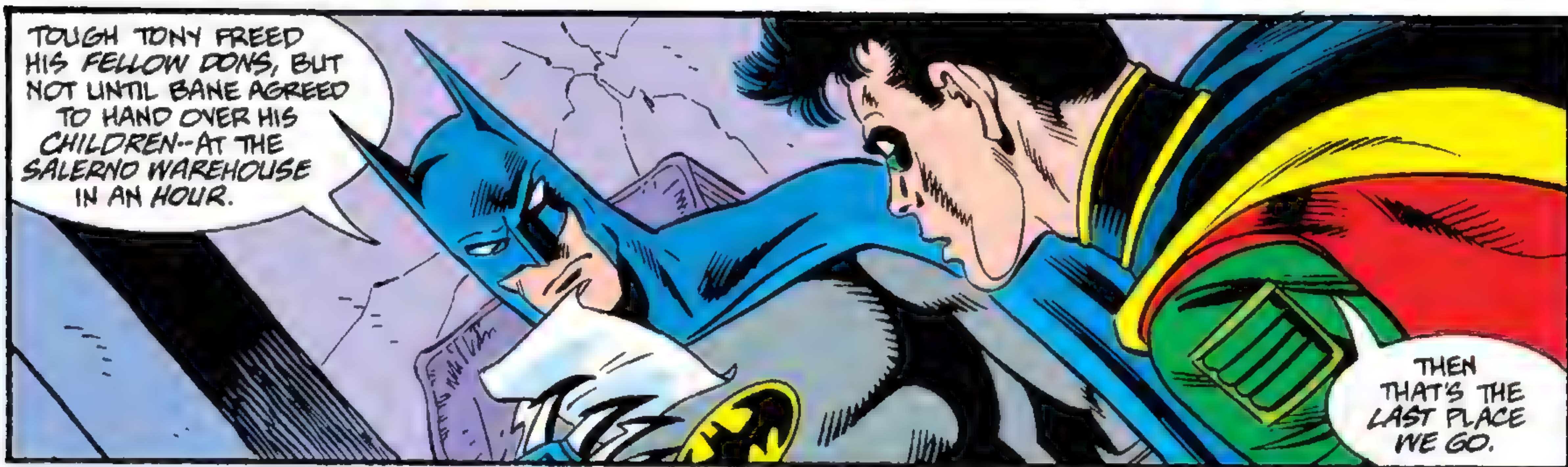






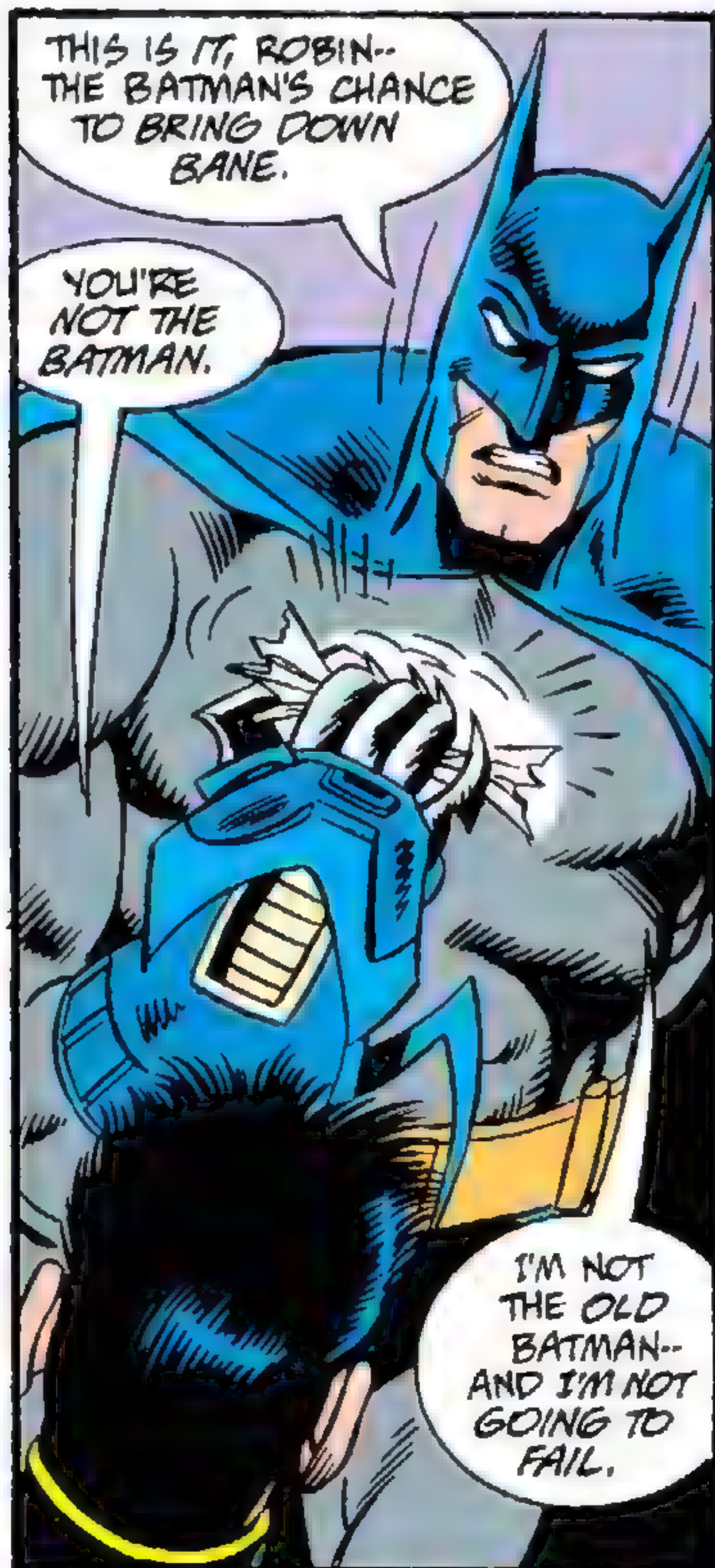






TOUGH TONY FREED HIS FELLOW DONS, BUT NOT UNTIL BANE AGREED TO HAND OVER HIS CHILDREN--AT THE SALERNO WAREHOUSE IN AN HOUR.

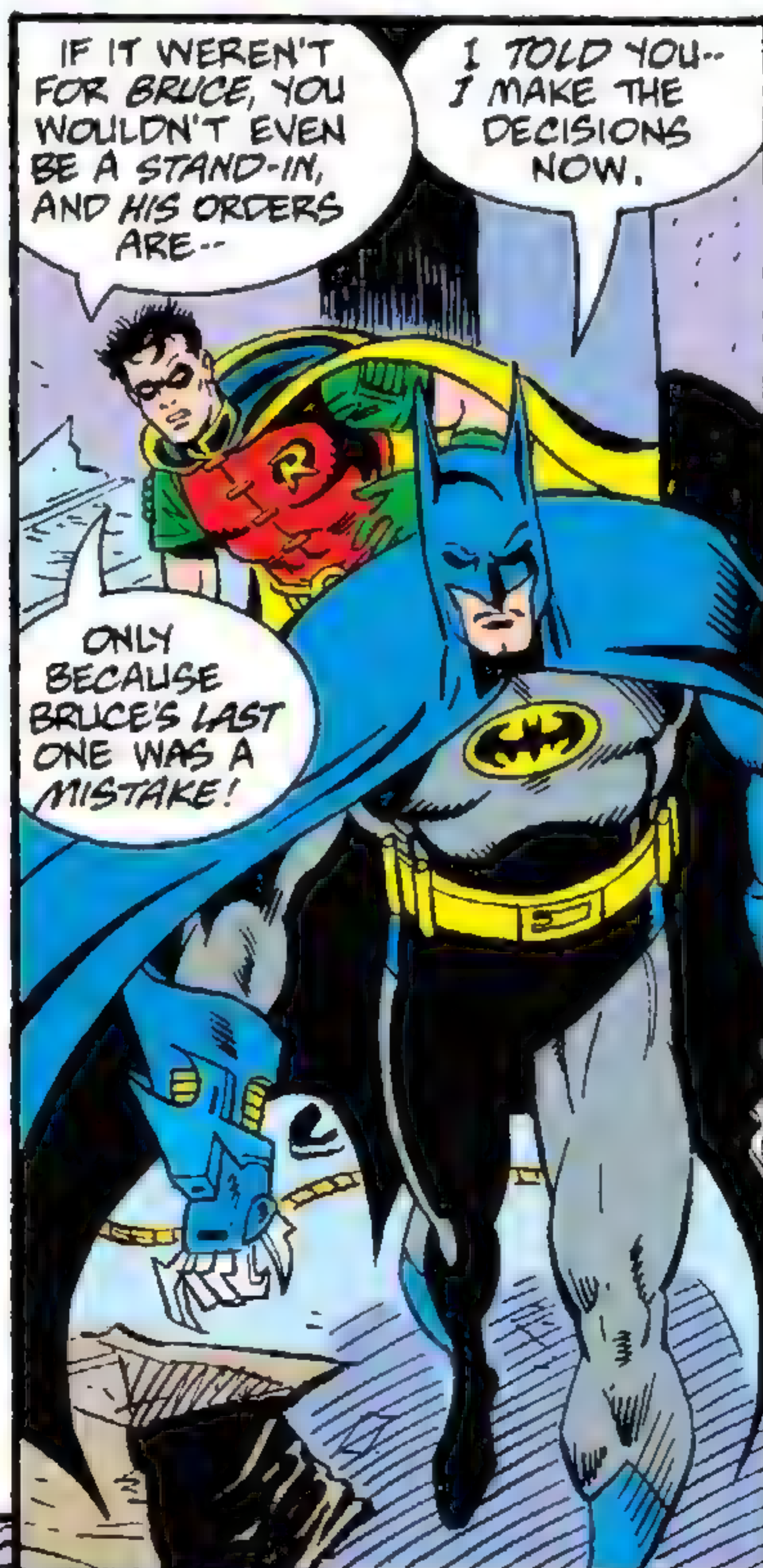
THEN THAT'S THE LAST PLACE WE GO.



THIS IS IT, ROBIN--THE BATMAN'S CHANCE TO BRING DOWN BANE.

YOU'RE NOT THE BATMAN.

I'M NOT THE OLD BATMAN--AND I'M NOT GOING TO FAIL.



IF IT WEREN'T FOR BRUCE, YOU WOULDN'T EVEN BE A STAND-IN, AND HIS ORDERS ARE--

I TOLD YOU--I MAKE THE DECISIONS NOW.

ONLY BECAUSE BRUCE'S LAST ONE WAS A MISTAKE!



YOU THINK YOU CAN BATTER AND SMASH YOUR WAY TO THE GOAL--JUST LIKE THE ONES WE'RE SWORN TO STOP!

AND WHY NOT? FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE IS--

A SURE WAY TO CREATE HELL!



WE'RE SUPPOSED TO PUT THE FIRES OUT--NOT ADD TO THEM!

I'M PUTTING THUGS AND MONSTERS OUT!

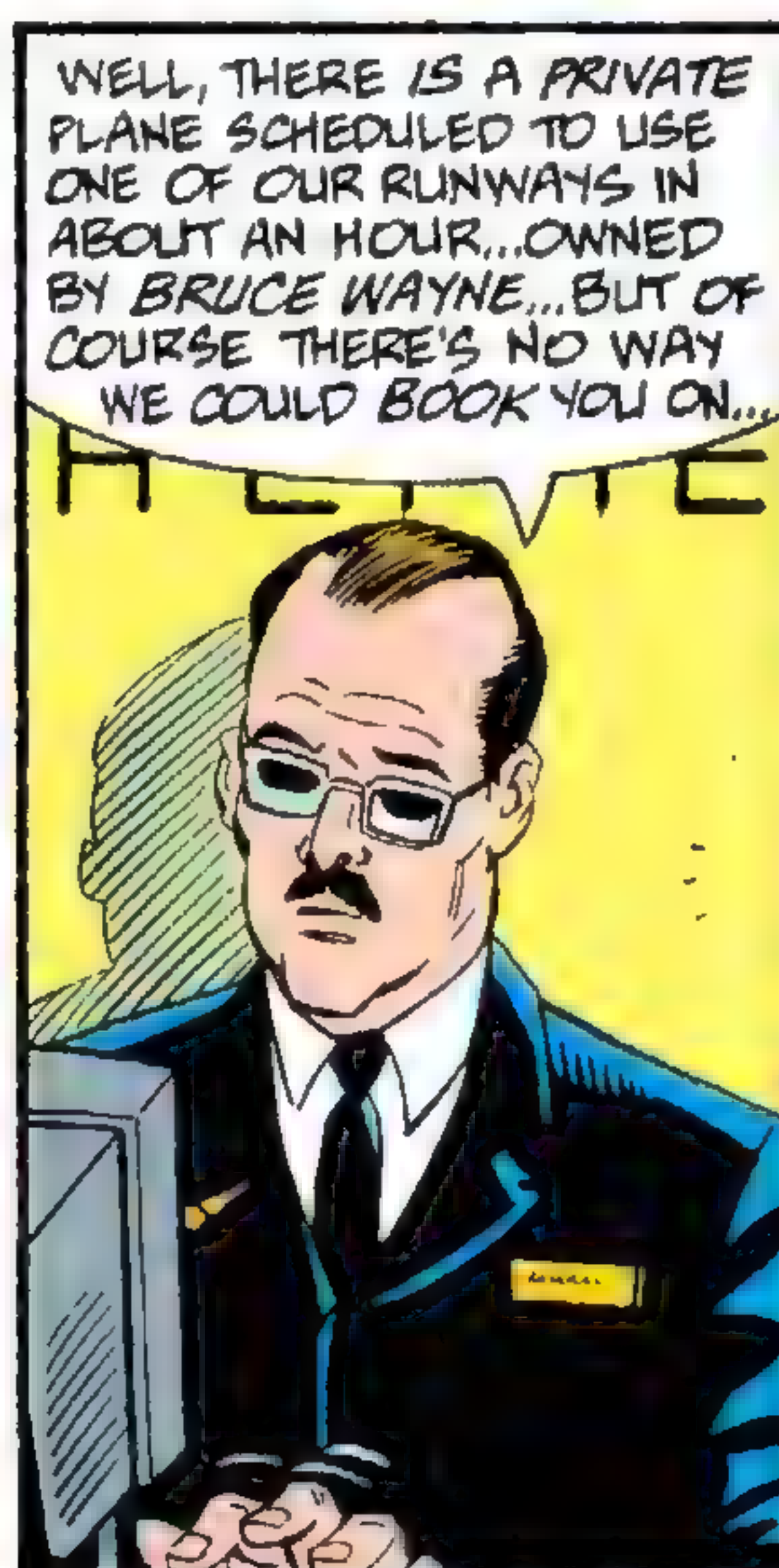
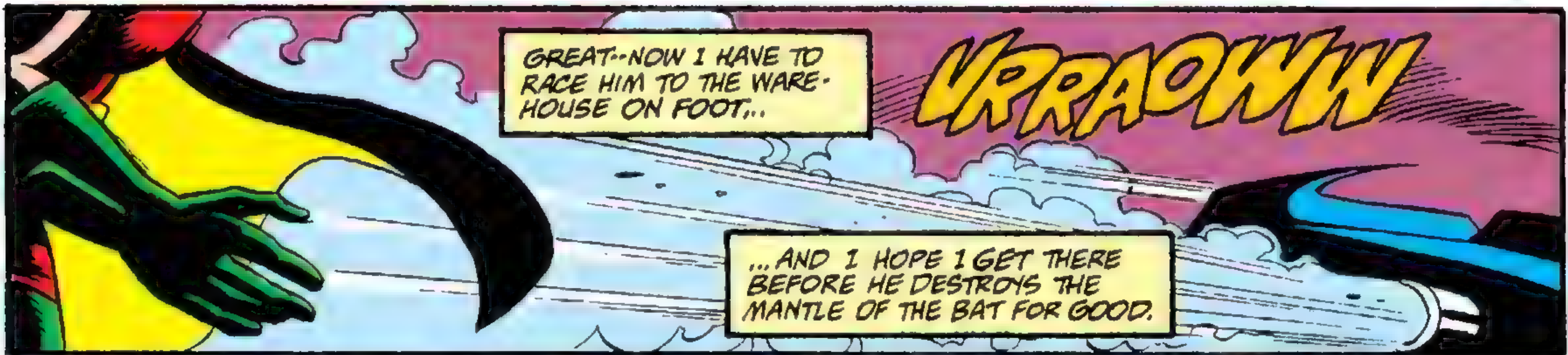
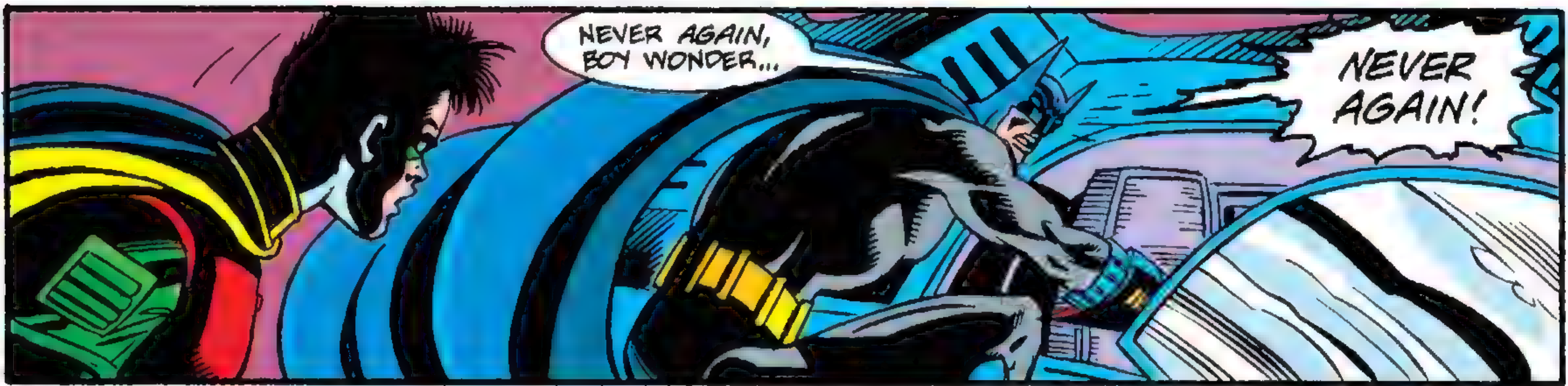
IT'S THE WRONG WAY TO DO IT! AND MAYBE YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO DO IT THE RIGHT WAY!



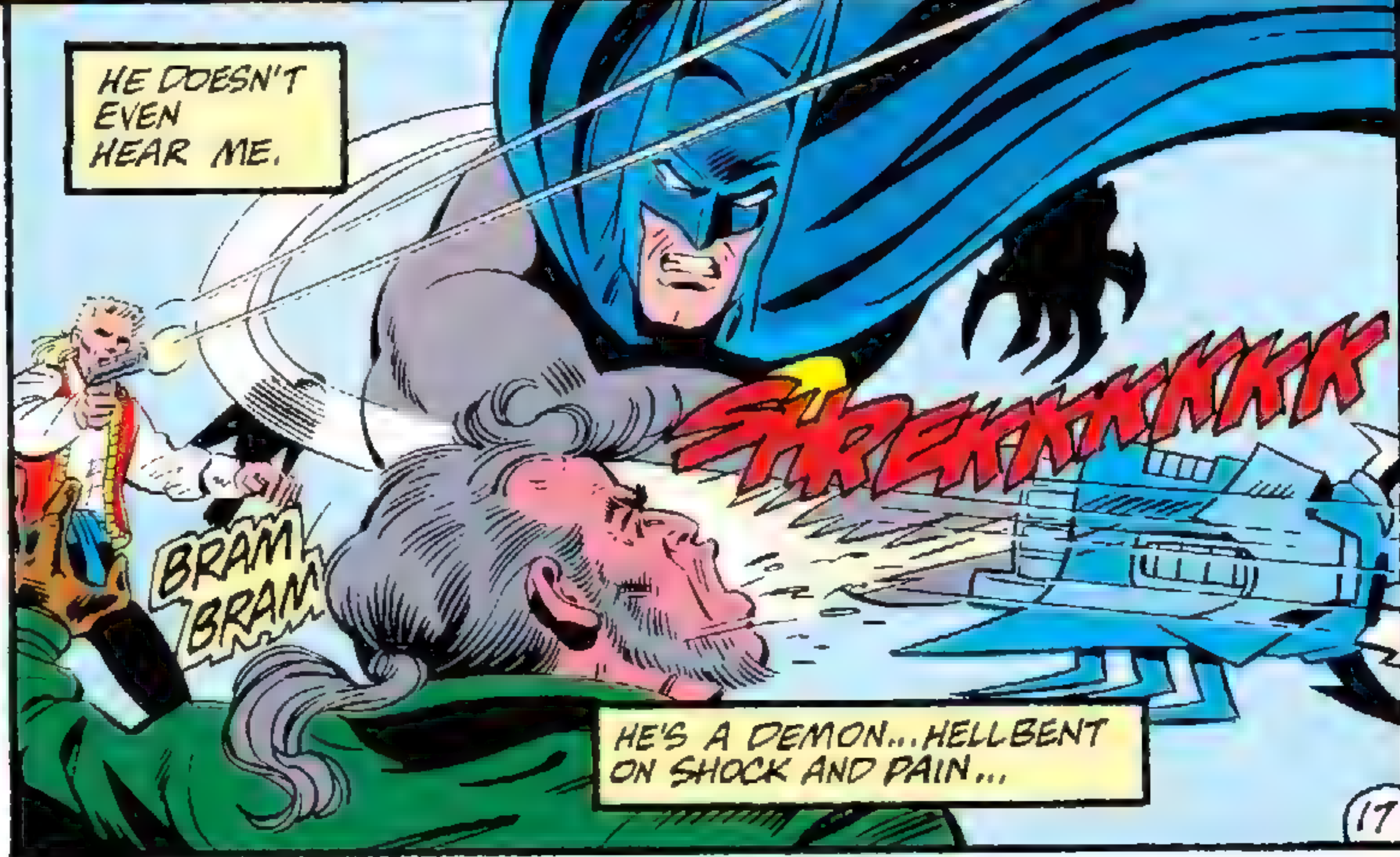
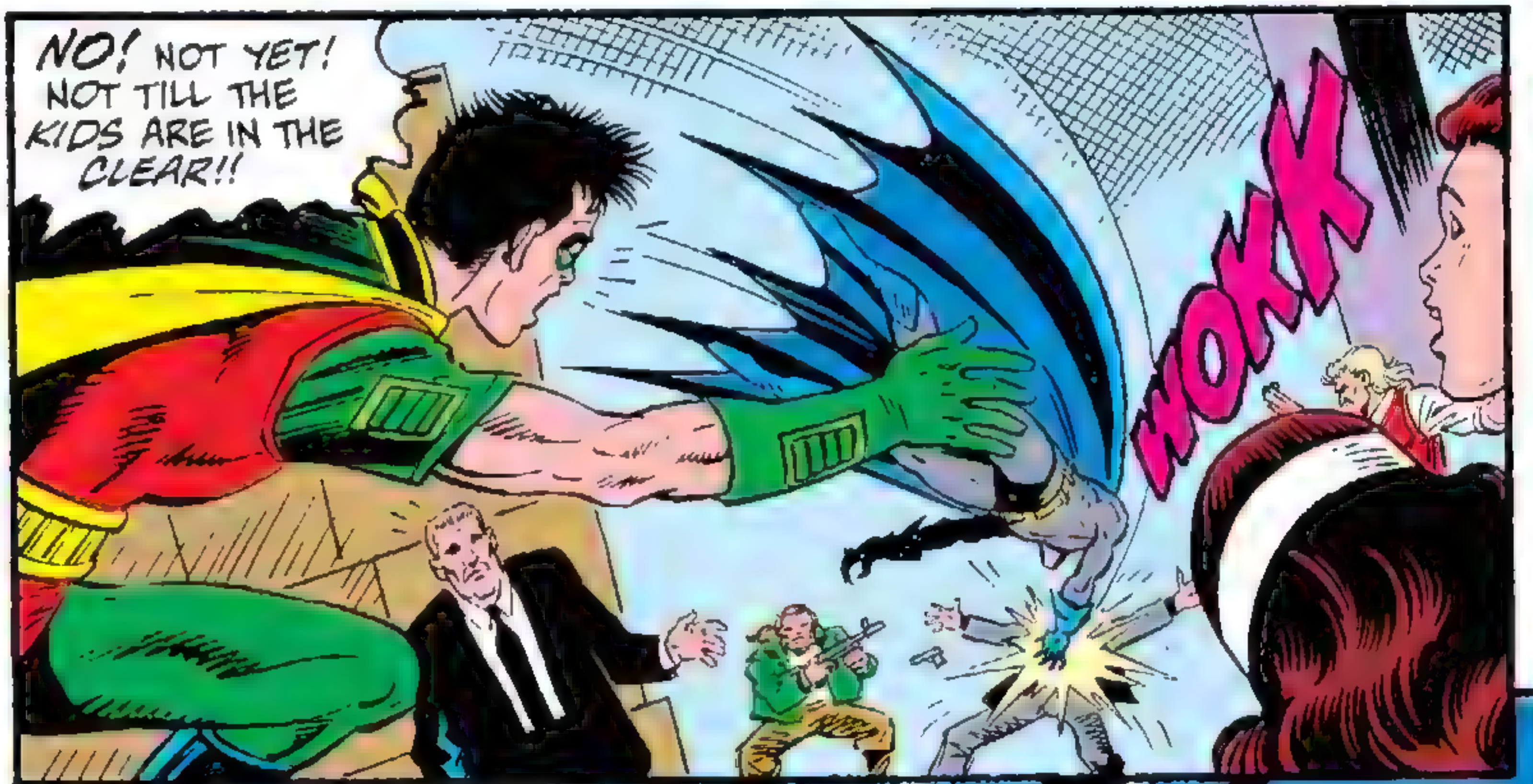
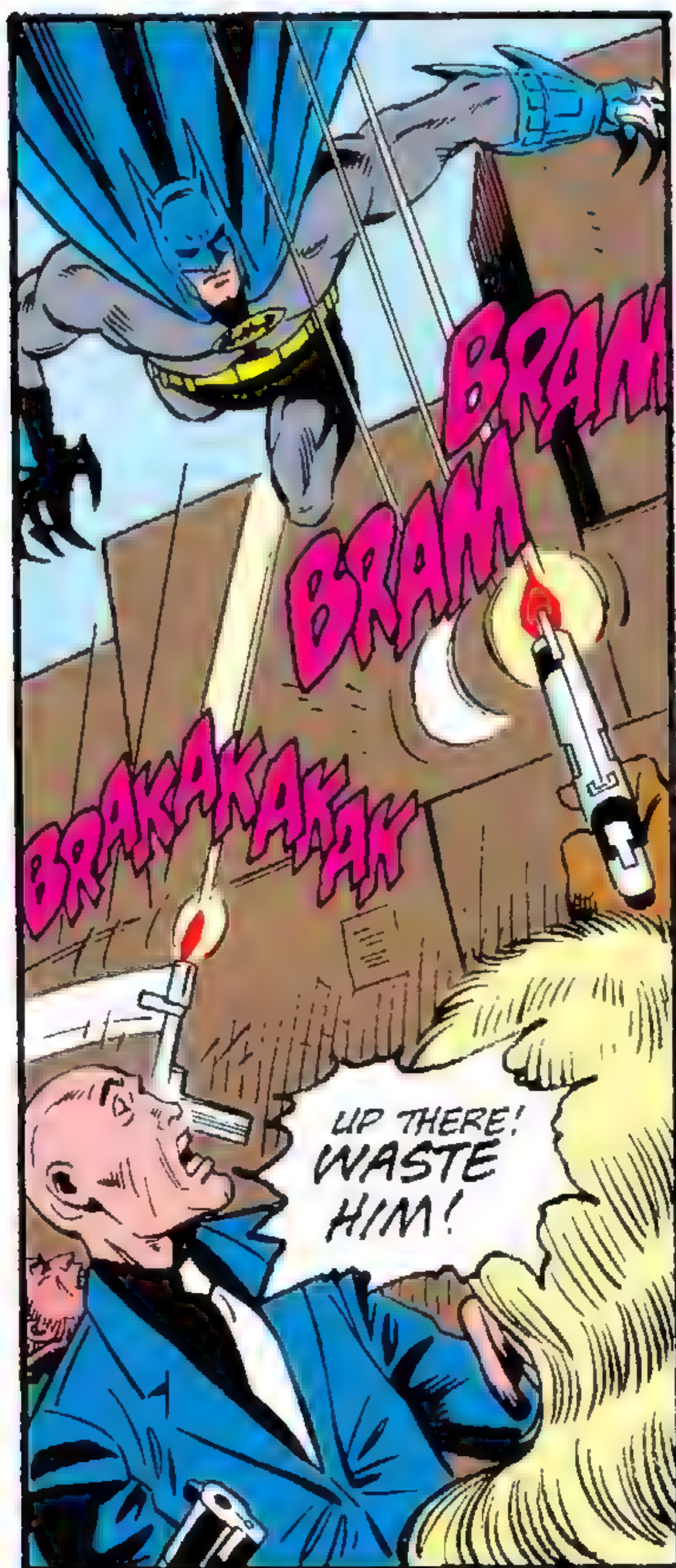
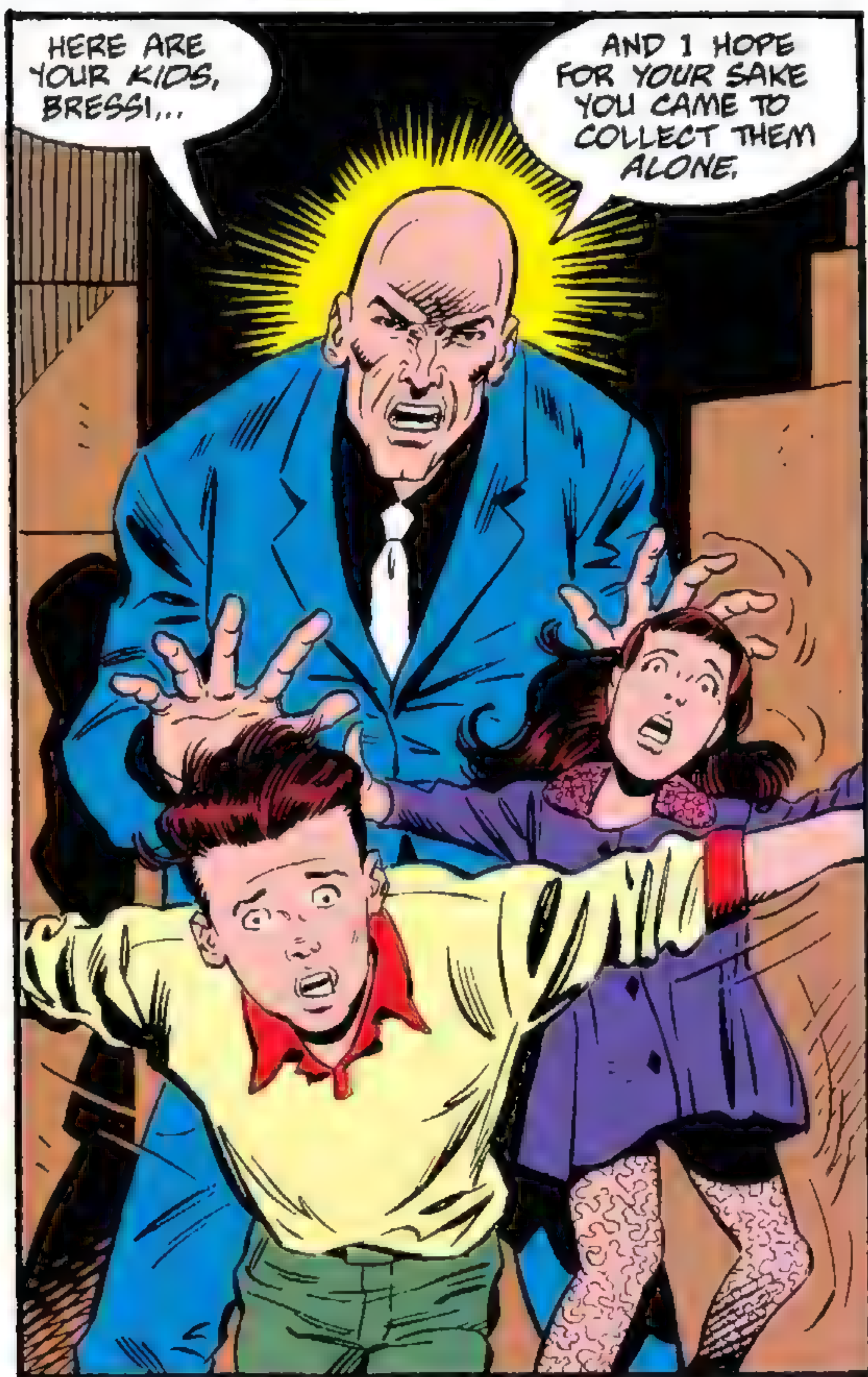
NOT GOOD ENOUGH? BECAUSE KILLER CROC HURT ME BACK IN THE BEGINNING?

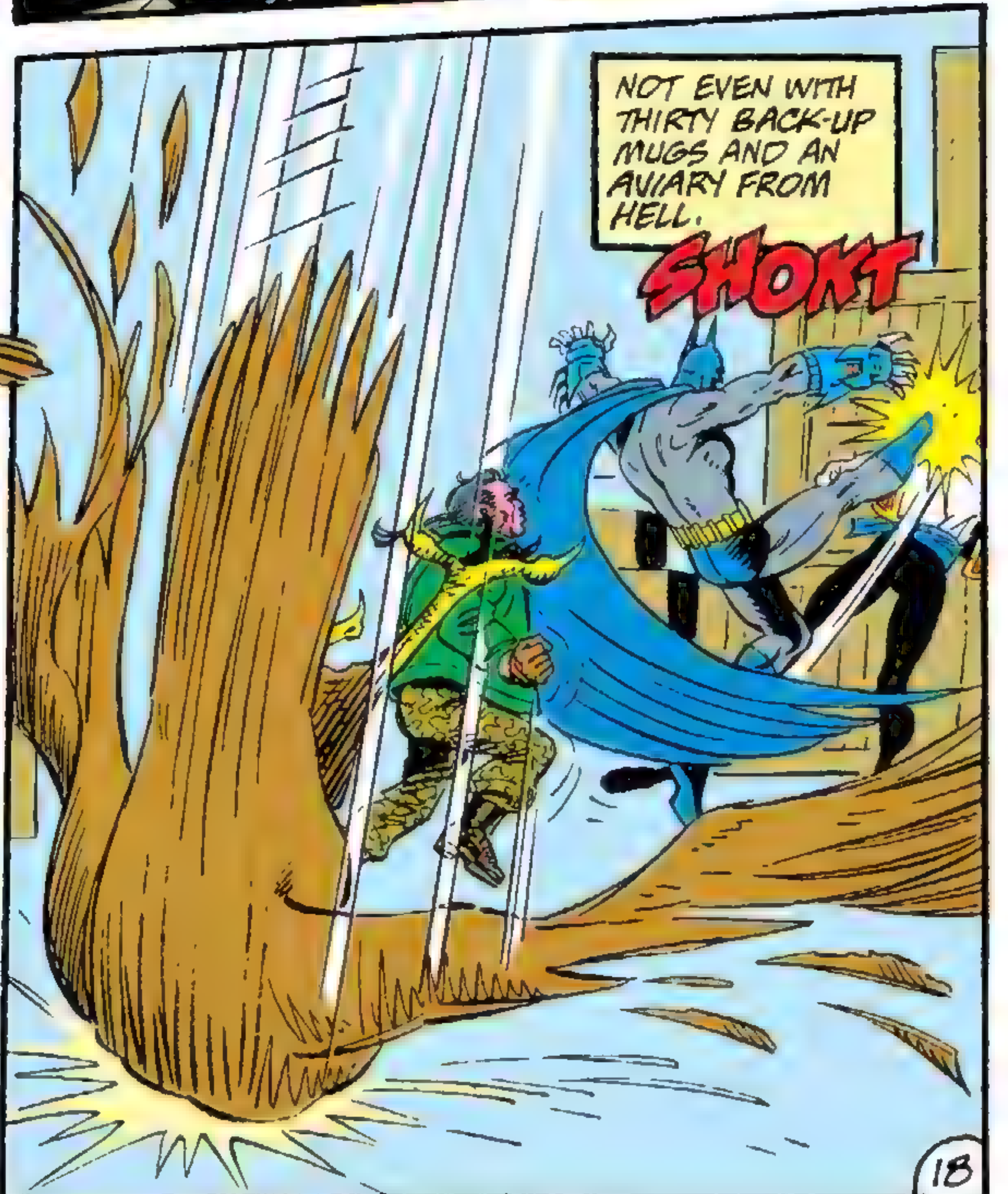
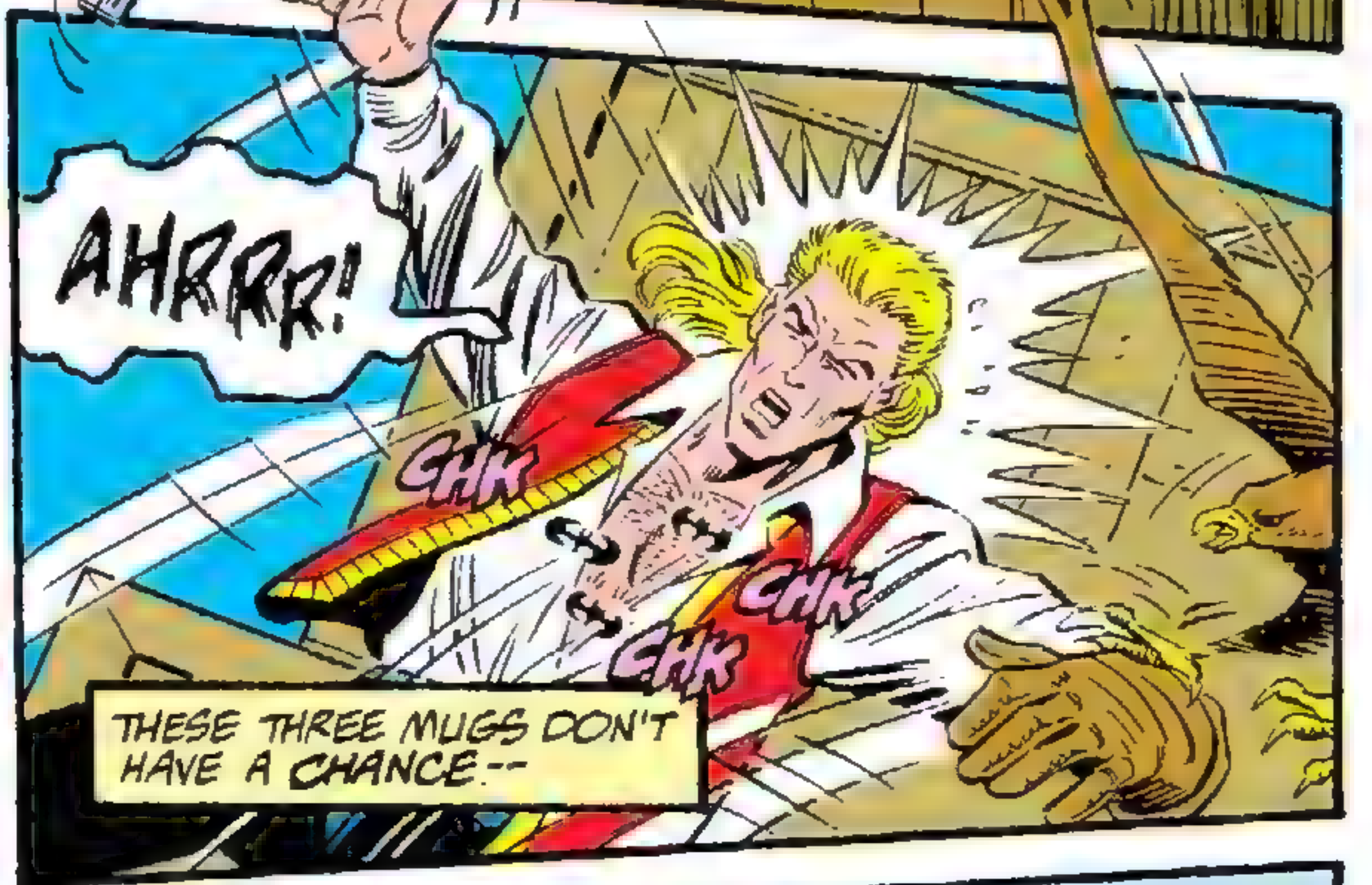
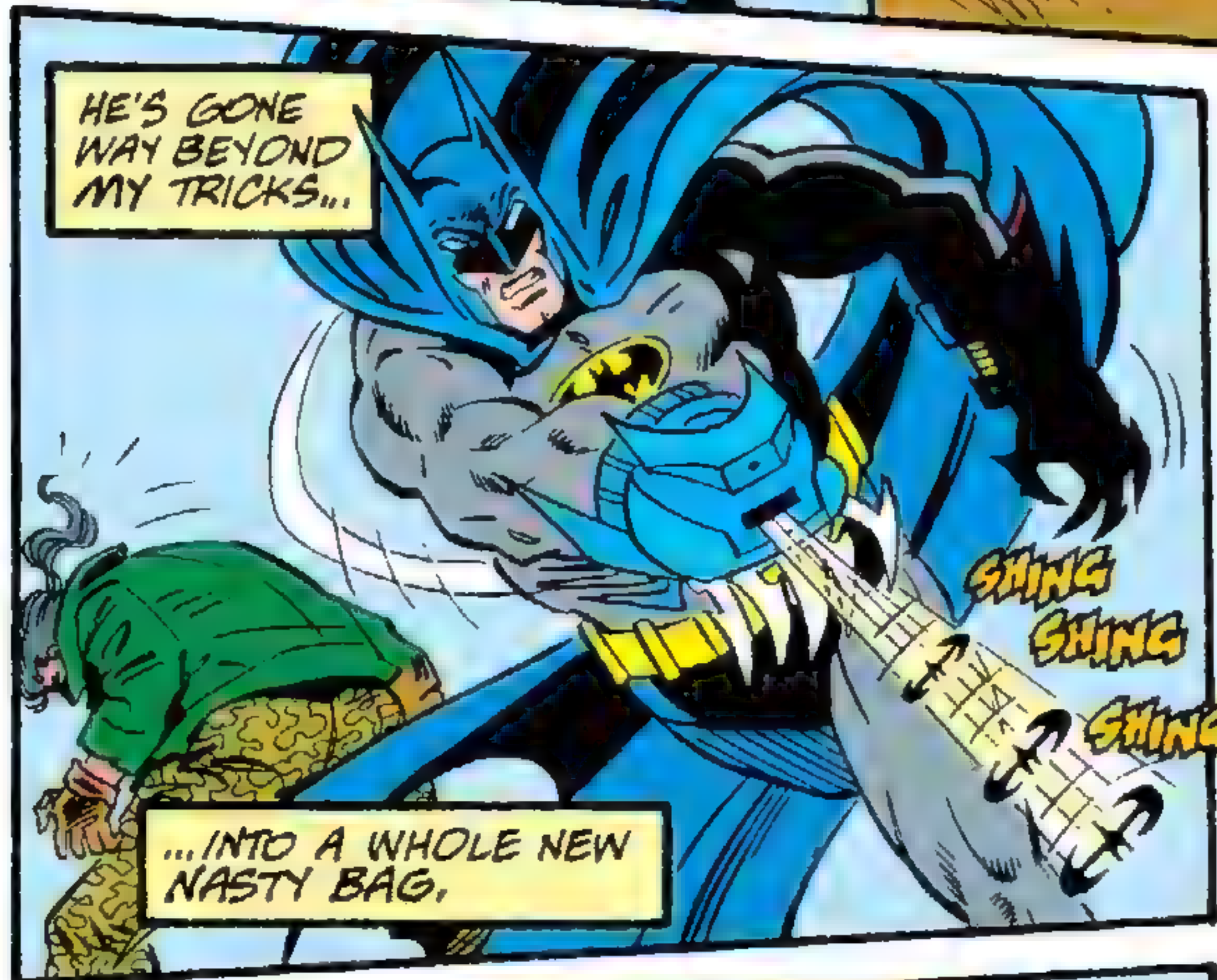
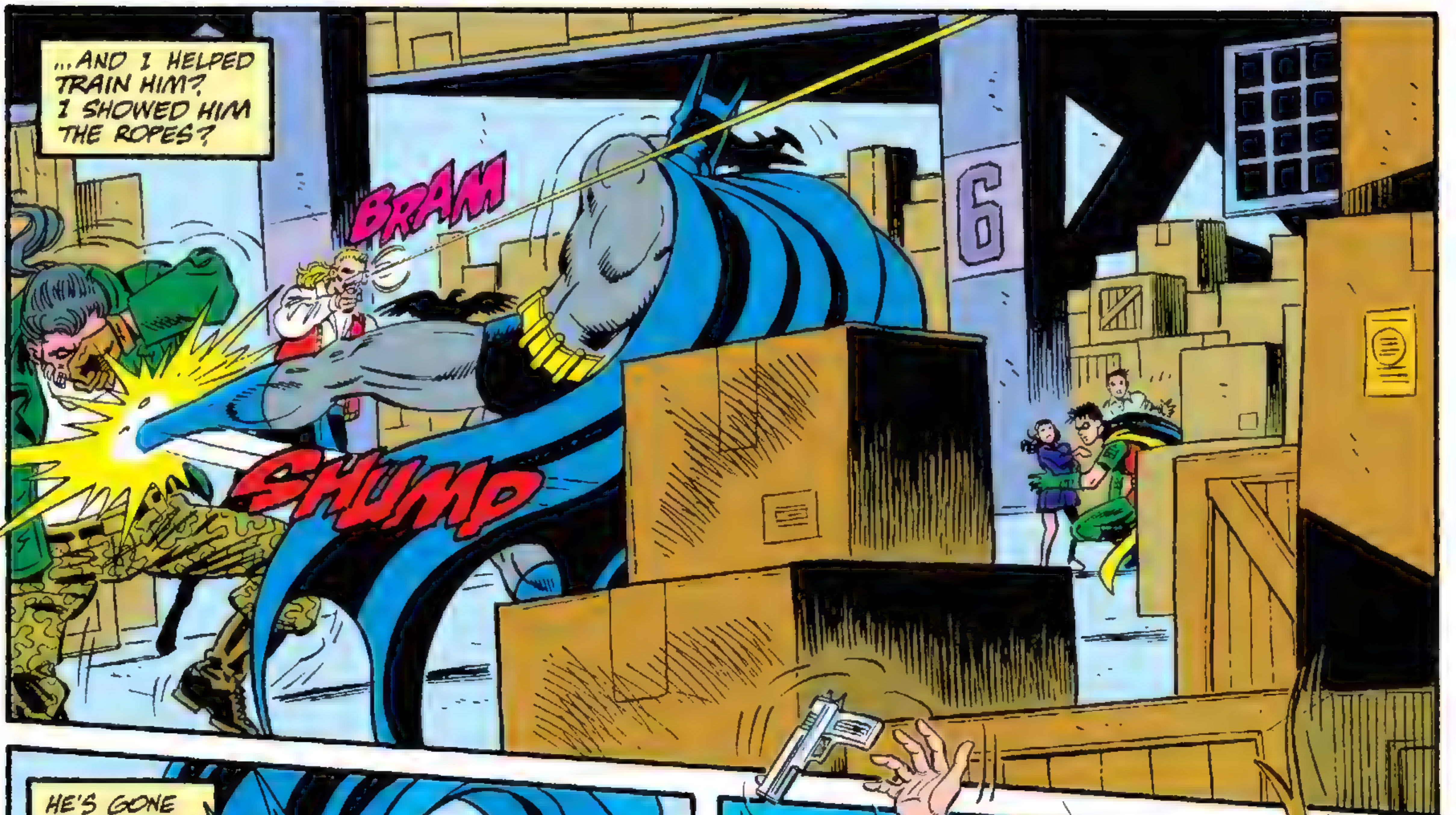
BECAUSE BANE WALKED RIGHT PAST ME IN CONTEMPT--?

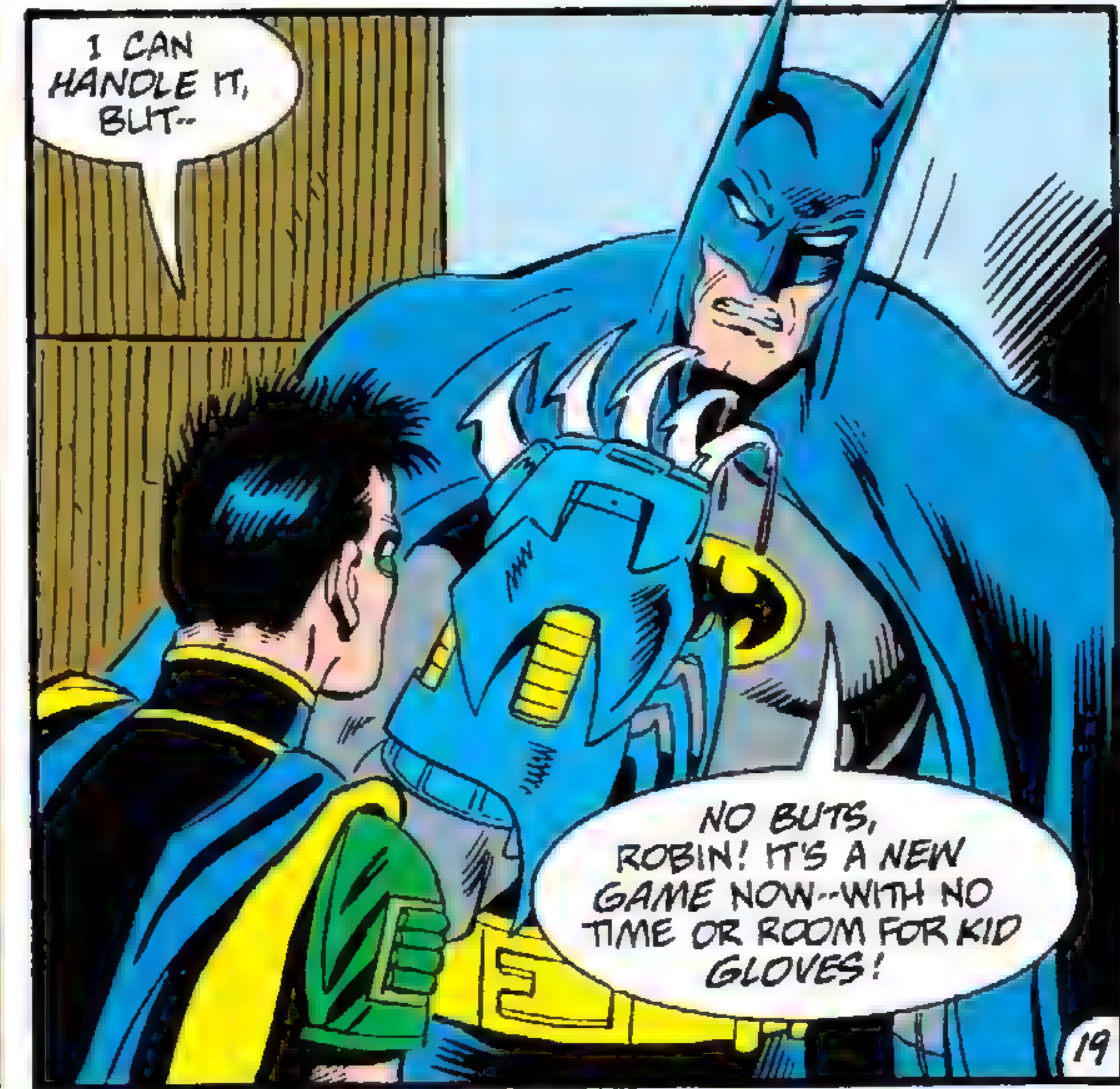
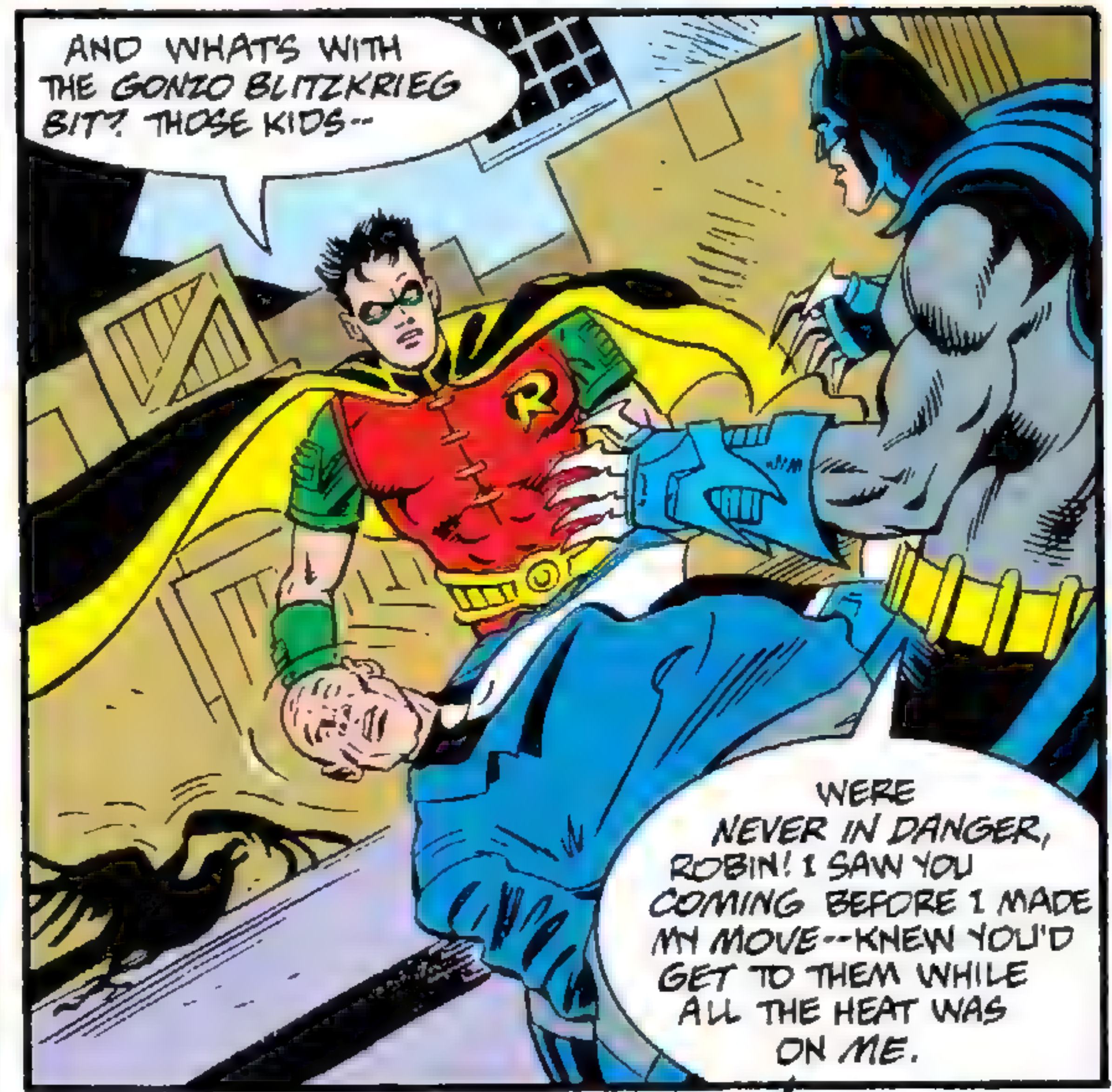
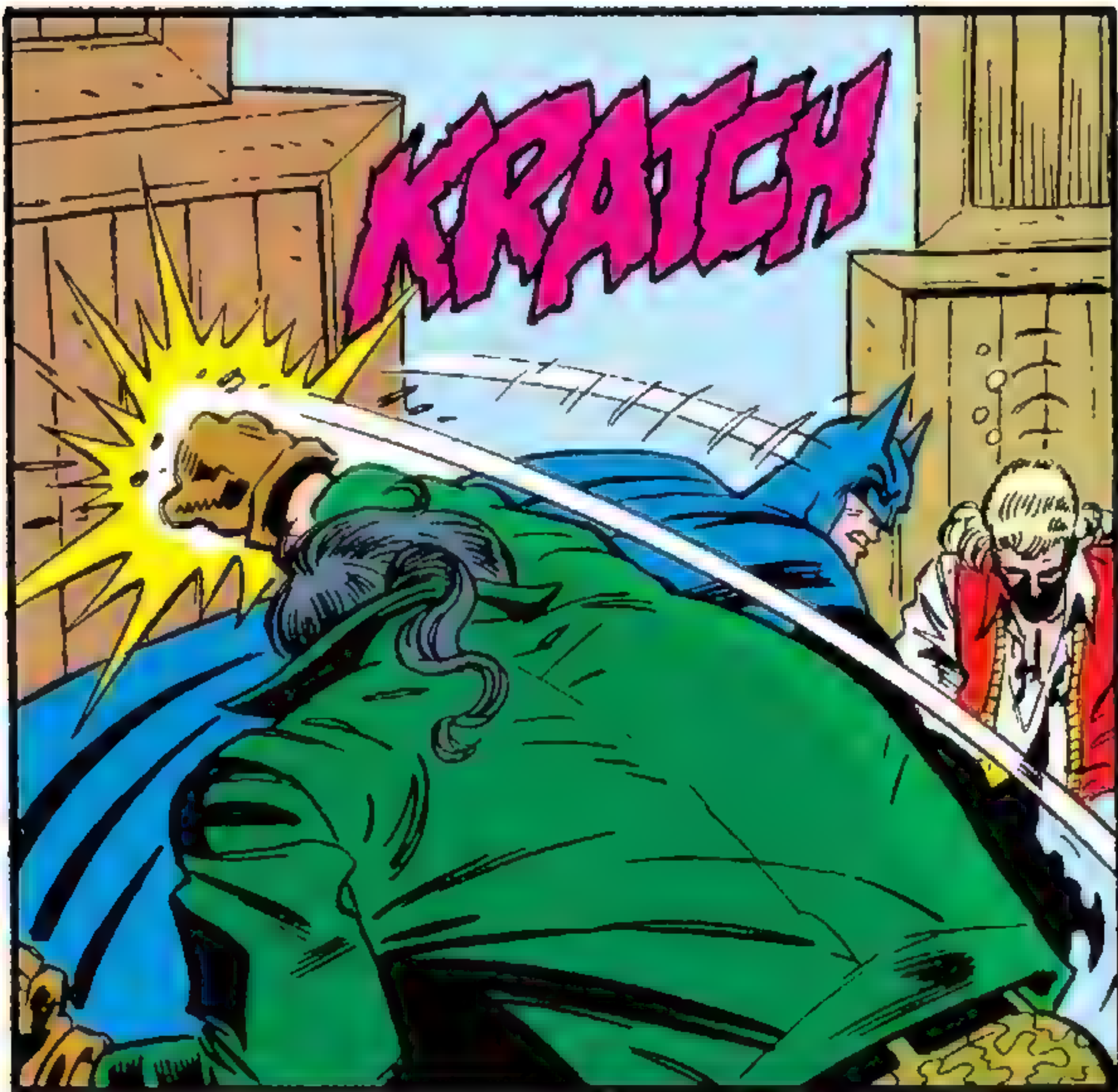
HE'S GETTING SCARY AGAIN--THE SHEER INTENSITY.

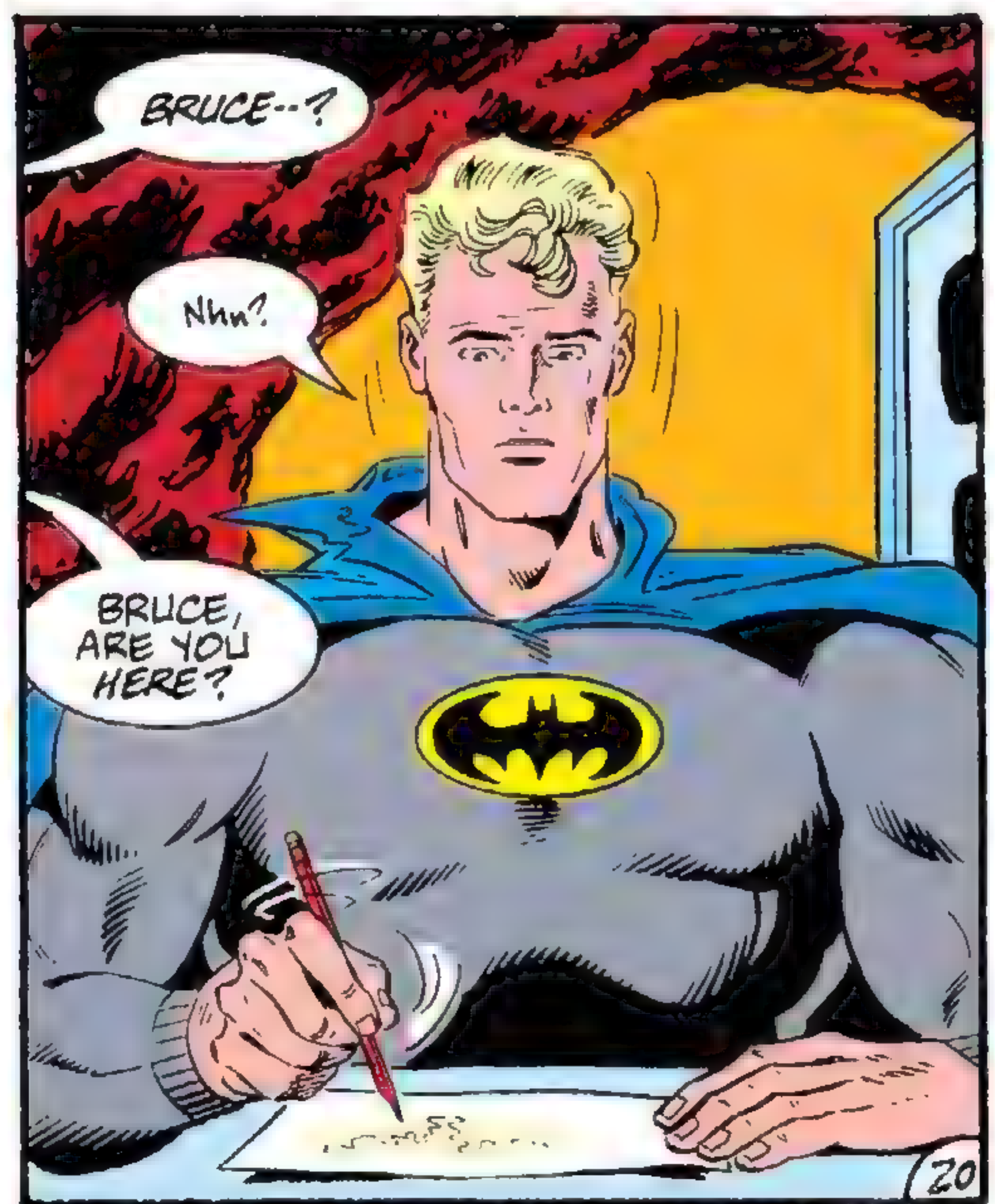
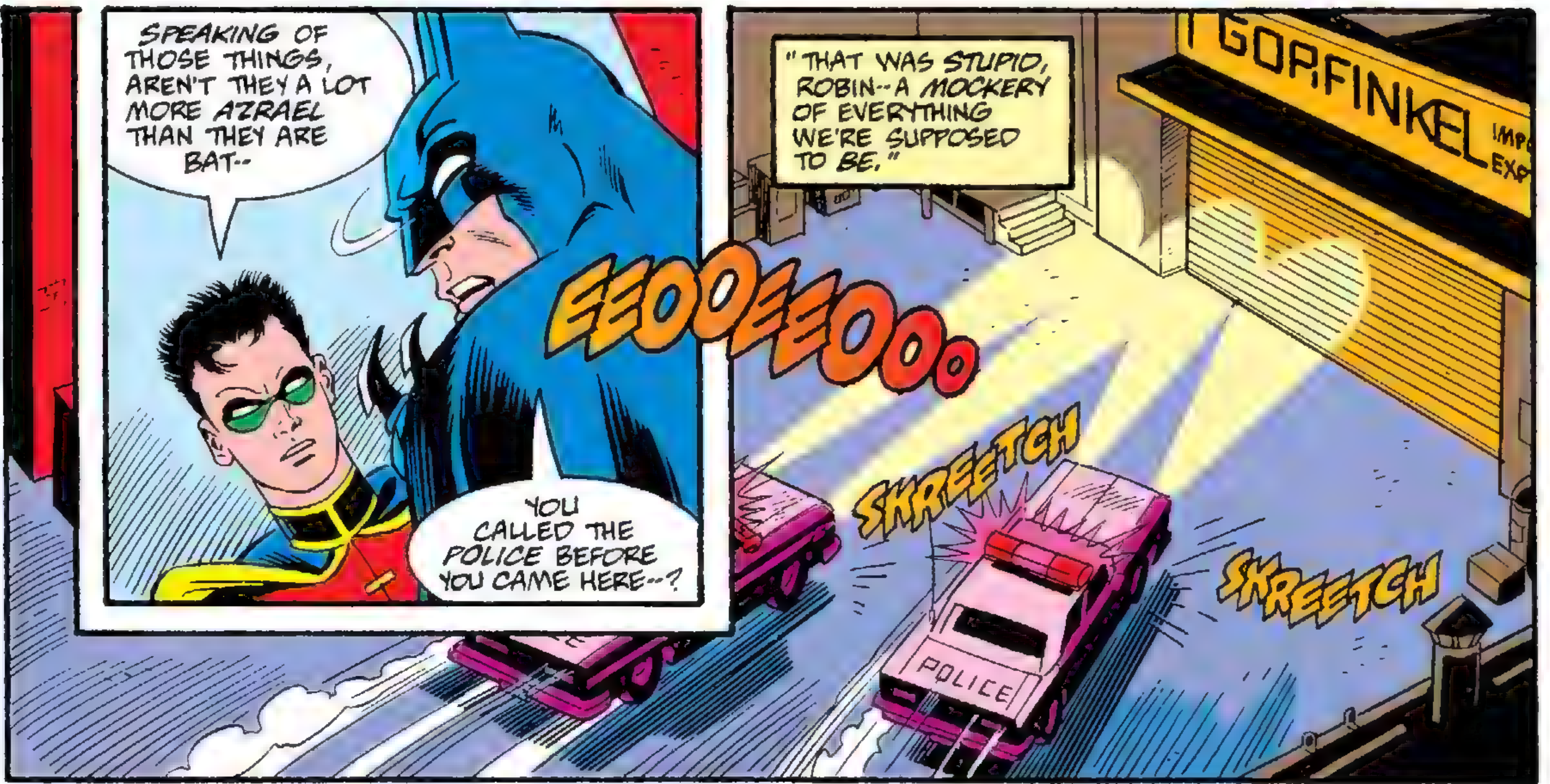


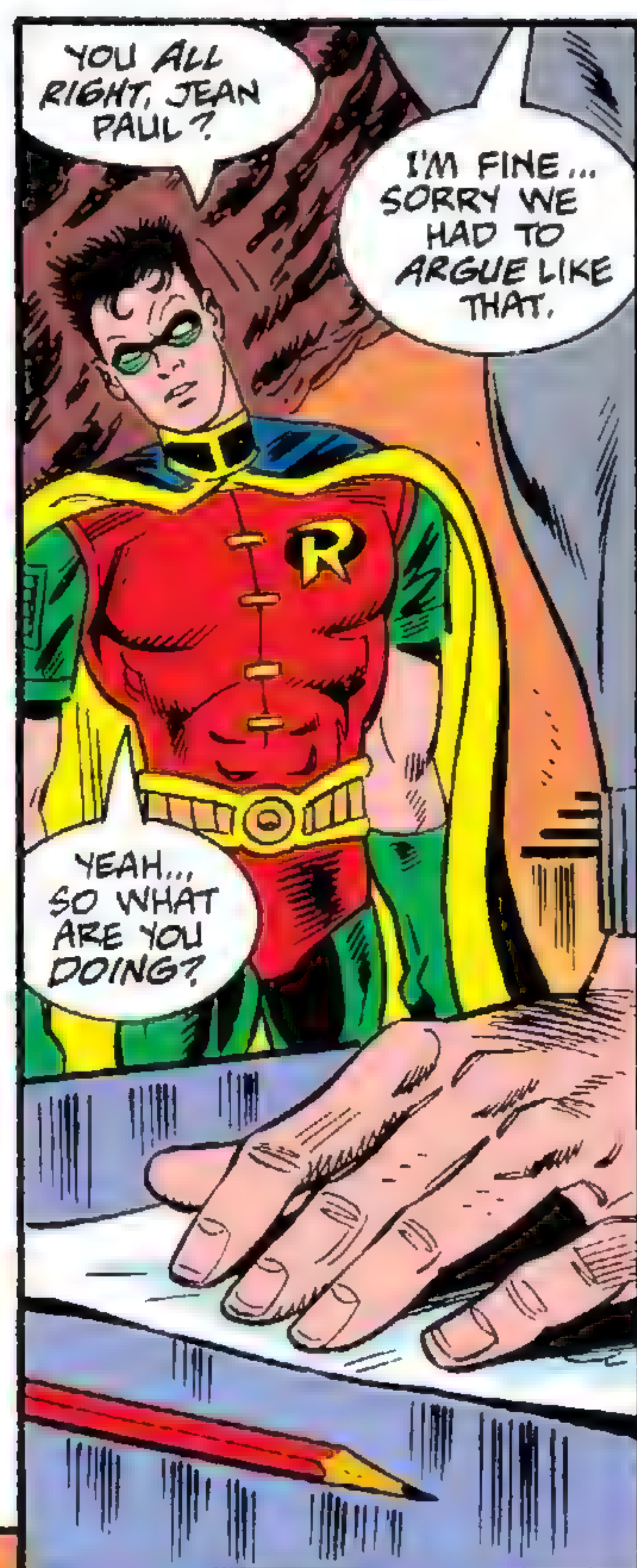
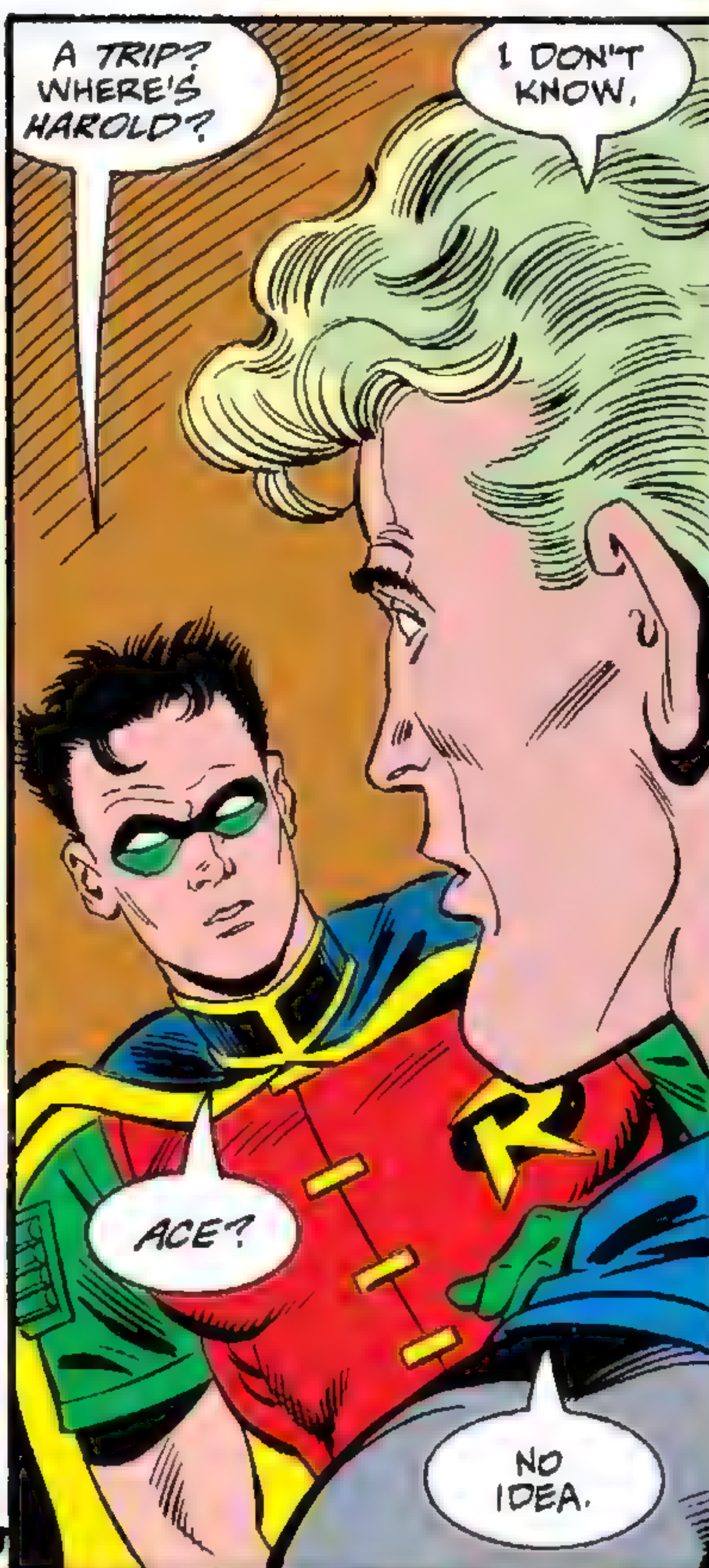
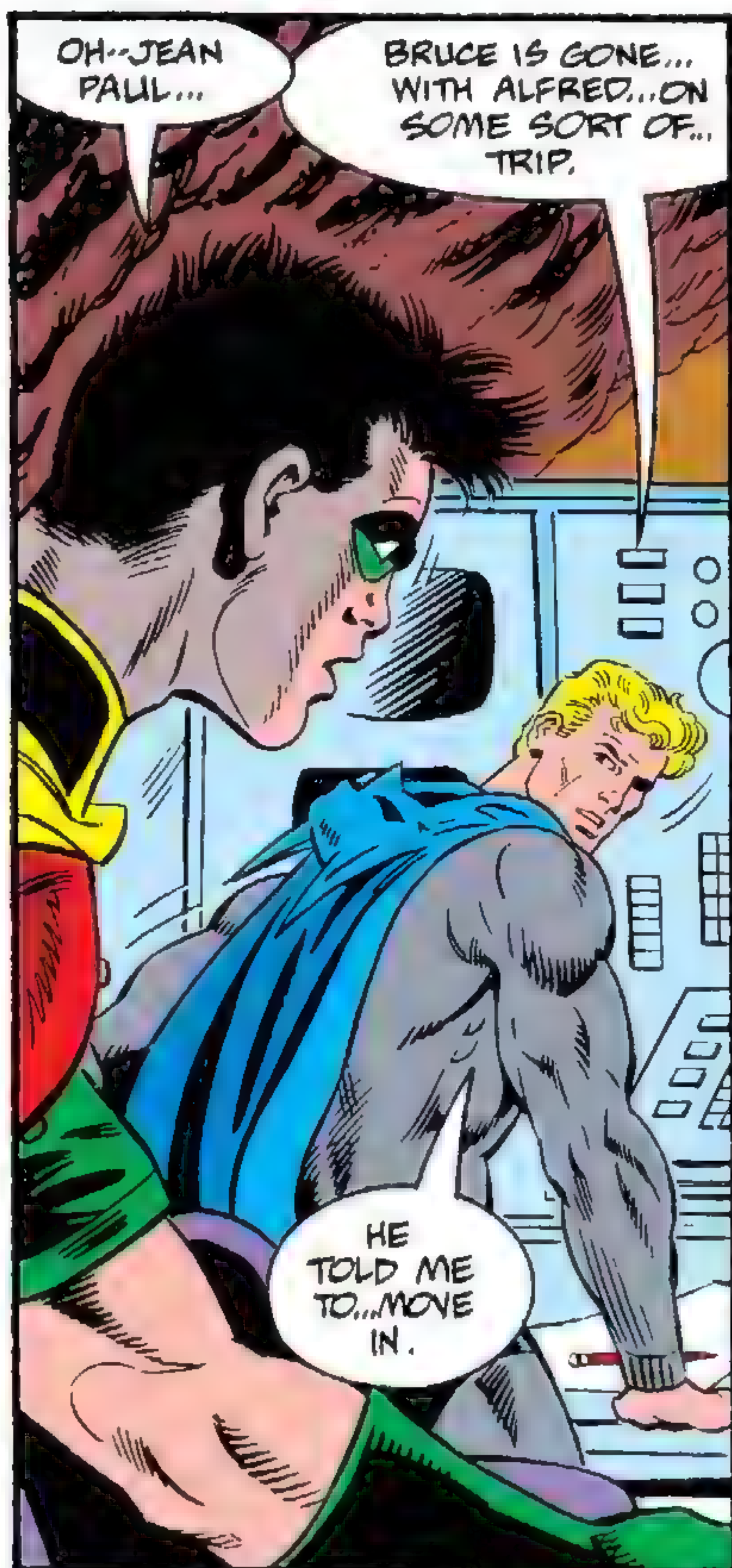








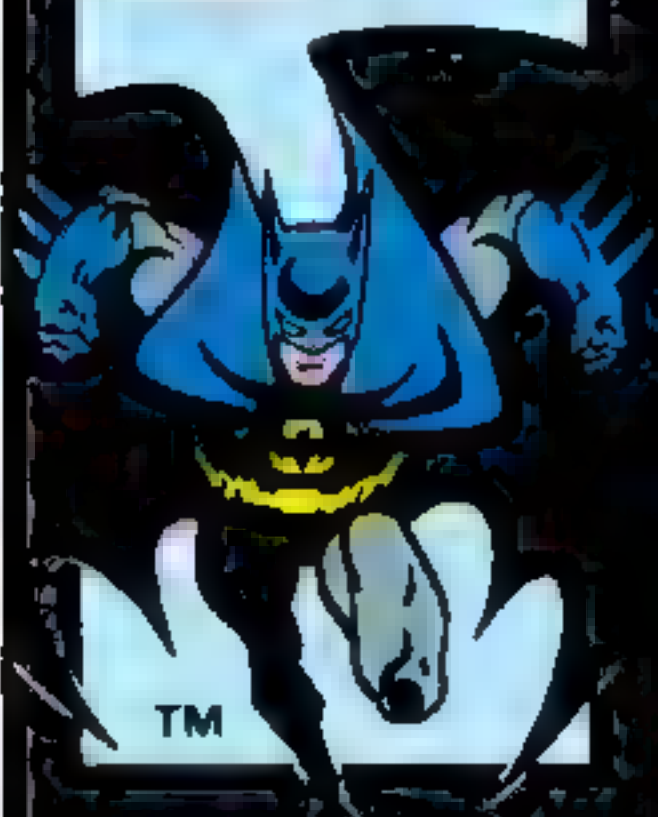








666
SEP 93



KNIGHTFALL



DETECTIVE COMICS[®] FEATURING BATMAN[®]





THE CITY IS
STILL NEW TO HIM.

HE'LL LEARN ALL
THE SECRETS
SOON ENOUGH.

DIFFERENT JUNGLE.

SAME RULES.

CHUCK DIXON • writer
GRAHAM NOLAN • penciller
SCOTT HANNA • inker
ADRIENNE ROY • colorist
JOHN COSTANZA • letterer
DARREN VINCENZO • asst. editor
SCOTT PETERSON • editor

BATMAN created by BOB KANE

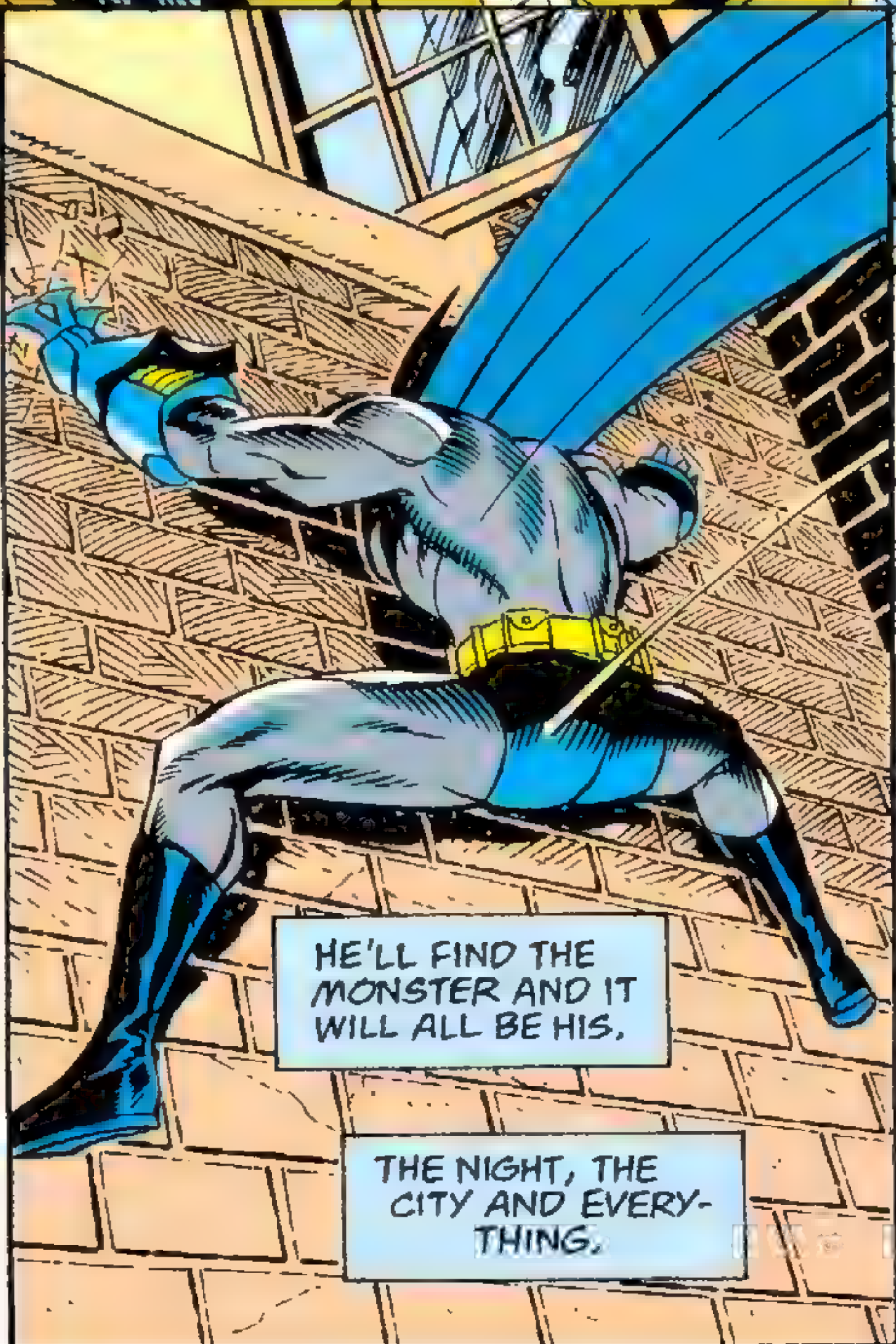


THE MANTLE OF THE
BAT IS HIS.

BANE MUST FALL IF
GOTHAM IS TO BE HIS.

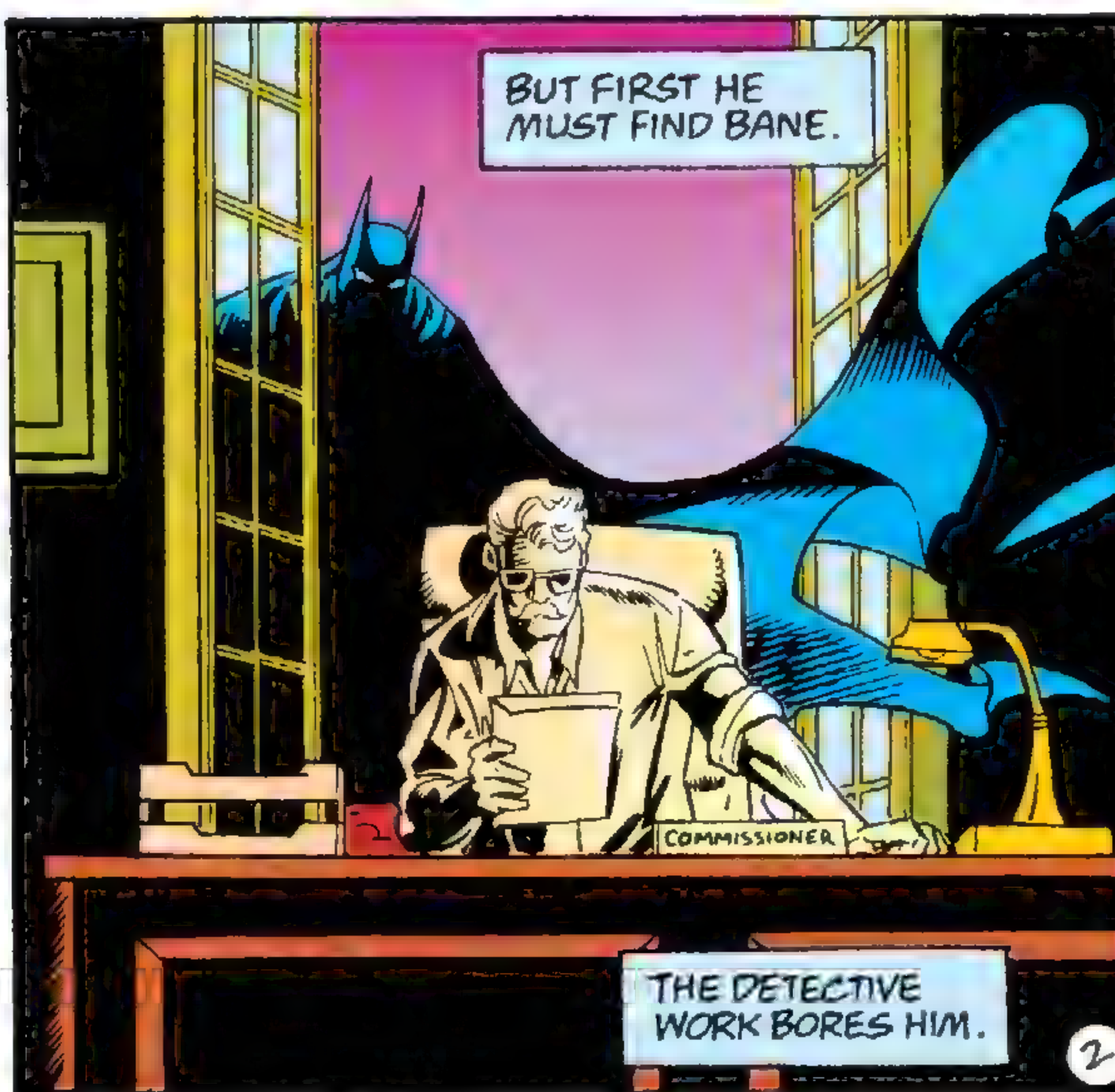
BUT BANE STILL
RULES THE NIGHT.

FOR NOW.



HE'LL FIND THE
MONSTER AND IT
WILL ALL BE HIS.

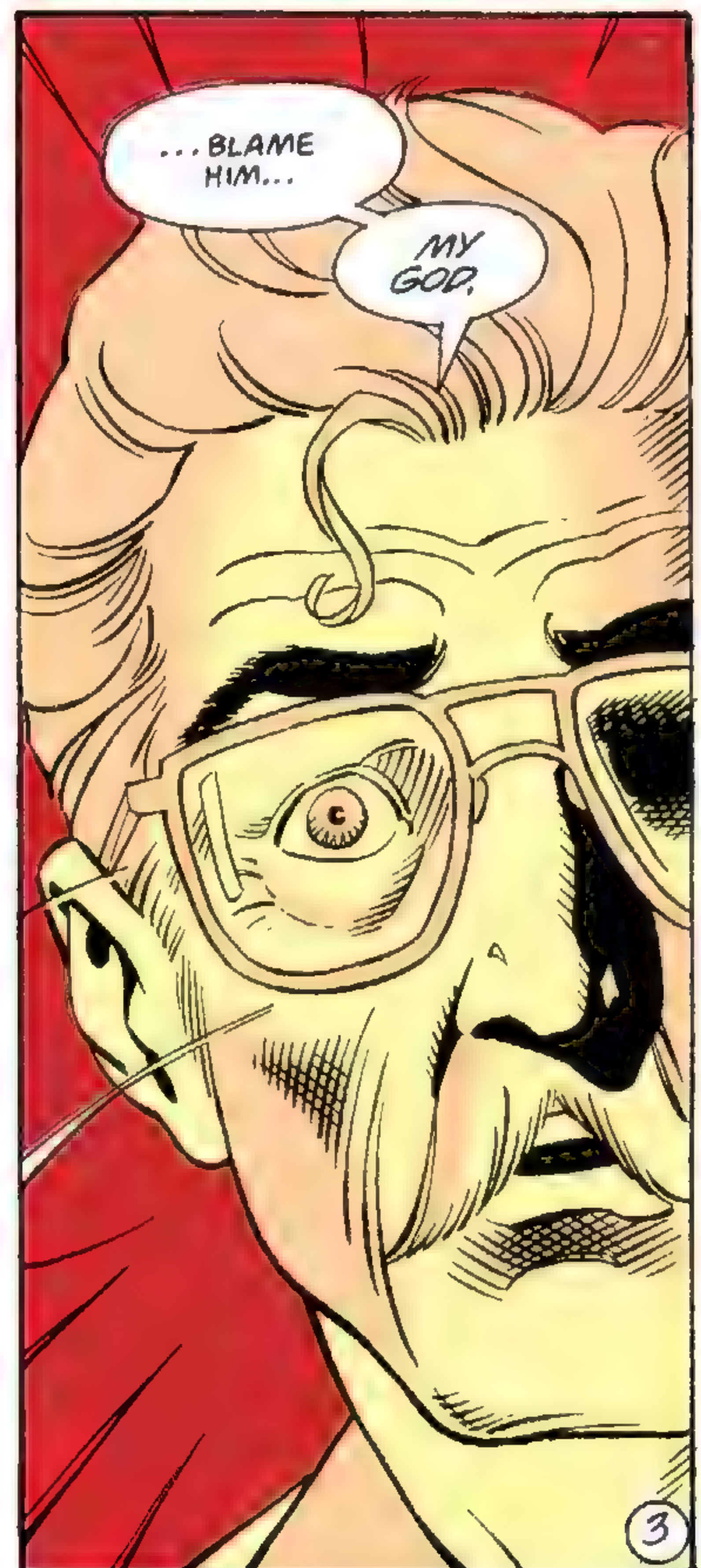
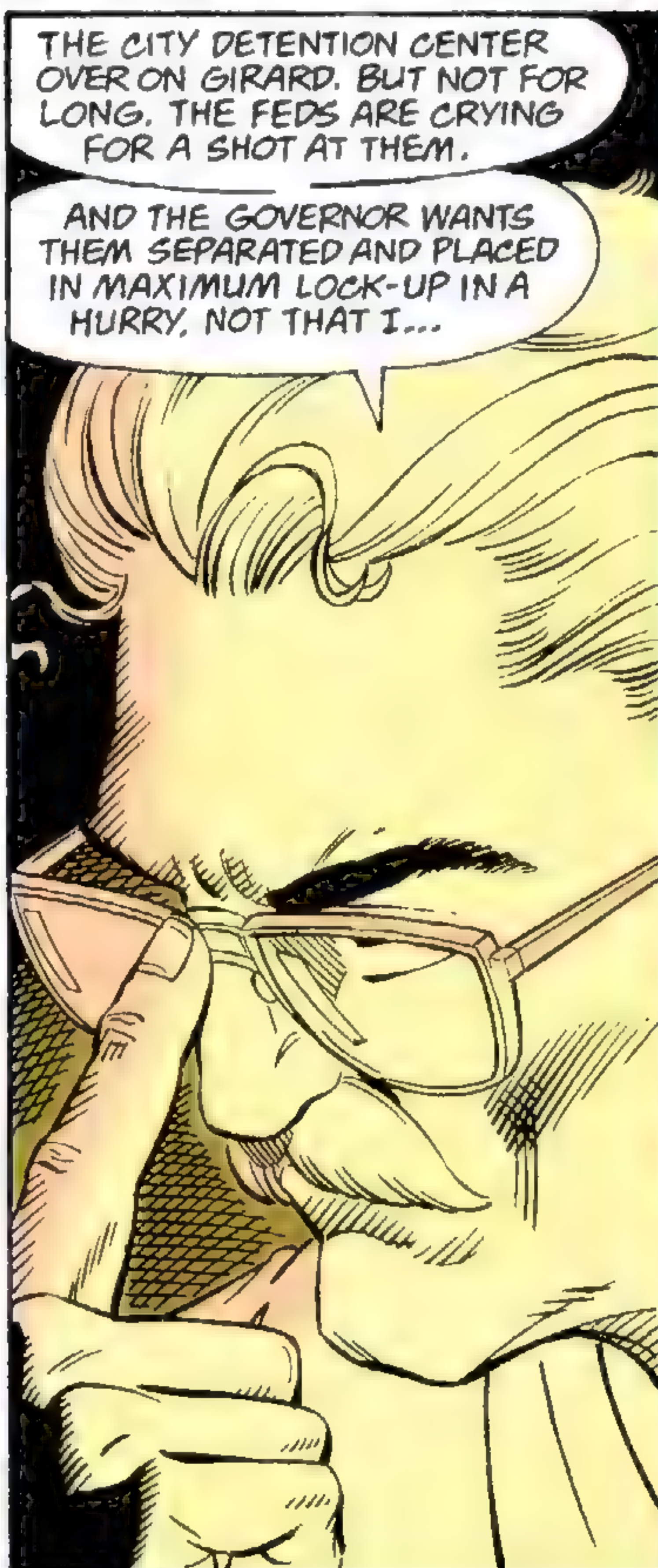
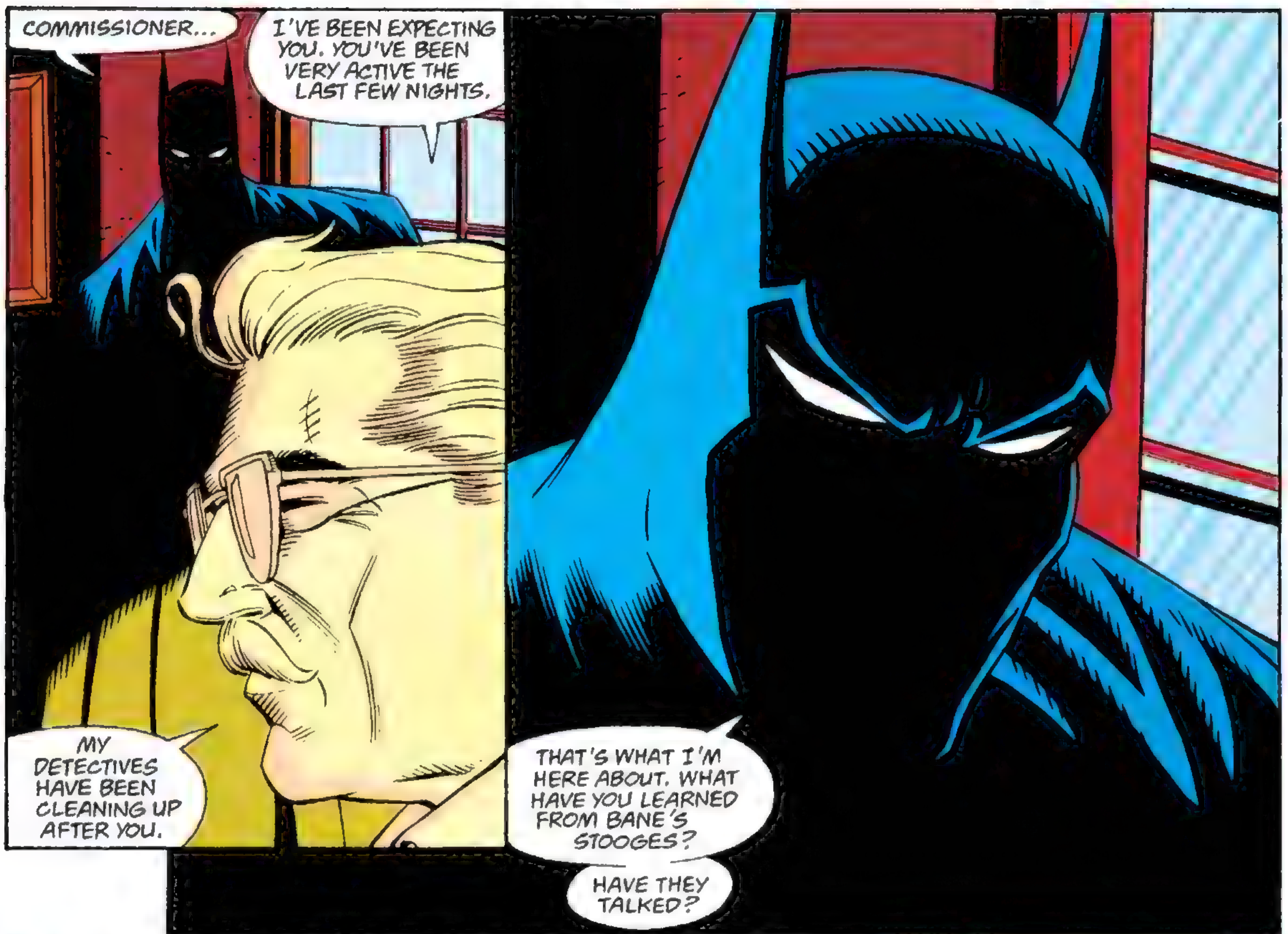
THE NIGHT, THE
CITY AND EVERY-
THING.



BUT FIRST HE
MUST FIND BANE.

THE DETECTIVE
WORK BORES HIM.

2

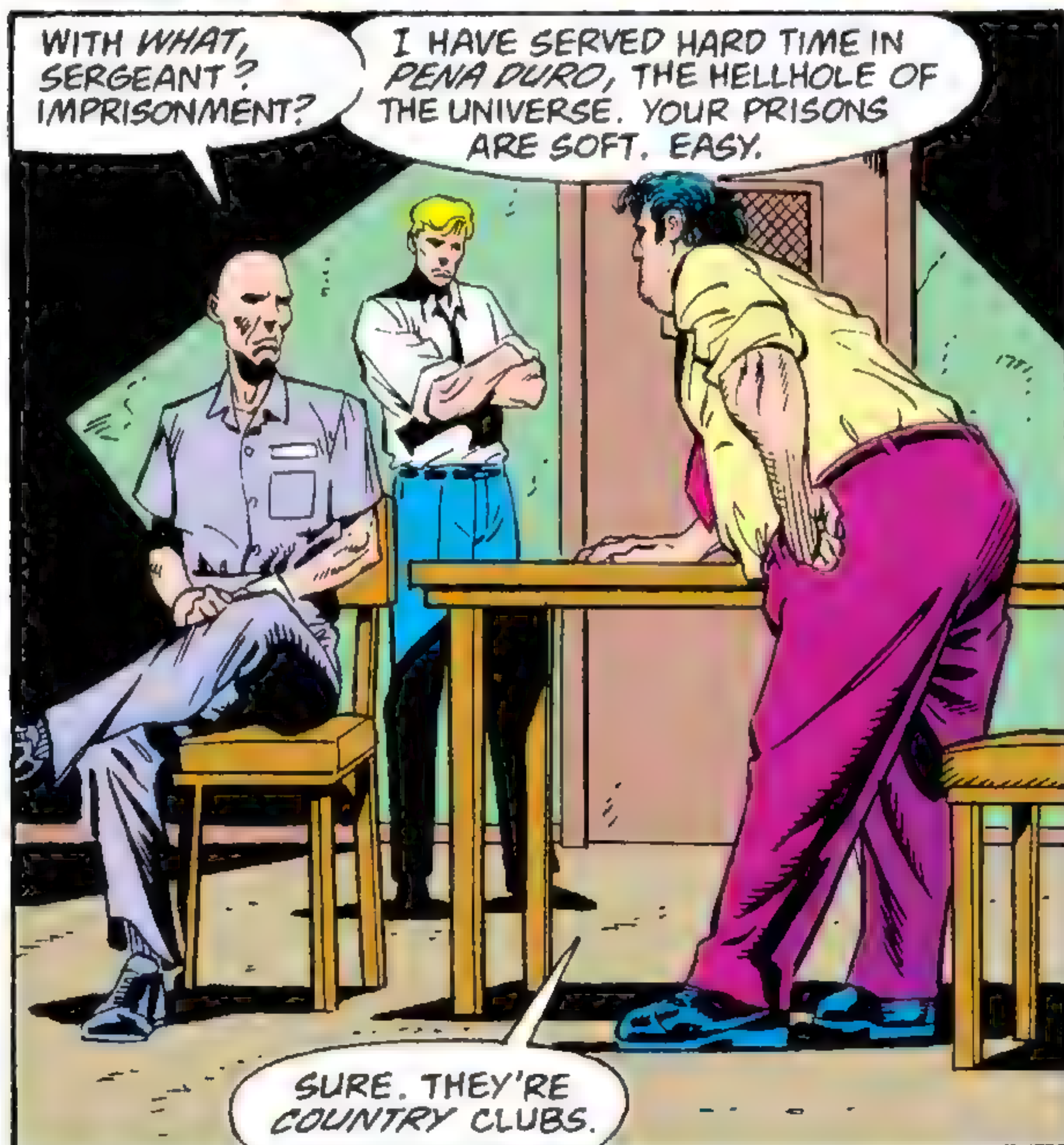






YOU GUYS ARE NEVER GONNA SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY, YOU KNOW THAT?

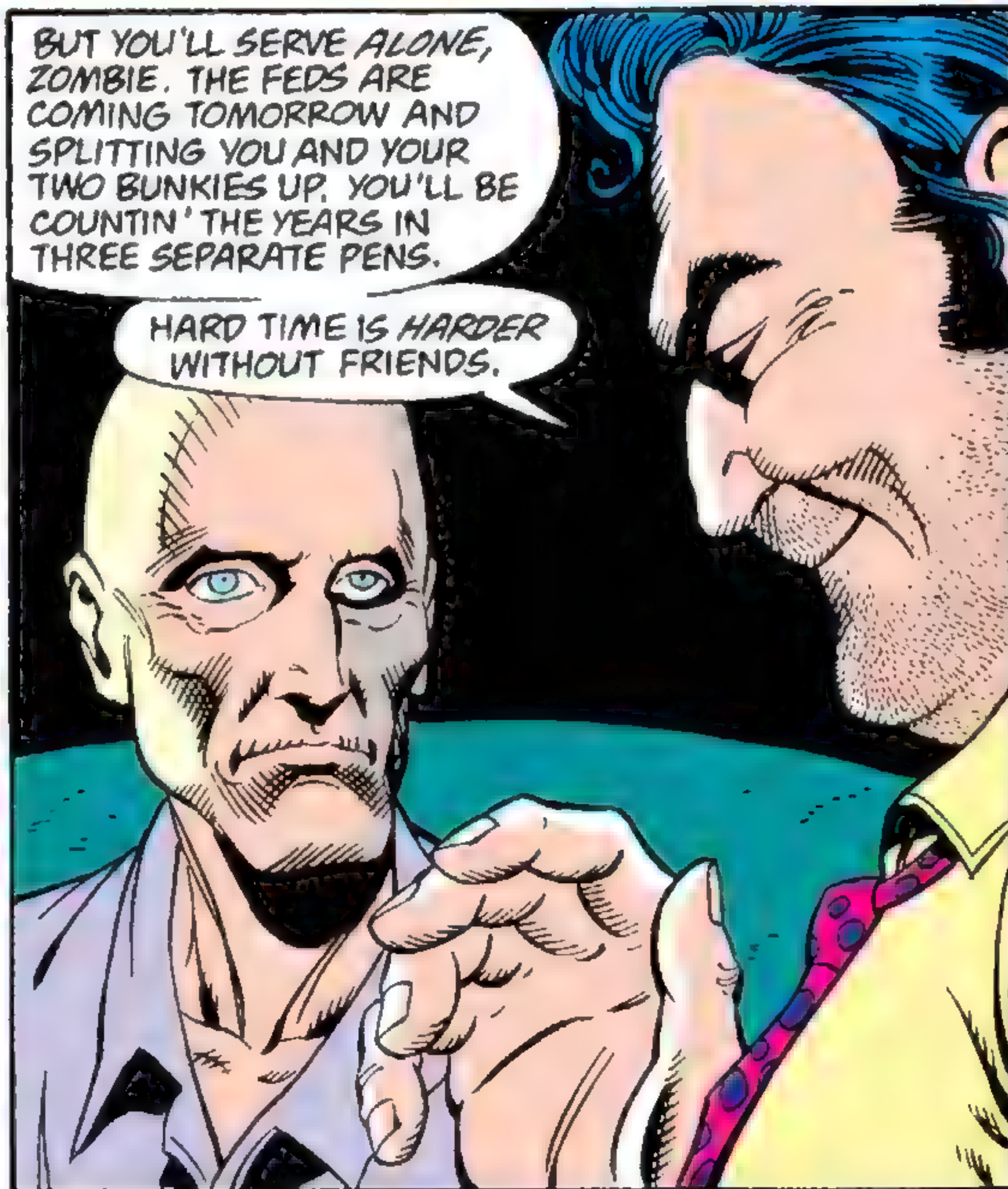
ARE YOU TRYING TO FRIGHTEN ME, SERGEANT?



WITH WHAT, SERGEANT? IMPRISONMENT?

I HAVE SERVED HARD TIME IN PENA DURO, THE HELLHOLE OF THE UNIVERSE. YOUR PRISONS ARE SOFT. EASY.

SURE. THEY'RE COUNTRY CLUBS.



BUT YOU'LL SERVE ALONE, ZOMBIE. THE FEDS ARE COMING TOMORROW AND SPLITTING YOU AND YOUR TWO BUNKIES UP. YOU'LL BE COUNTIN' THE YEARS IN THREE SEPARATE PENS.

HARD TIME IS HARDER WITHOUT FRIENDS.



AND WHAT MUST I DO TO SAVE MYSELF? SURRENDER BANE TO YOU?

I WOULD DIE FIRST. I WOULD DIE SMILING.



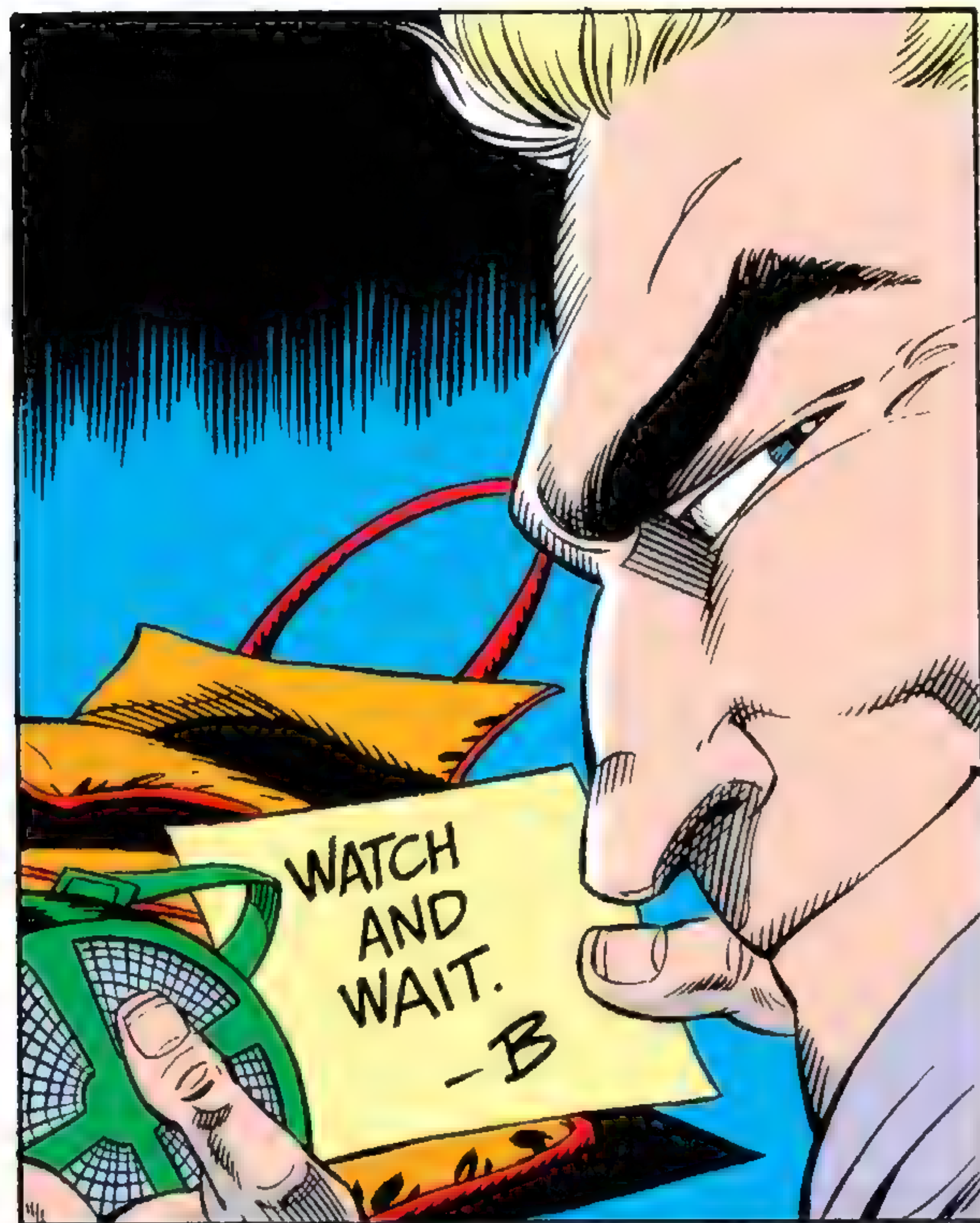
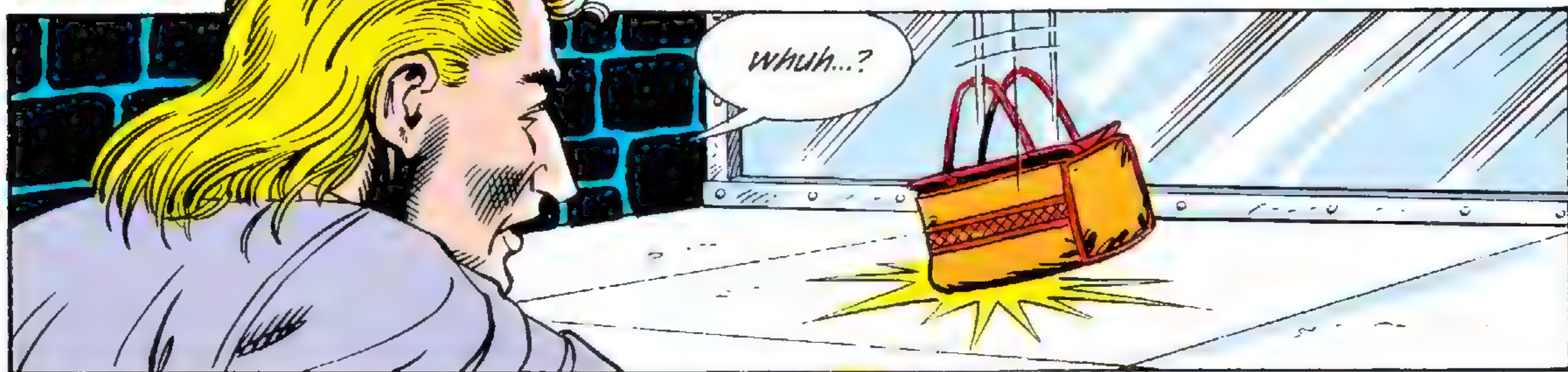
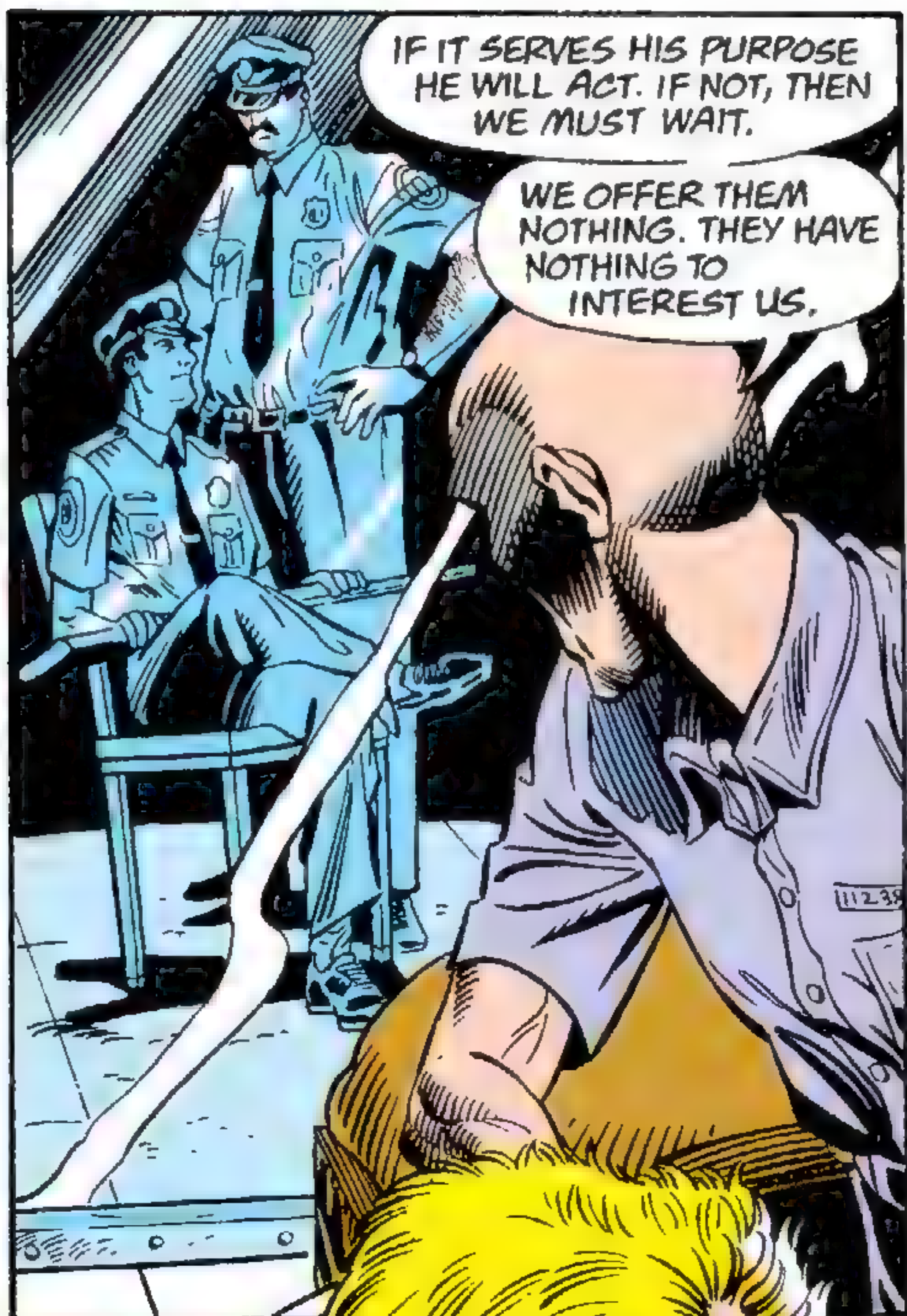
GET THIS GOON OUTTA HERE BEFORE I PUT A SLUG IN HIM, LIEUTENANT.

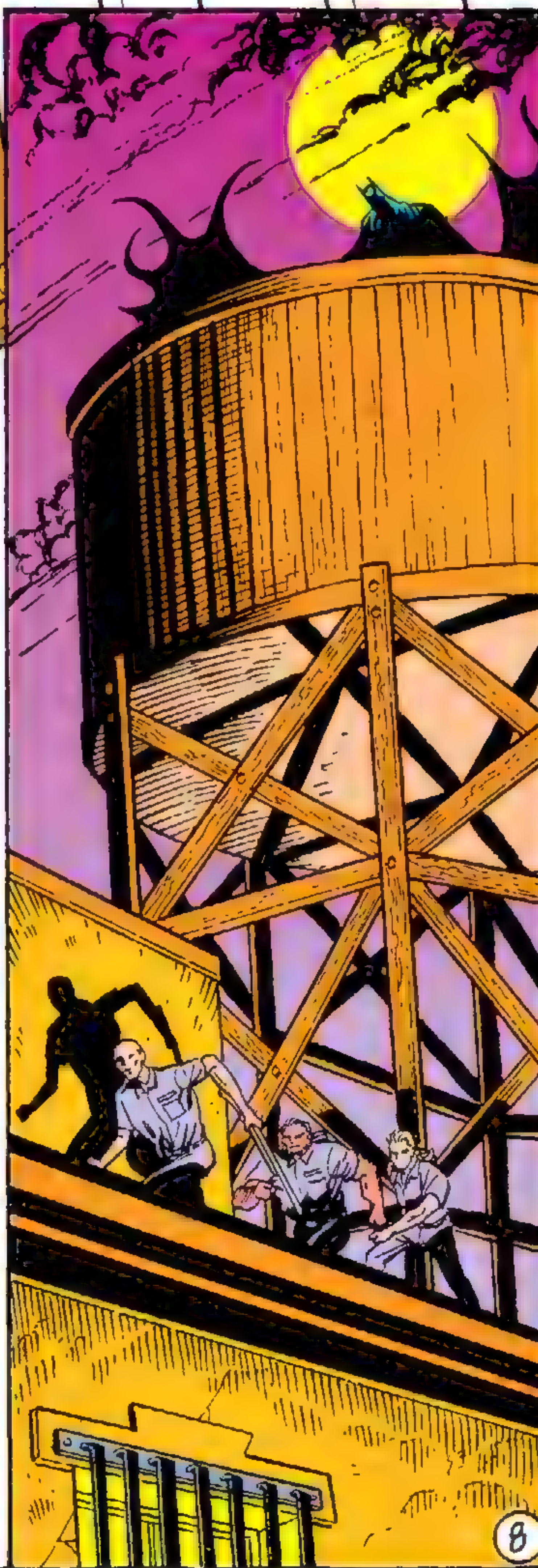
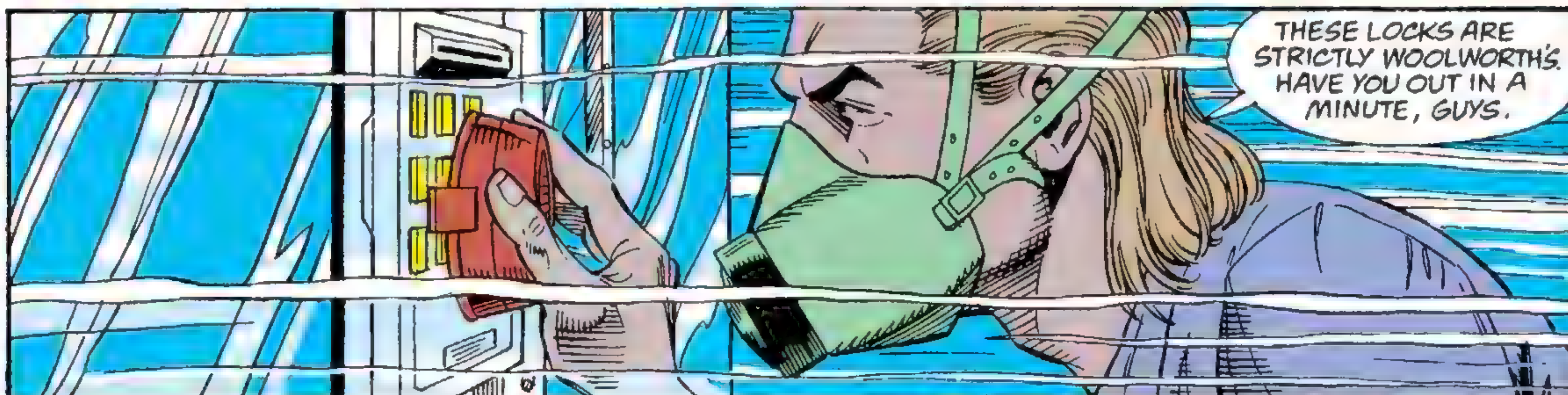
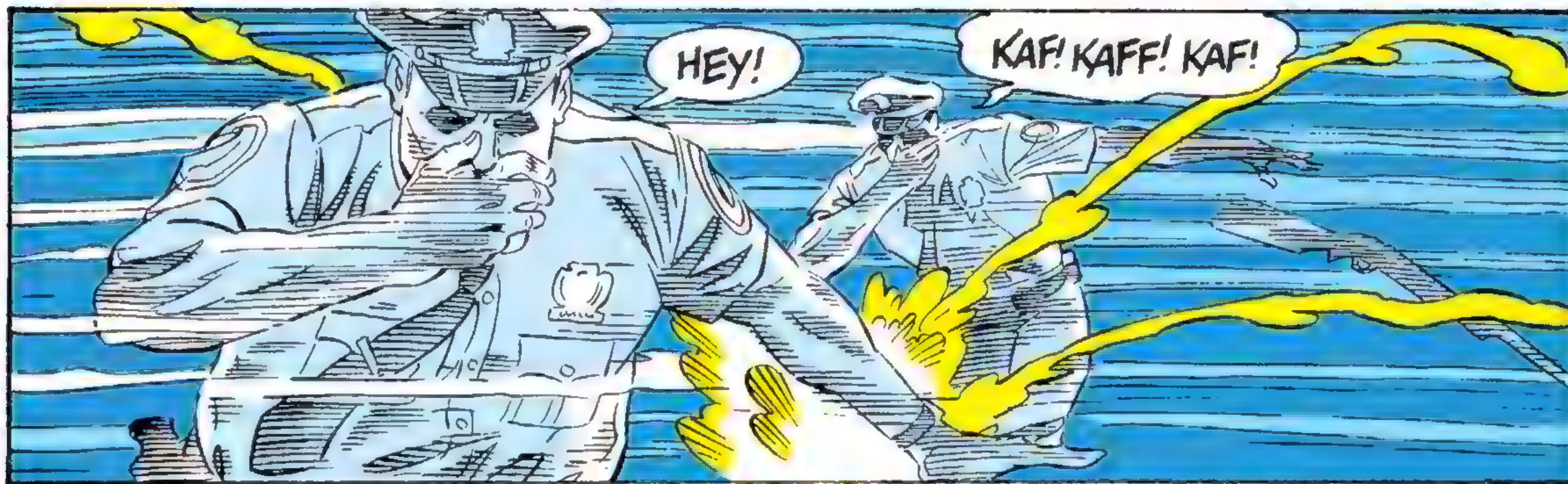
LET'S GO, ZOMBIE. WE'RE FINISHED WITH YOU.



IMAGINE MY RELIEF.









DAD GONE UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES. BRUCE AND ALFRED GONE TO LOOK FOR HIM WITH ONLY A NOTE TO LET ME KNOW.

THE SIGNAL BEING SHOWN FOR SOME OTHER BATMAN.

AND PAUL'S MADE IT PRETTY CLEAR I'M NOT WELCOME AS HIS PARTNER.

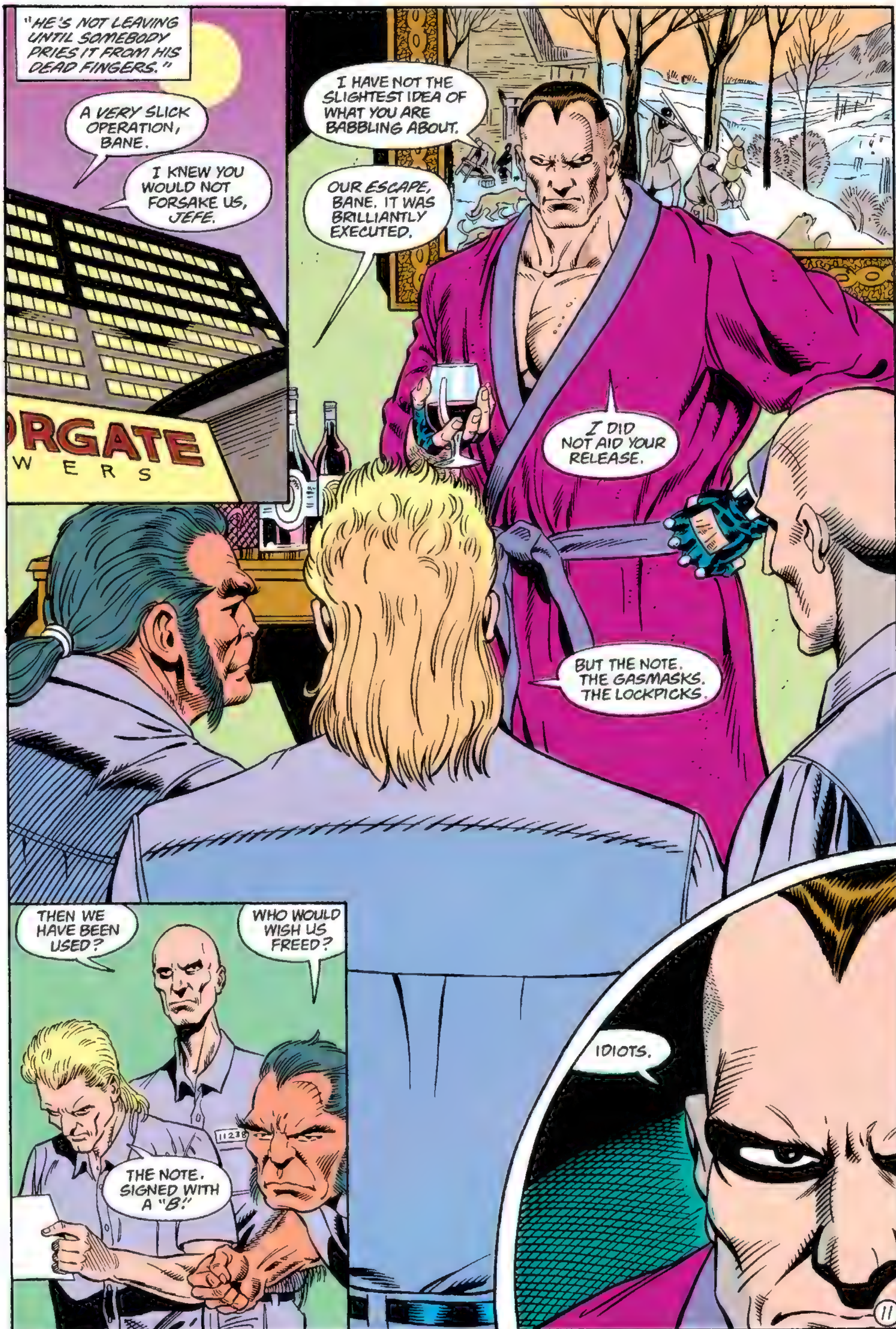
WELL, THAT'S TOUGH. HE DIDN'T GIVE ME THE JOB.

"AND ONLY ONE MAN CAN TAKE IT AWAY FROM ME."

I COULDA TOLD YA THOSE FREAKS SHOULDA BEEN SLAPPED IN A MAX SECURITY CELL OUT ON BLACKGATE.

NOW BANE AND HIS PALS ARE PROBABLY HALFWAY TO RIO AND LAUGHING THEMSELVES STUPID AT GOTHAM'S "FINEST."

YOU'RE WRONG, HARV. BANE WORKED TOO HARD TO GET HIS GRIP ON THIS TOWN'S UNDERWORLD.



"HE'S NOT LEAVING UNTIL SOMEBODY PRIES IT FROM HIS DEAD FINGERS."

A VERY SLICK OPERATION, BANE.

I KNEW YOU WOULD NOT FORSAKE US, JEFE.

I HAVE NOT THE SLIGHTEST IDEA OF WHAT YOU ARE BABBLING ABOUT.

OUR ESCAPE, BANE. IT WAS BRILLIANTLY EXECUTED.

I DID NOT AID YOUR RELEASE.

BUT THE NOTE. THE GASMASKS. THE LOCKPICKS.

THEN WE HAVE BEEN USED?

WHO WOULD WISH US FREED?

THE NOTE. SIGNED WITH A "B."

IDIOTS.



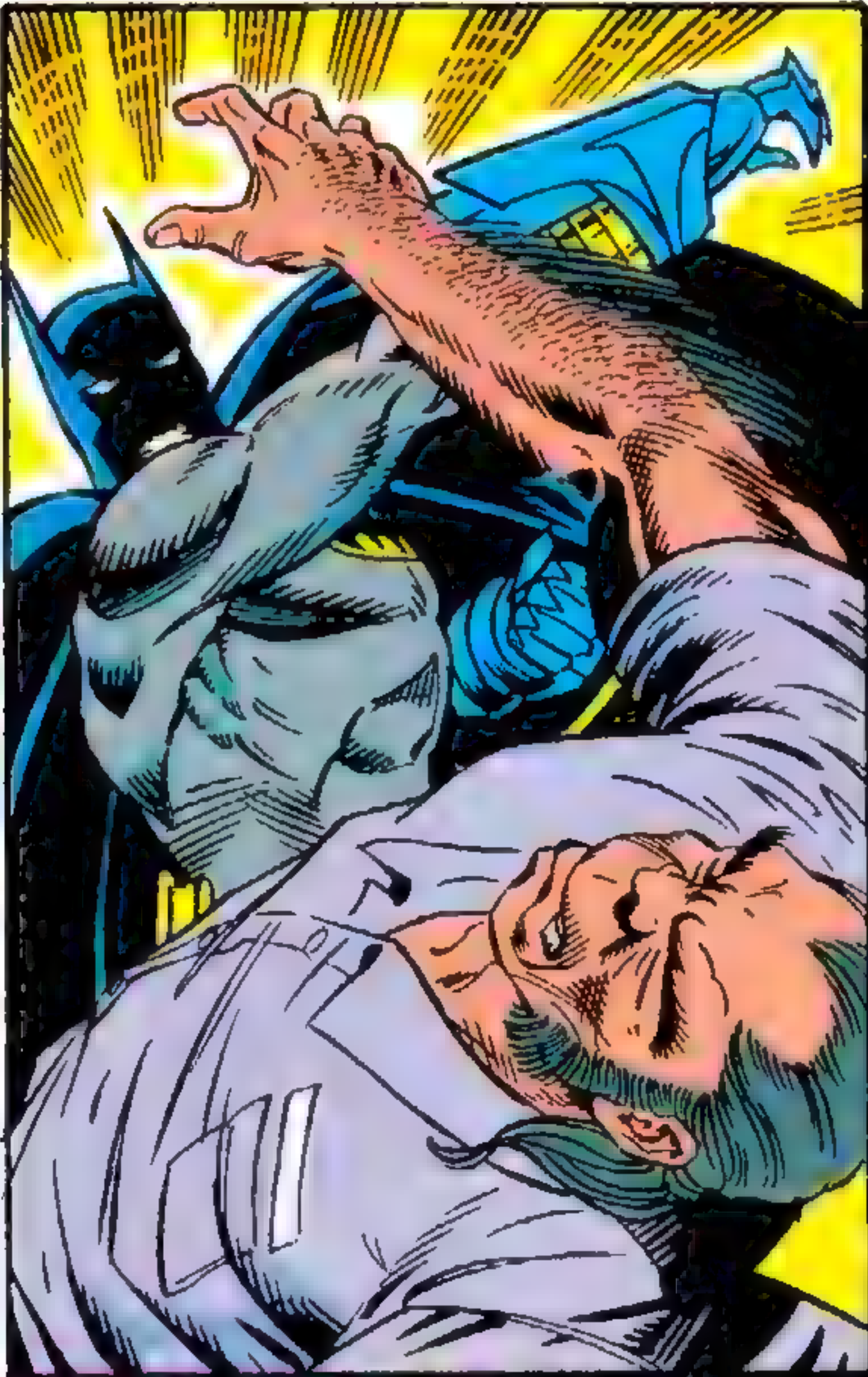
JUST A SMALL CHARGE STUCK TO THE WINDOW.

A FLASH AND BANG LOAD.

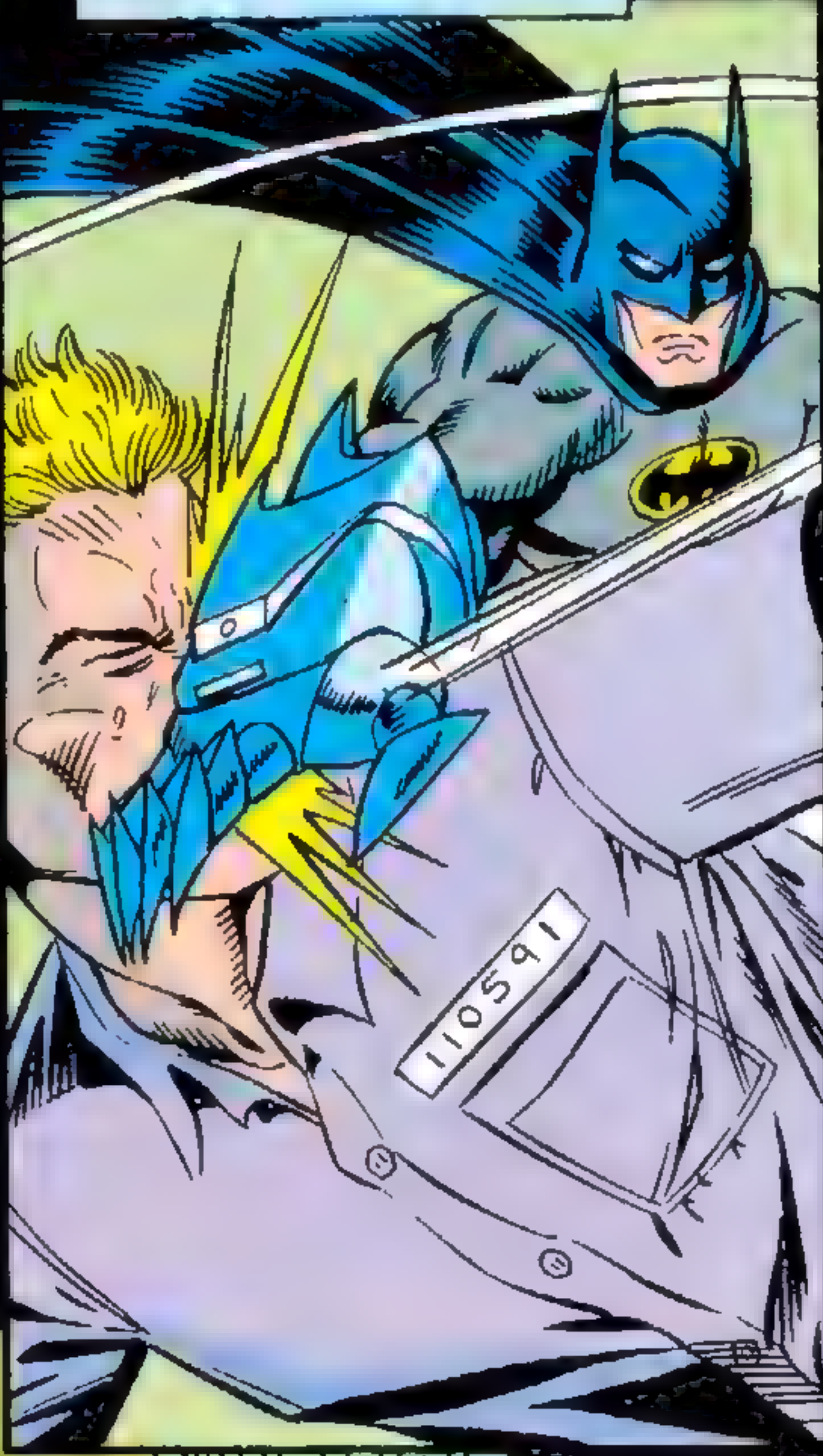
HE WANTS THEM DISORIENTED AND OFF BALANCE.

HE HAS NO TIME FOR SUBTLETY.

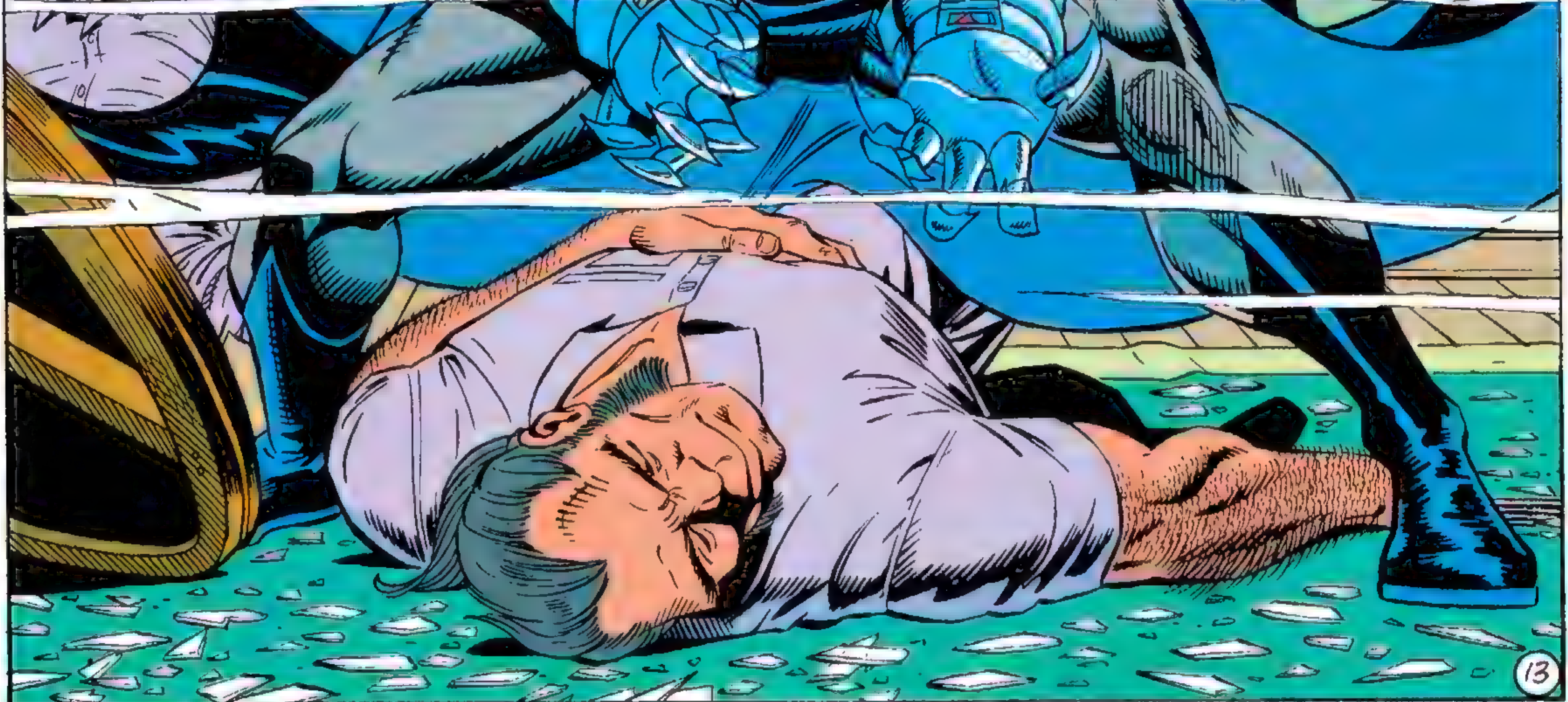
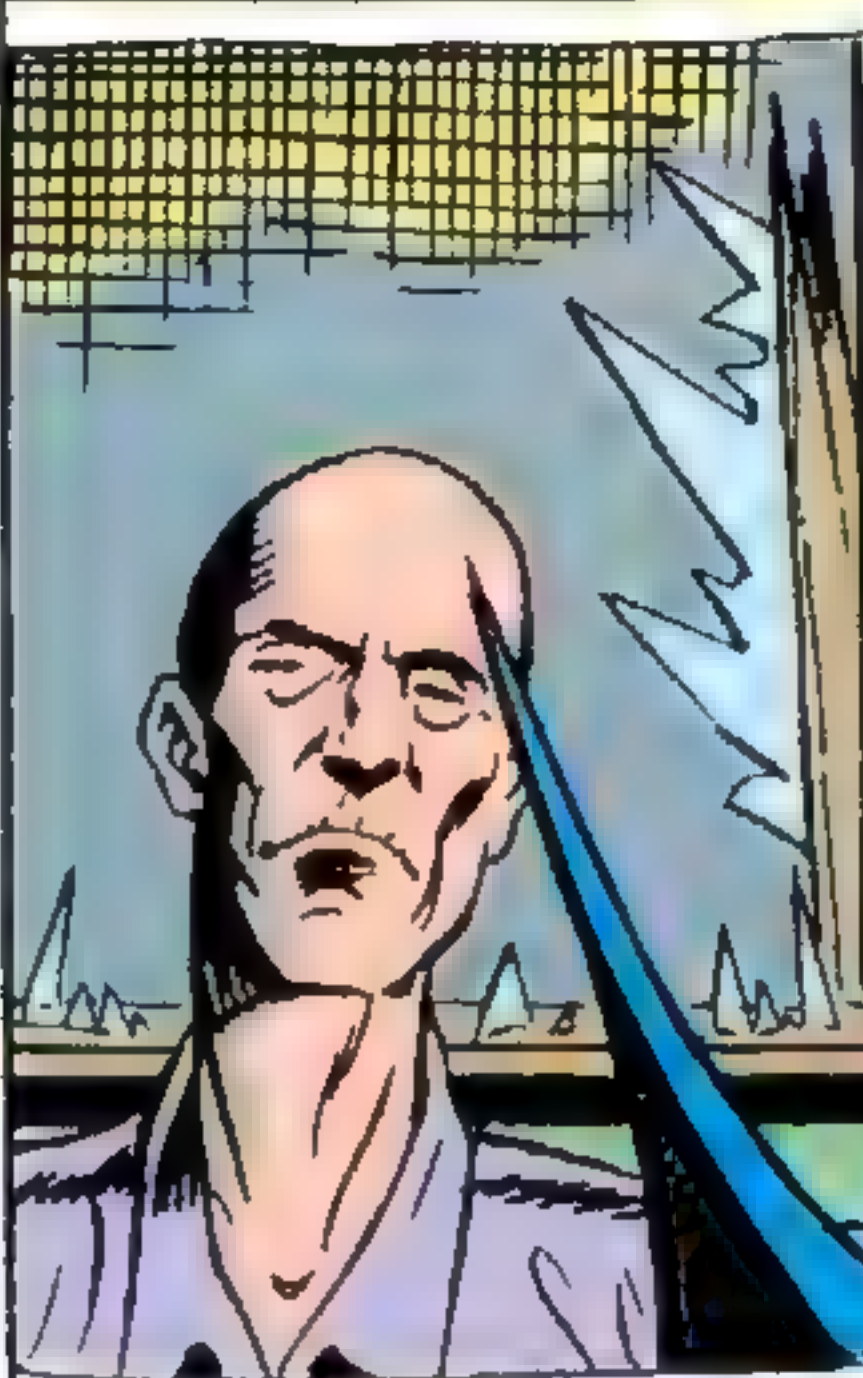
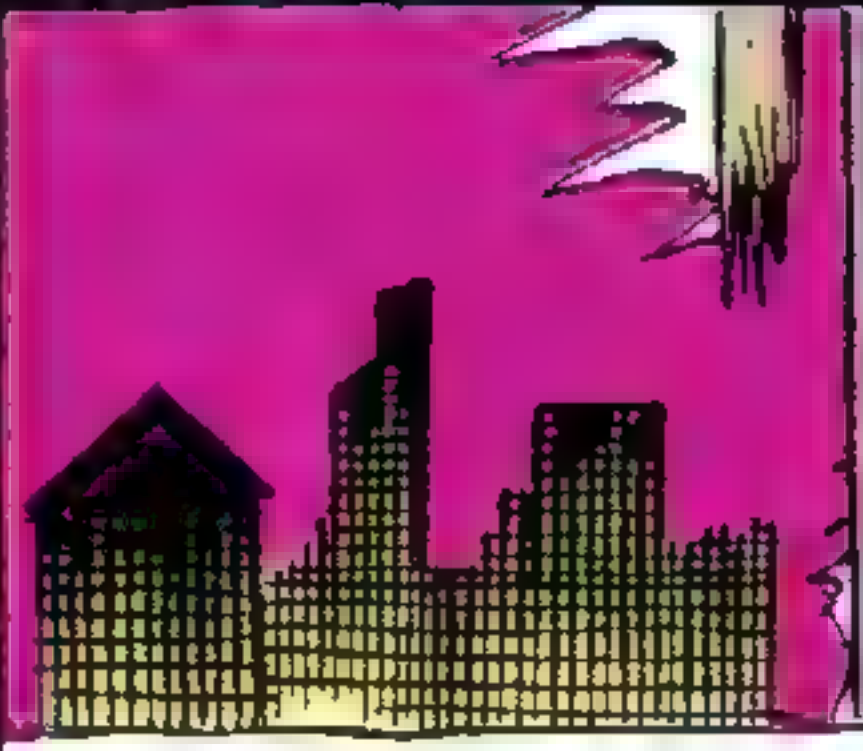
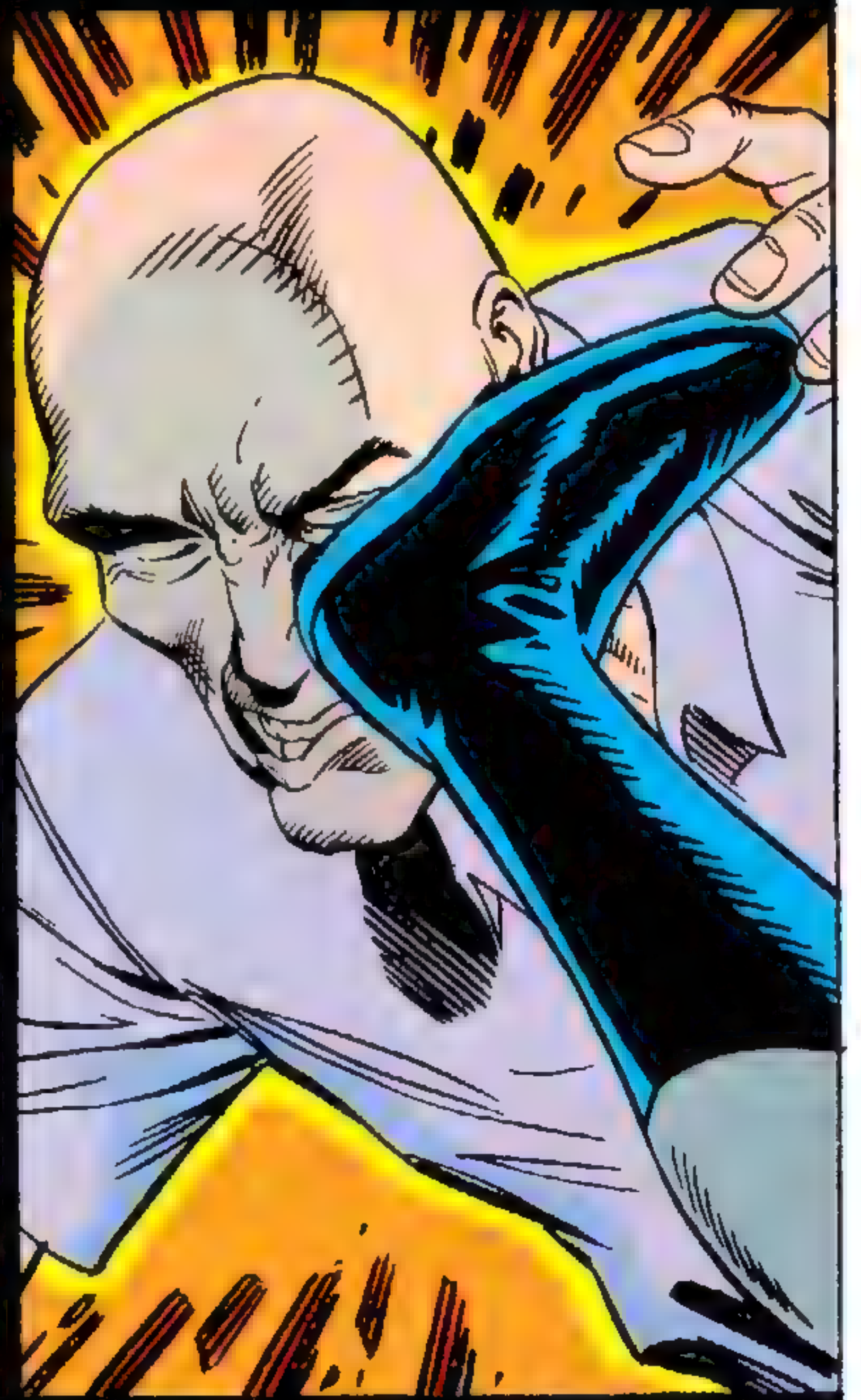
THIS IS WAR.

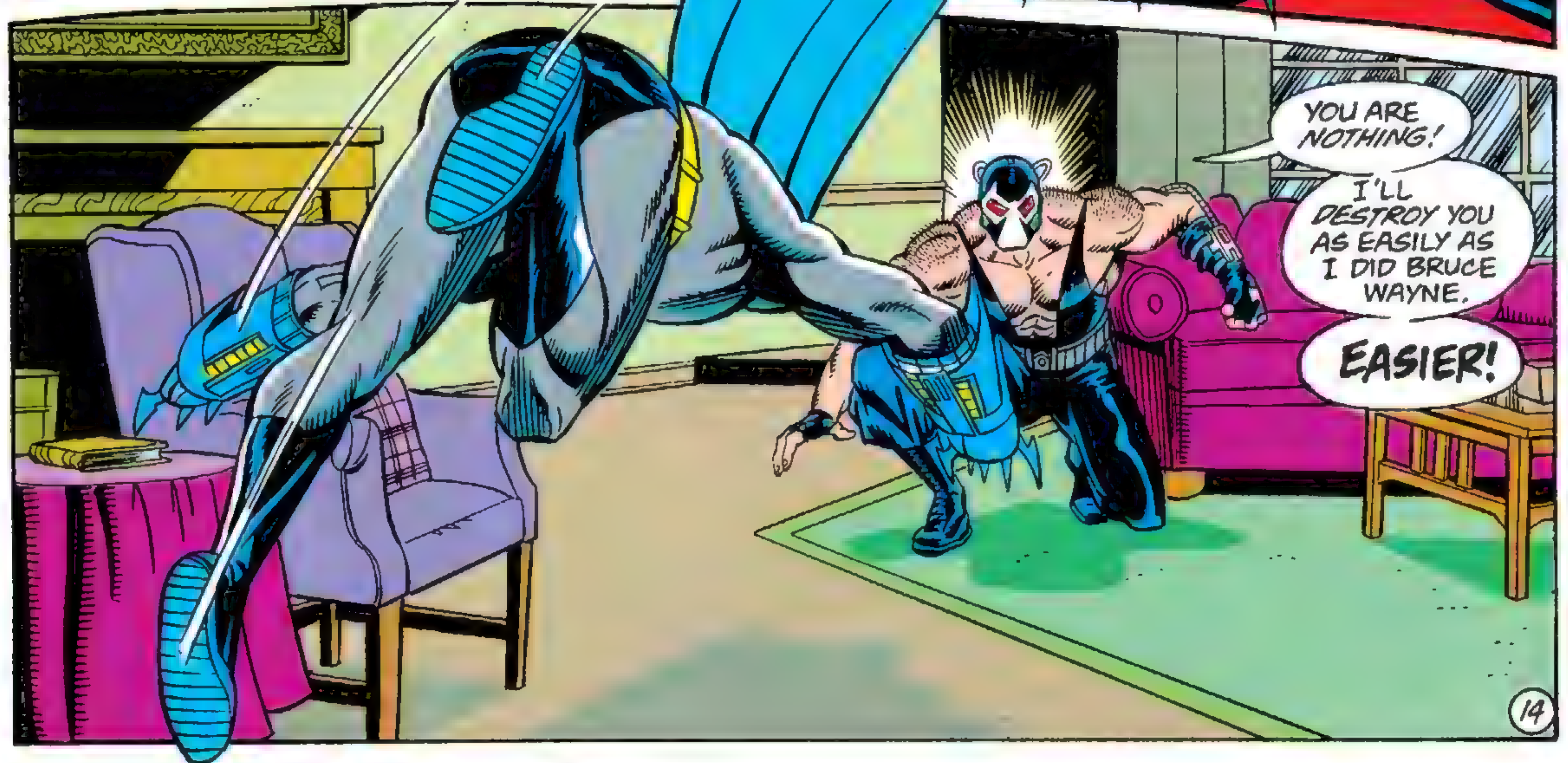
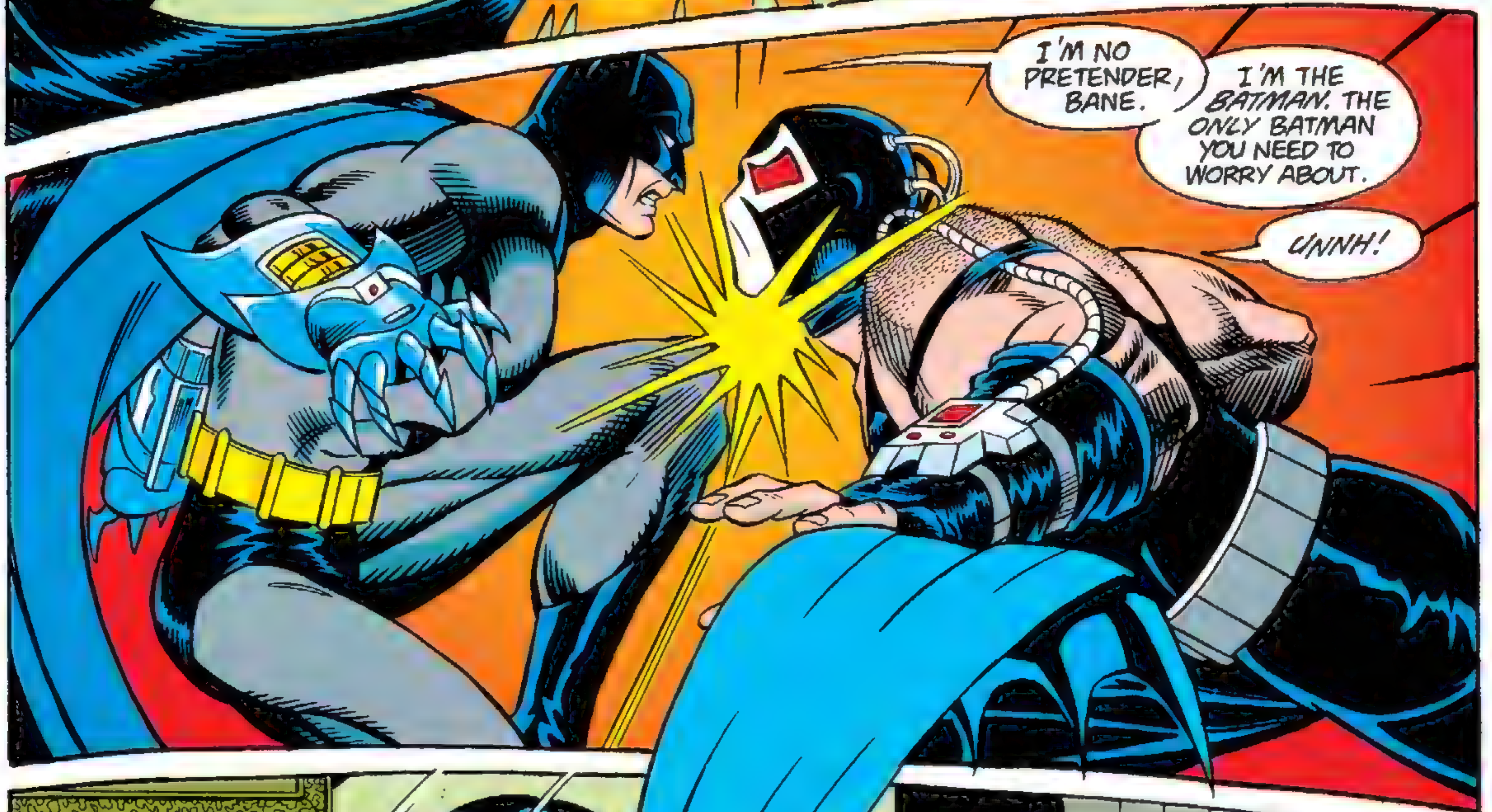
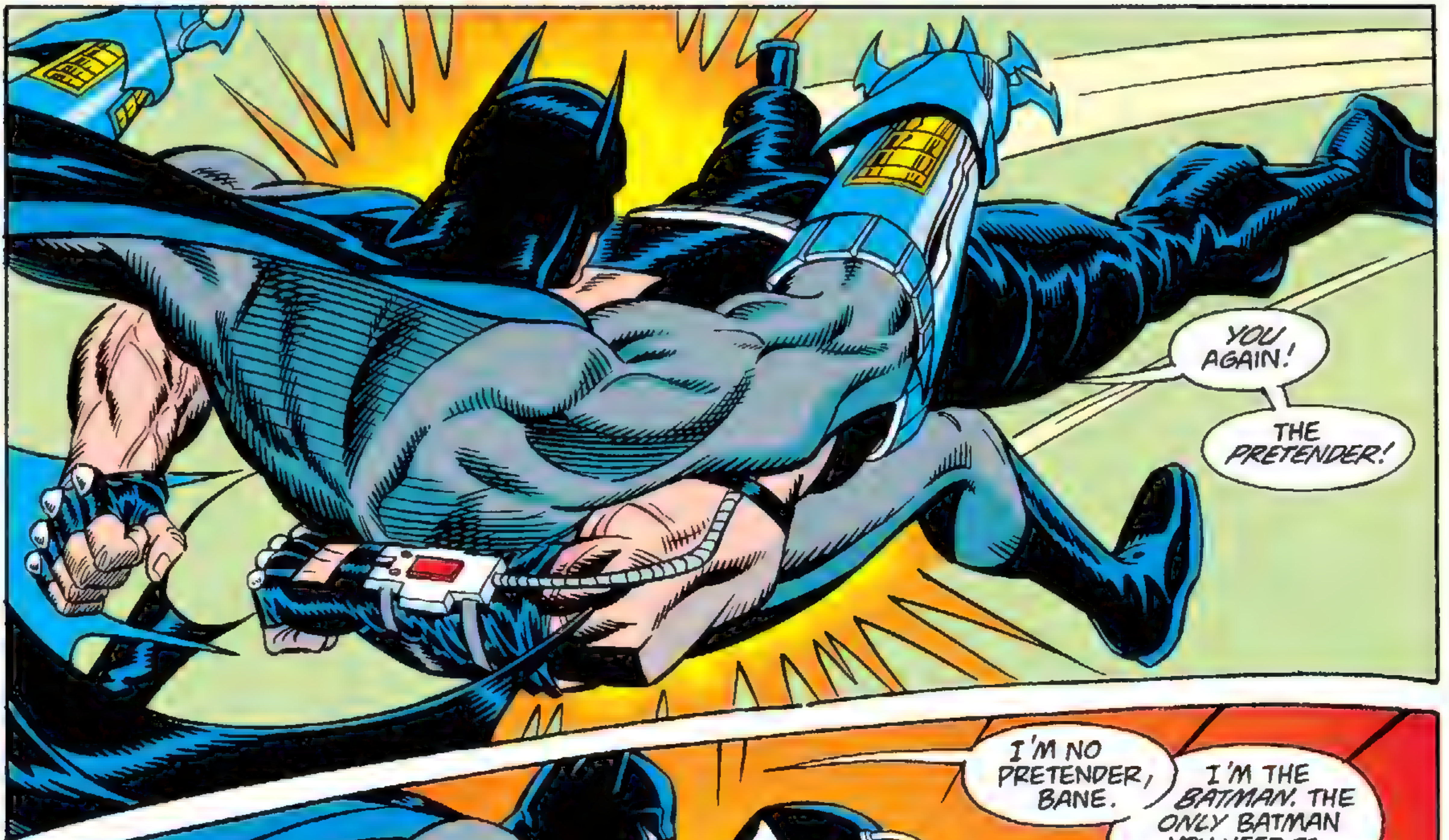


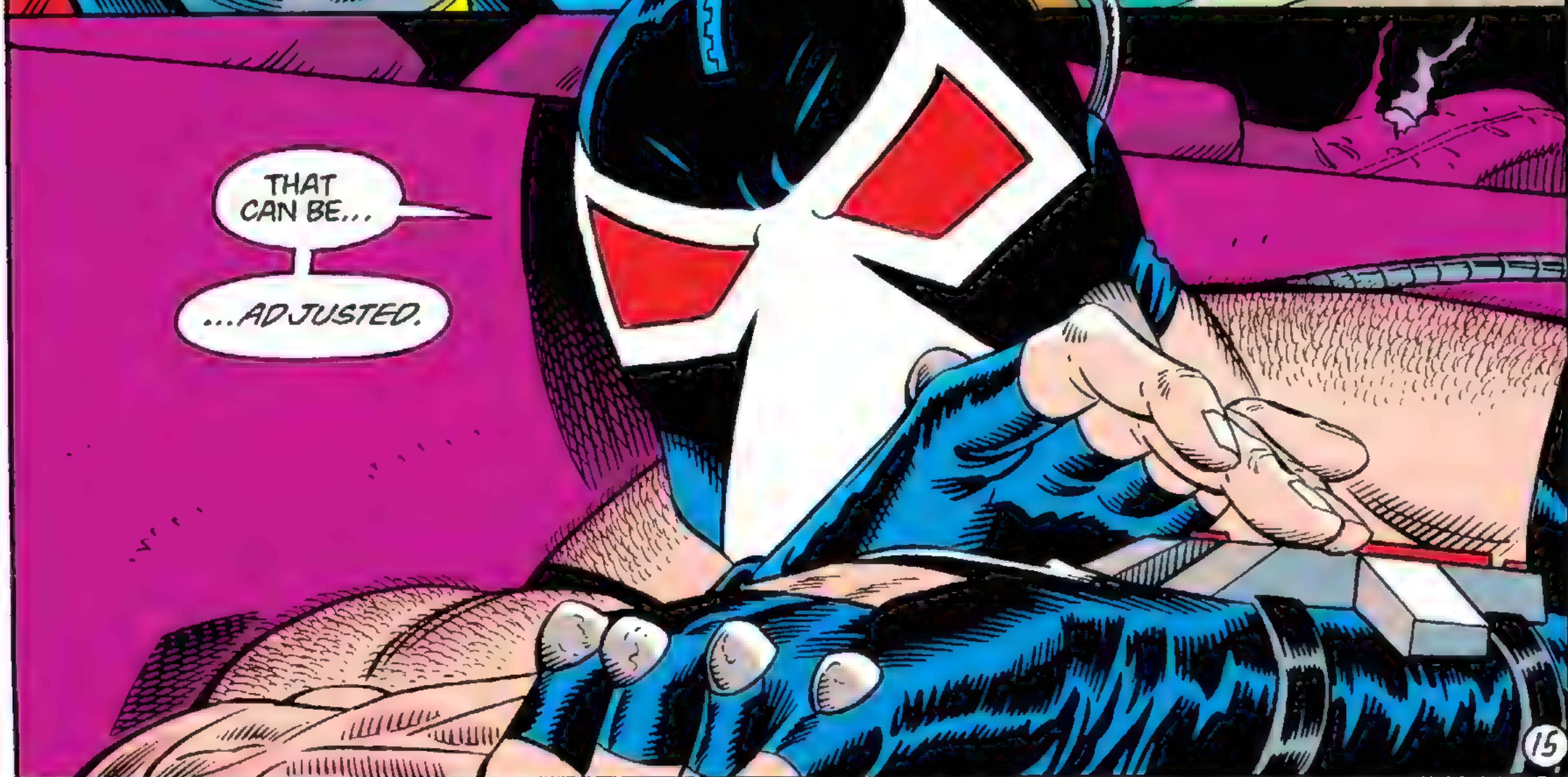
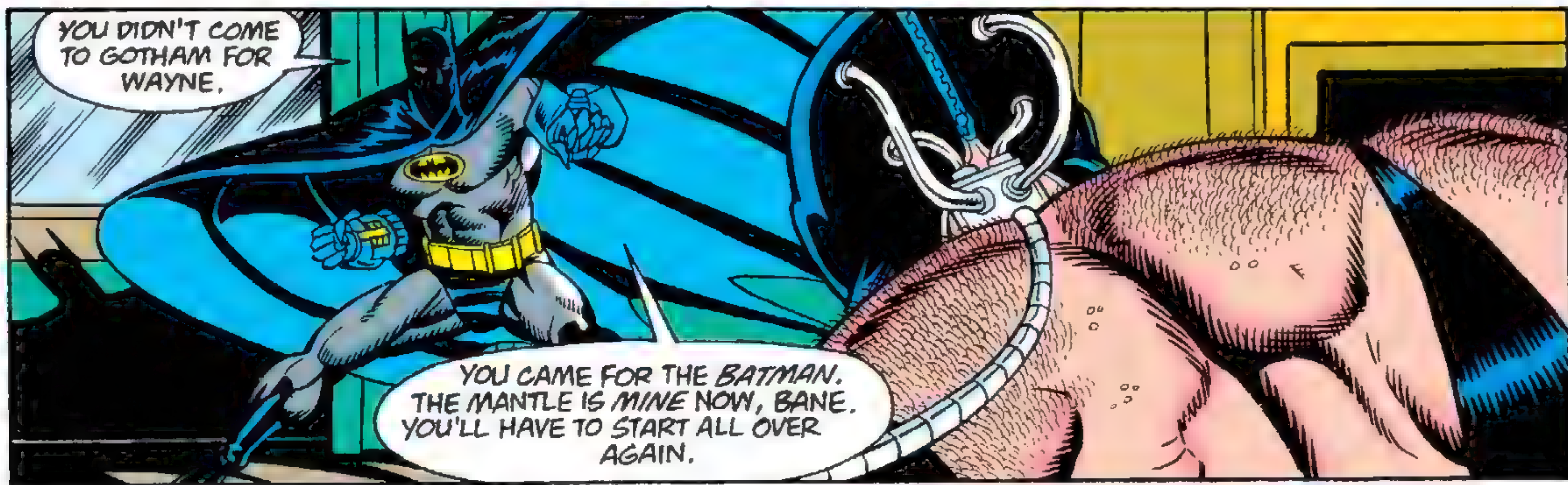
THE UNDERLINGS ARE
JUST CHAFF.

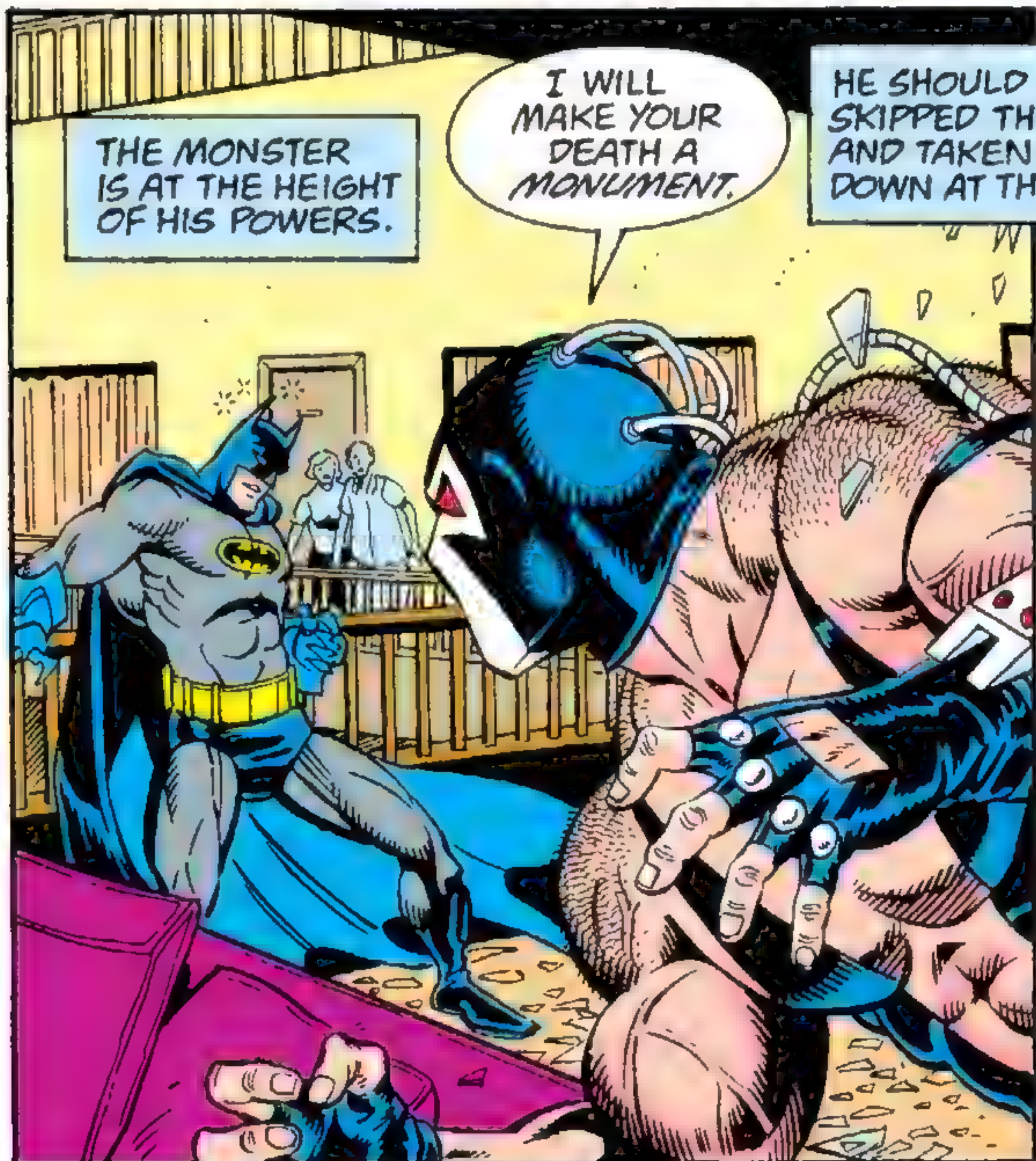
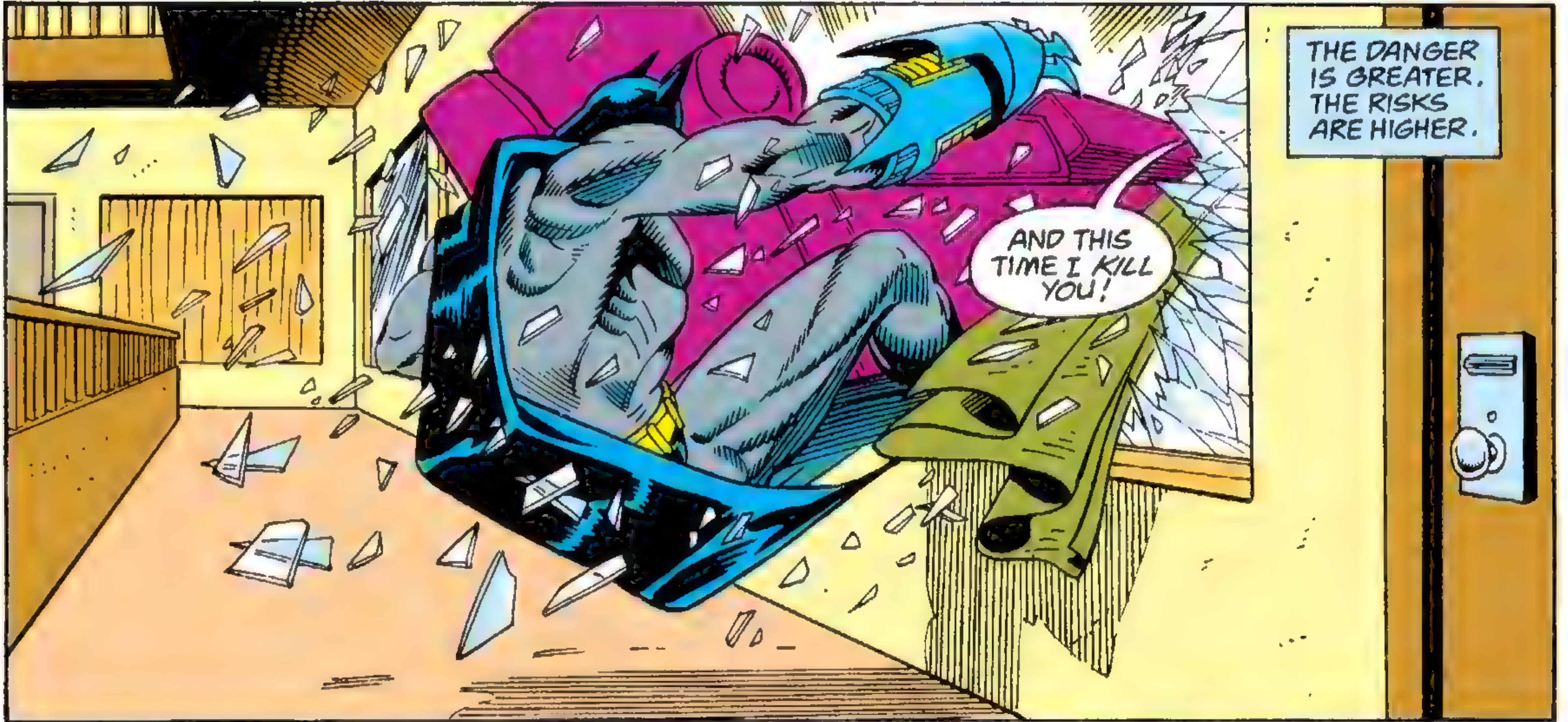
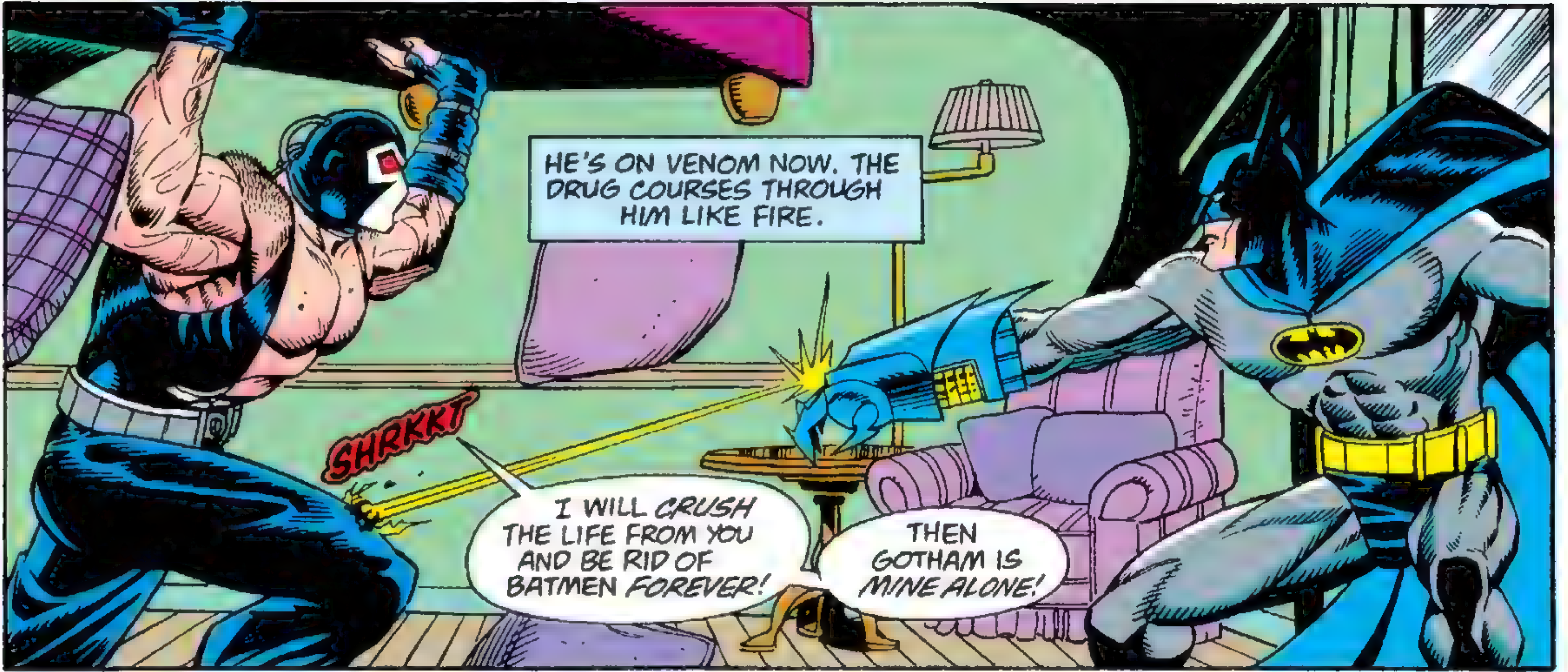


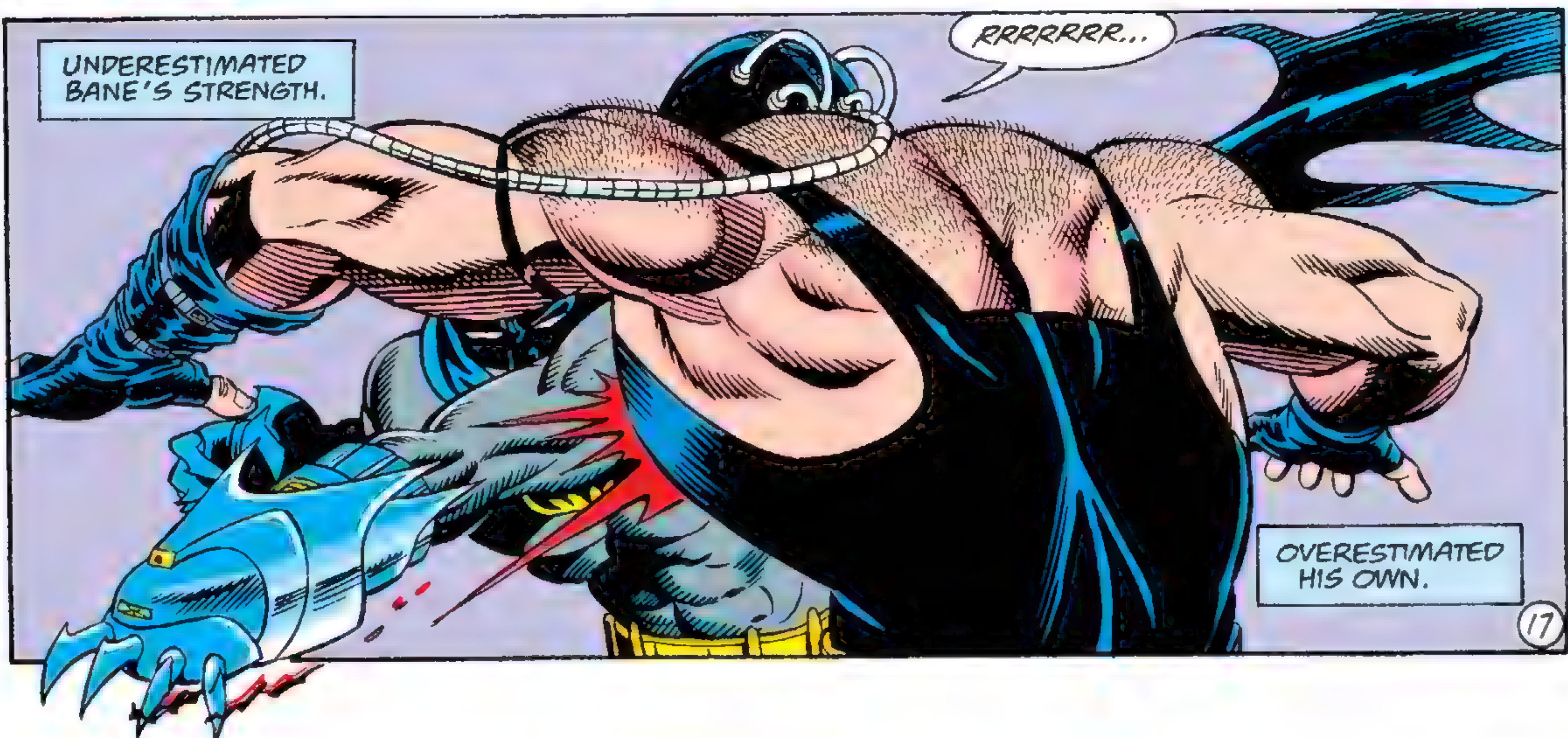
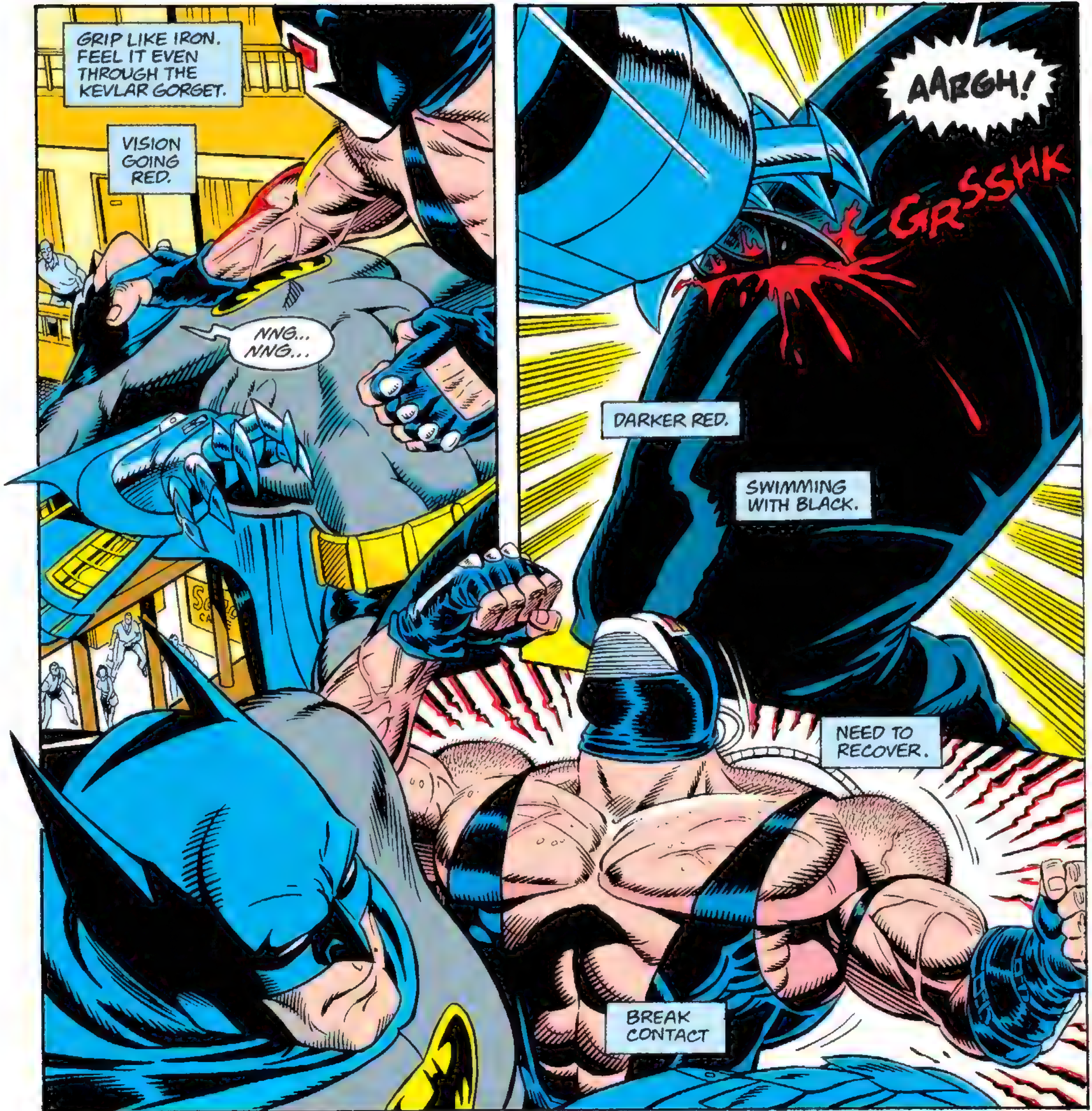
GET THROUGH THEM
AND MOVE ON.

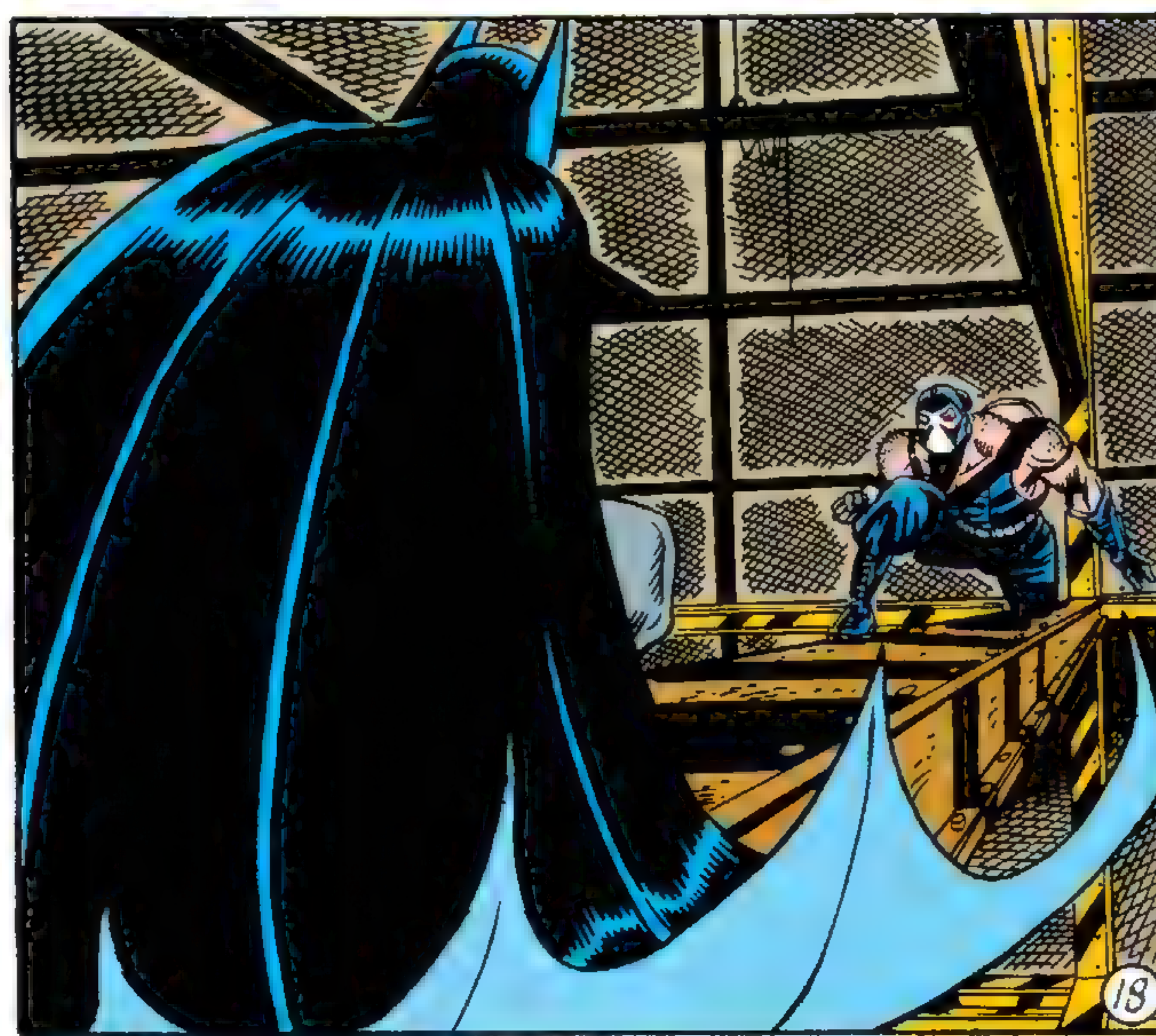
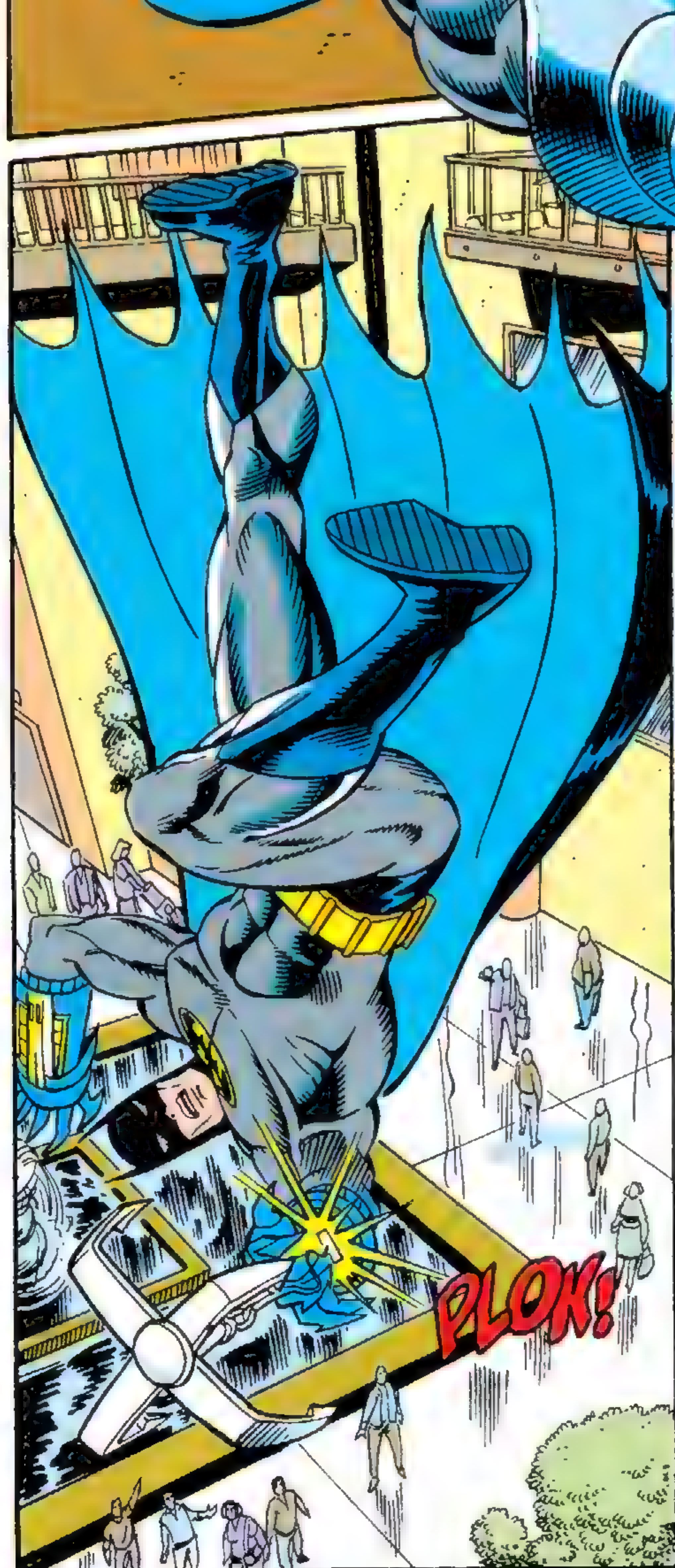
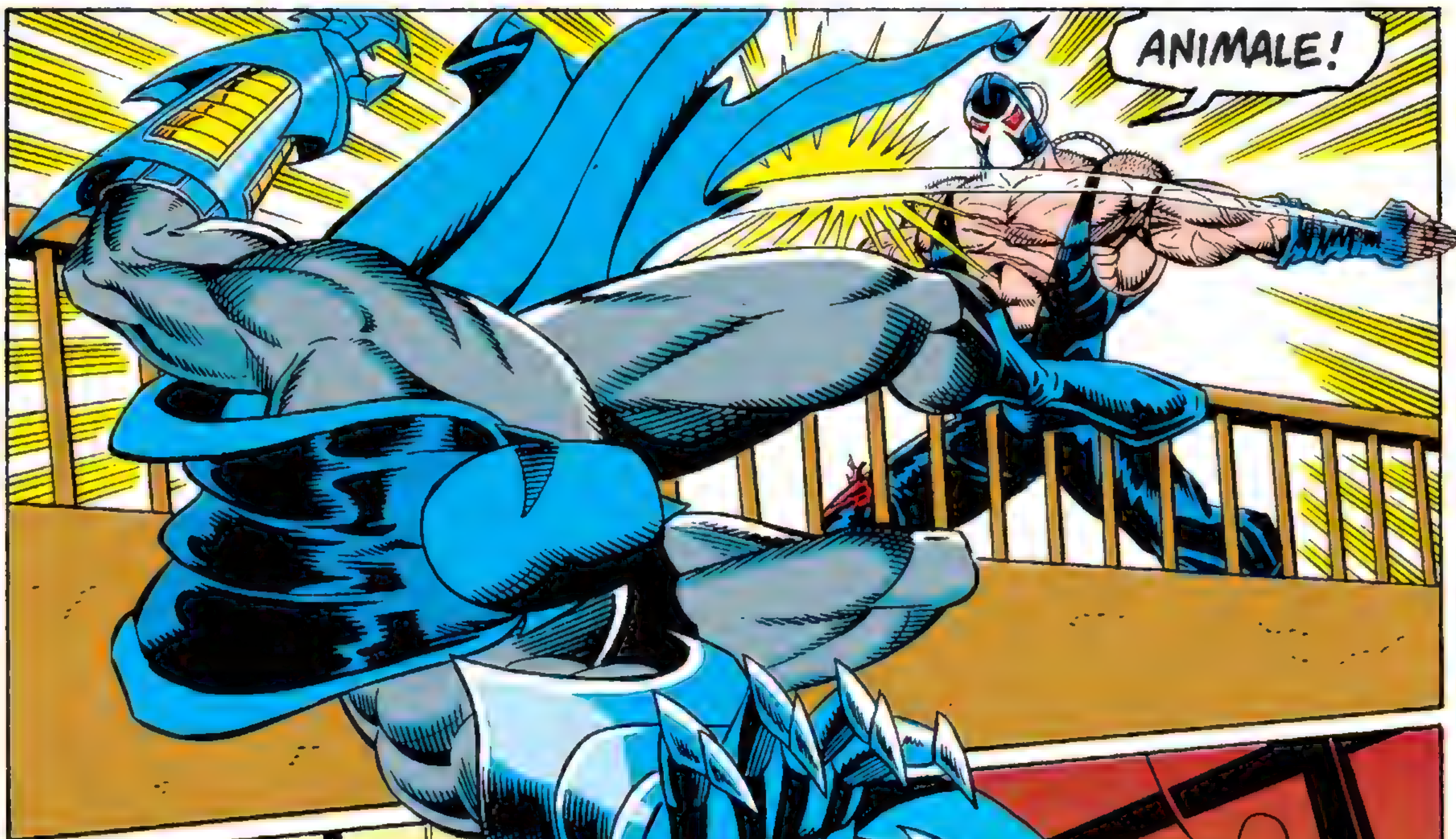


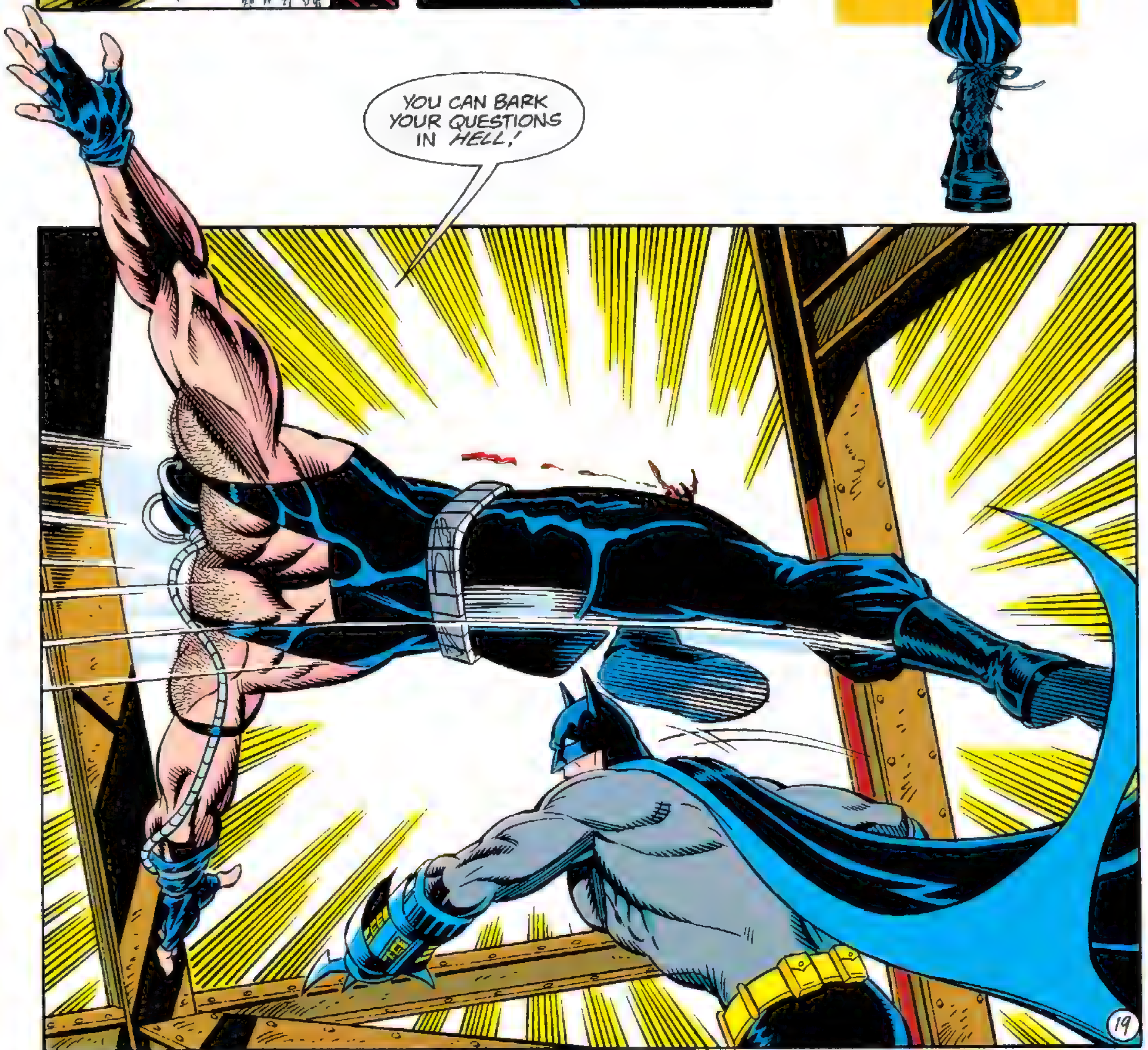


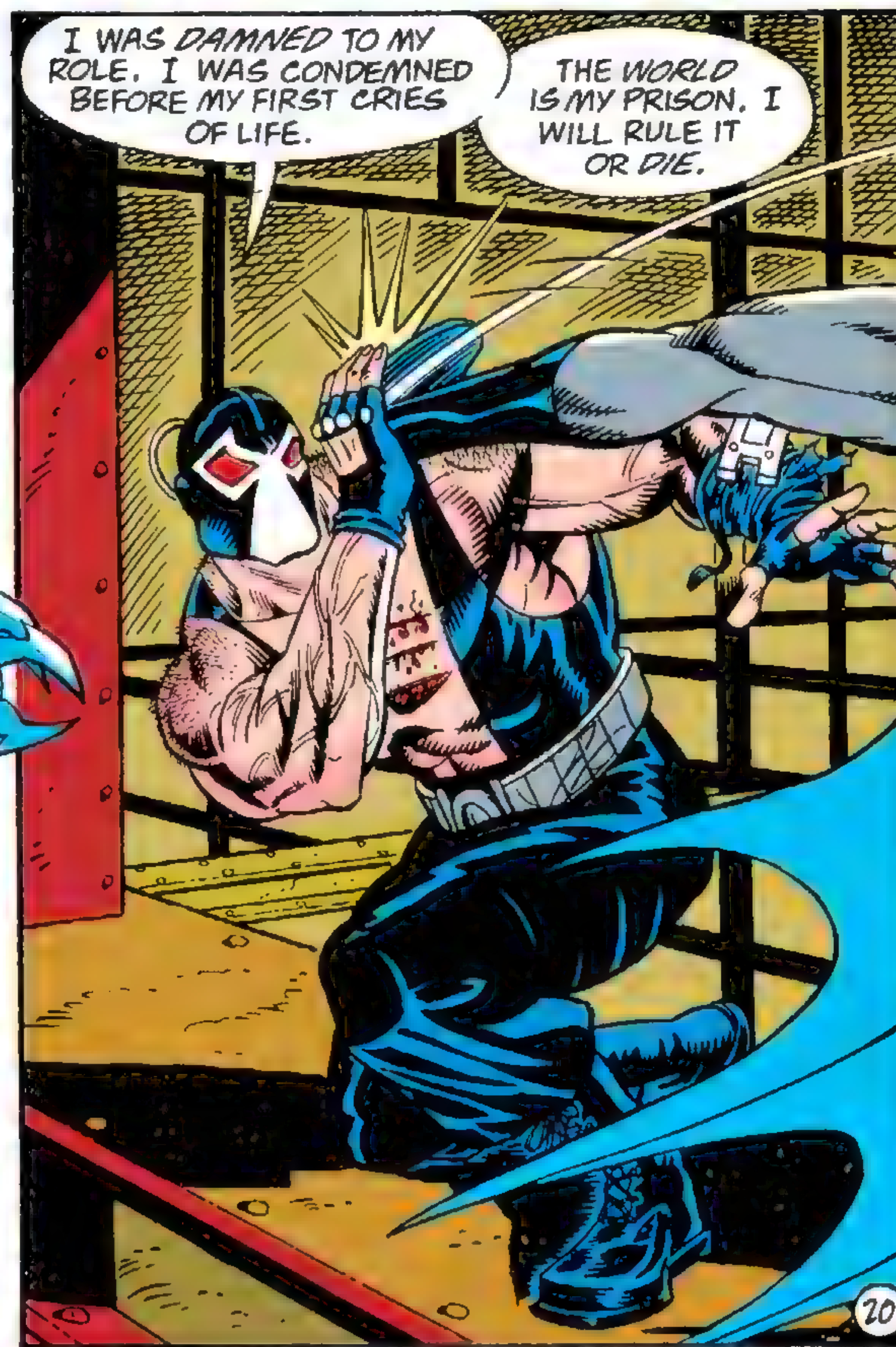
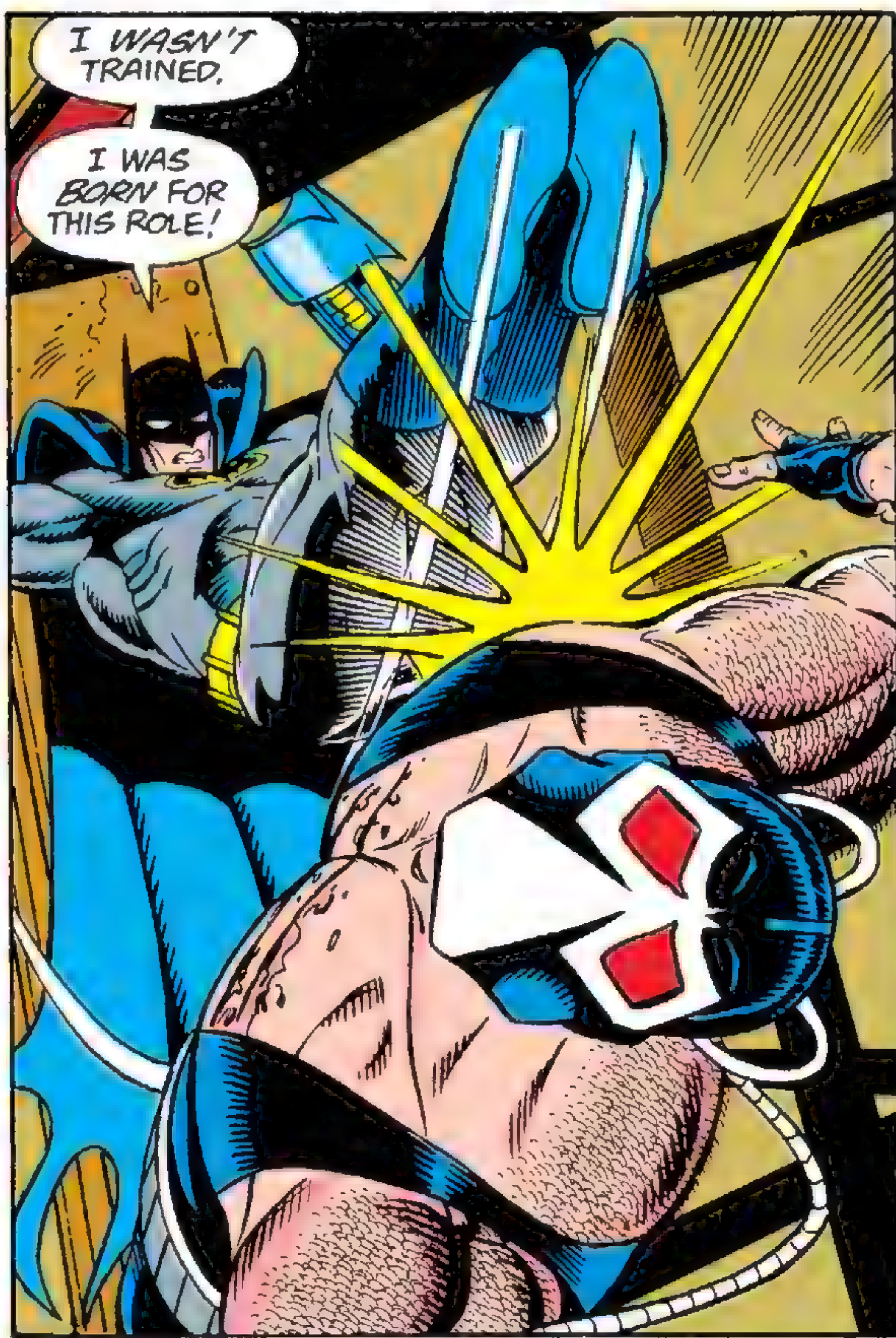


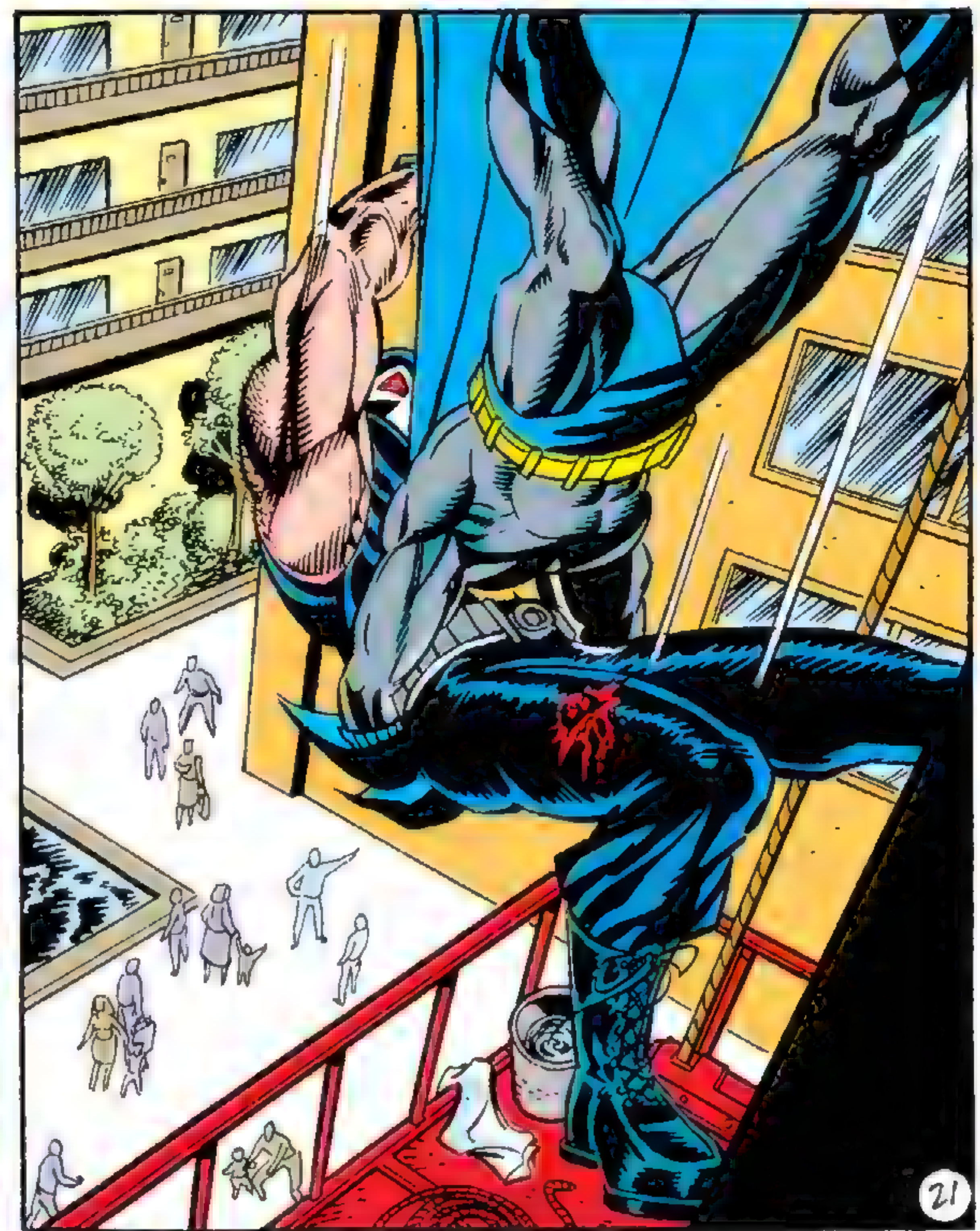
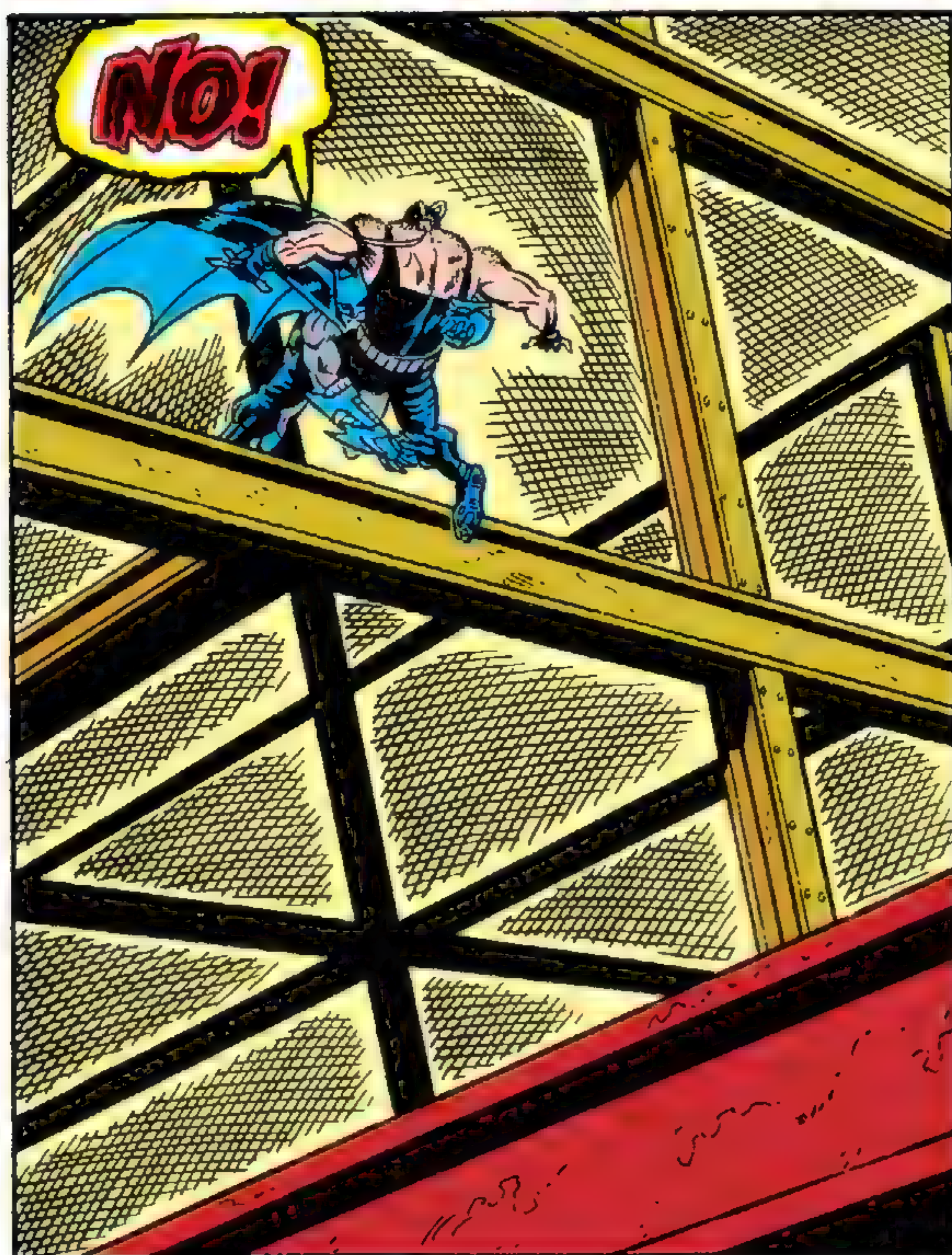
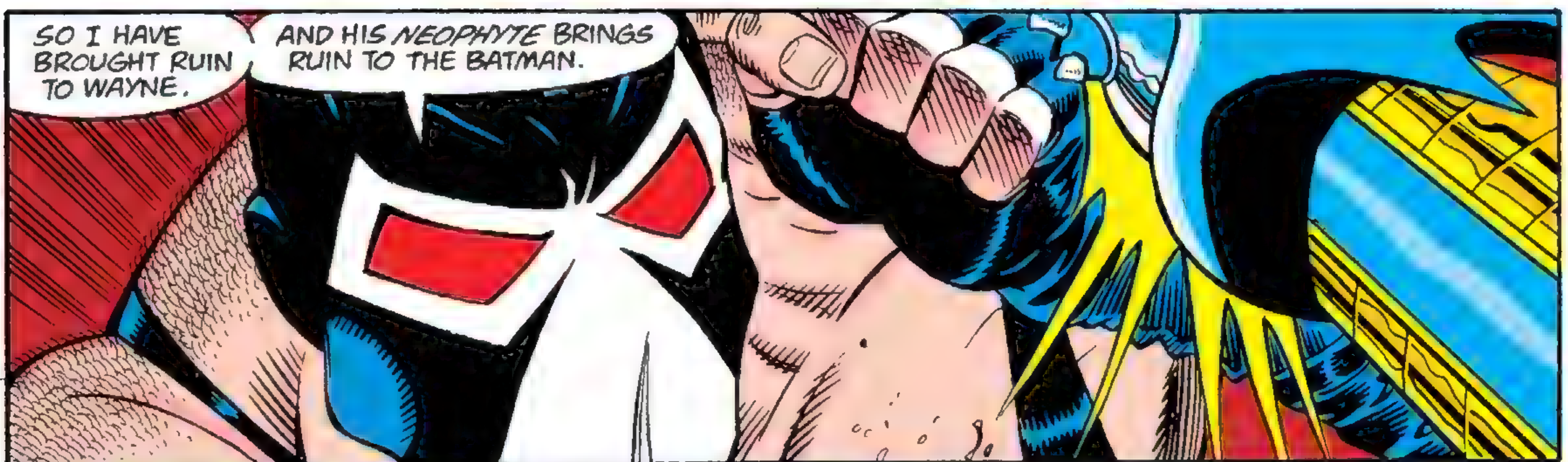
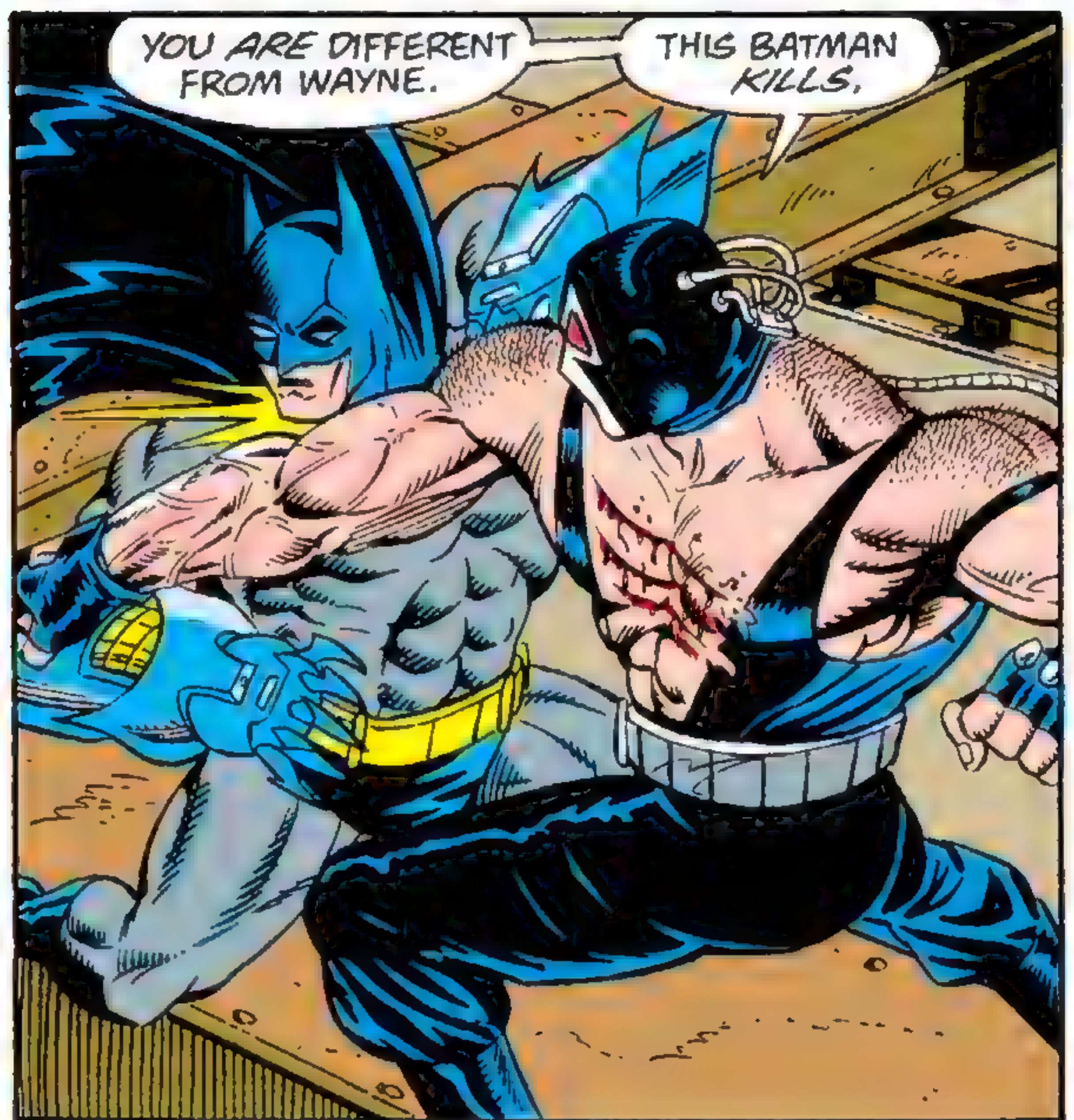


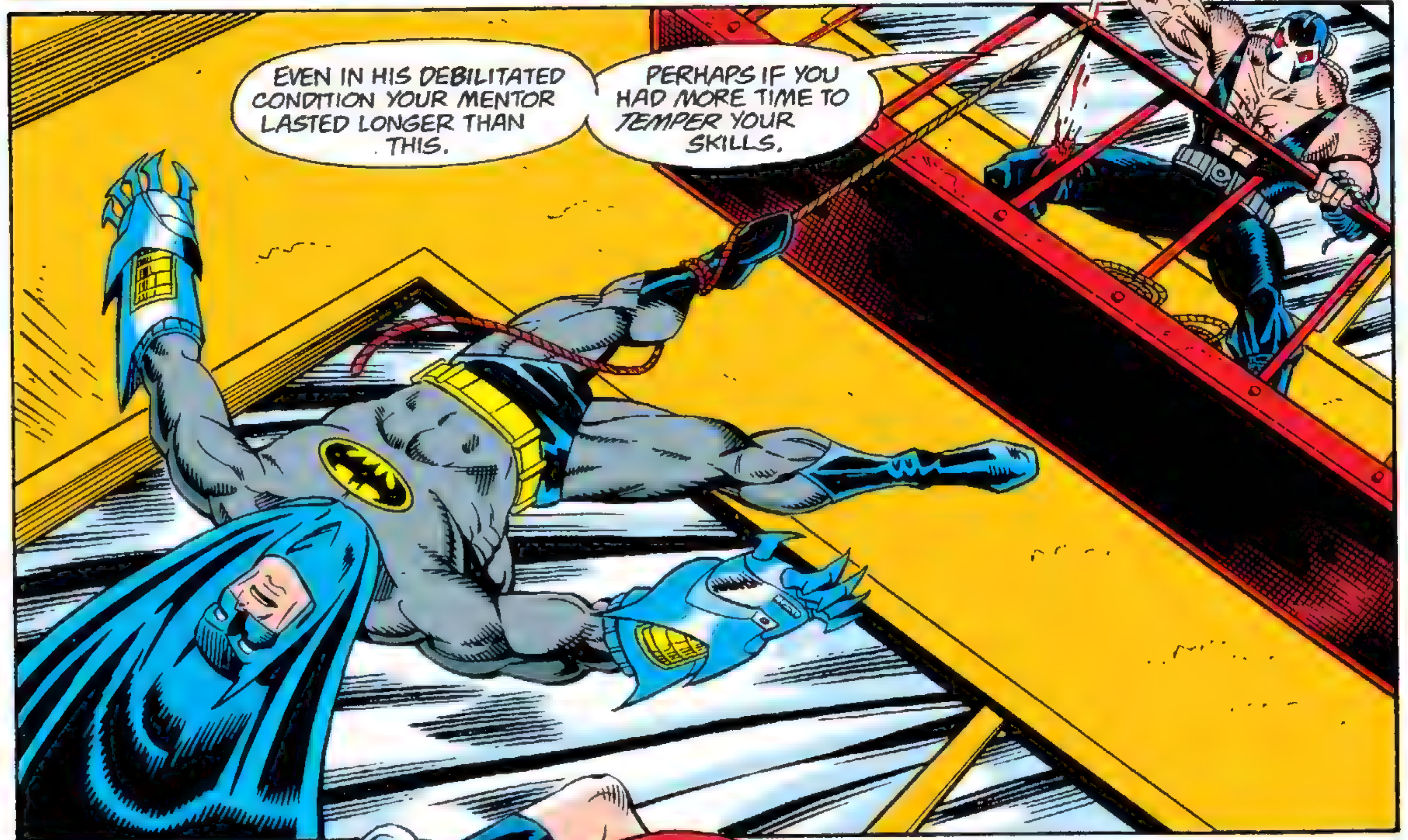
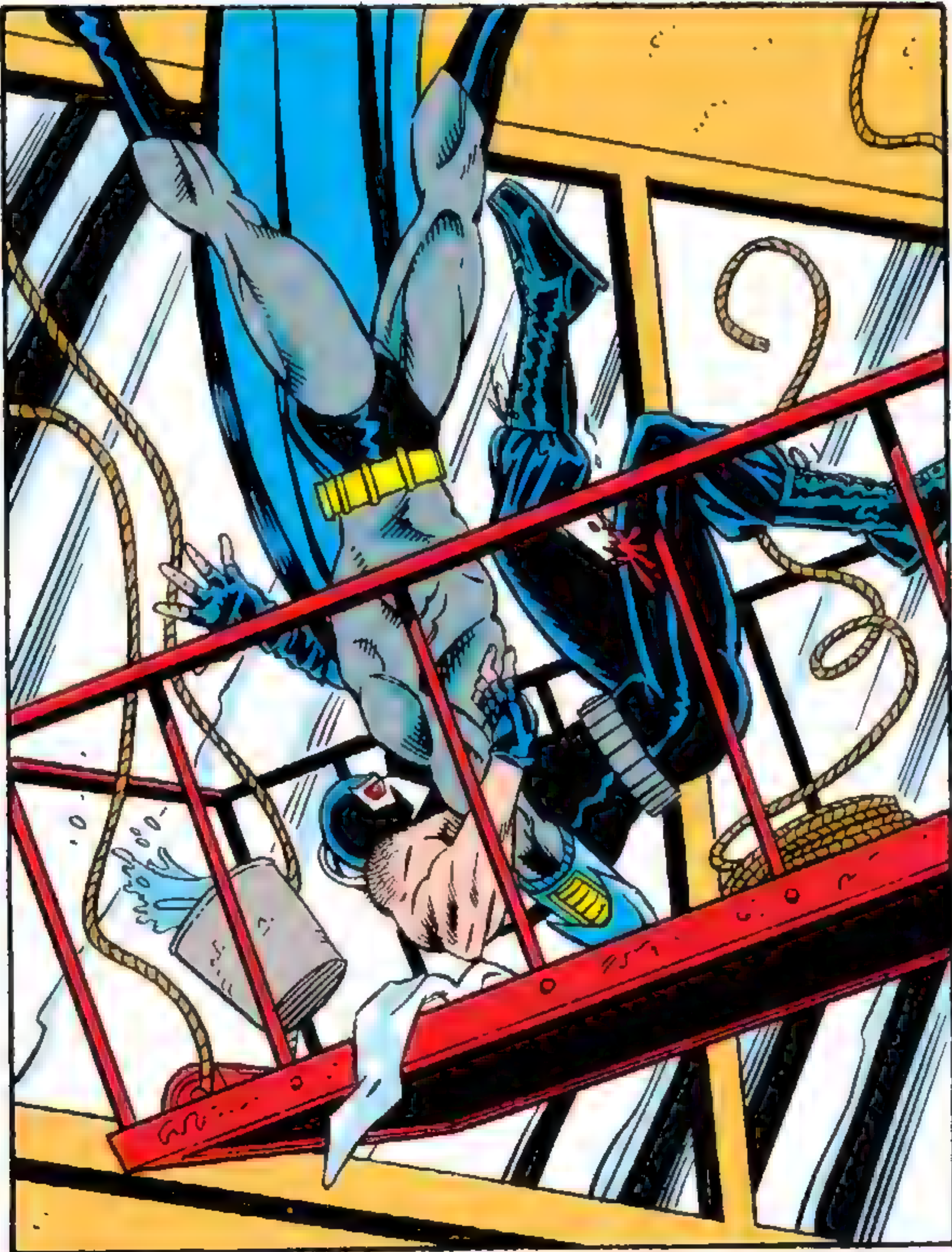






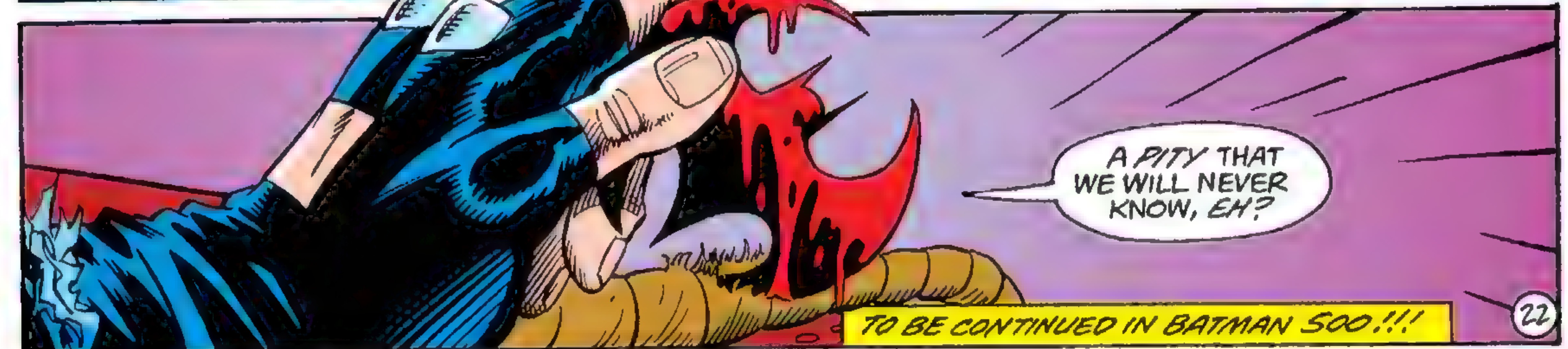






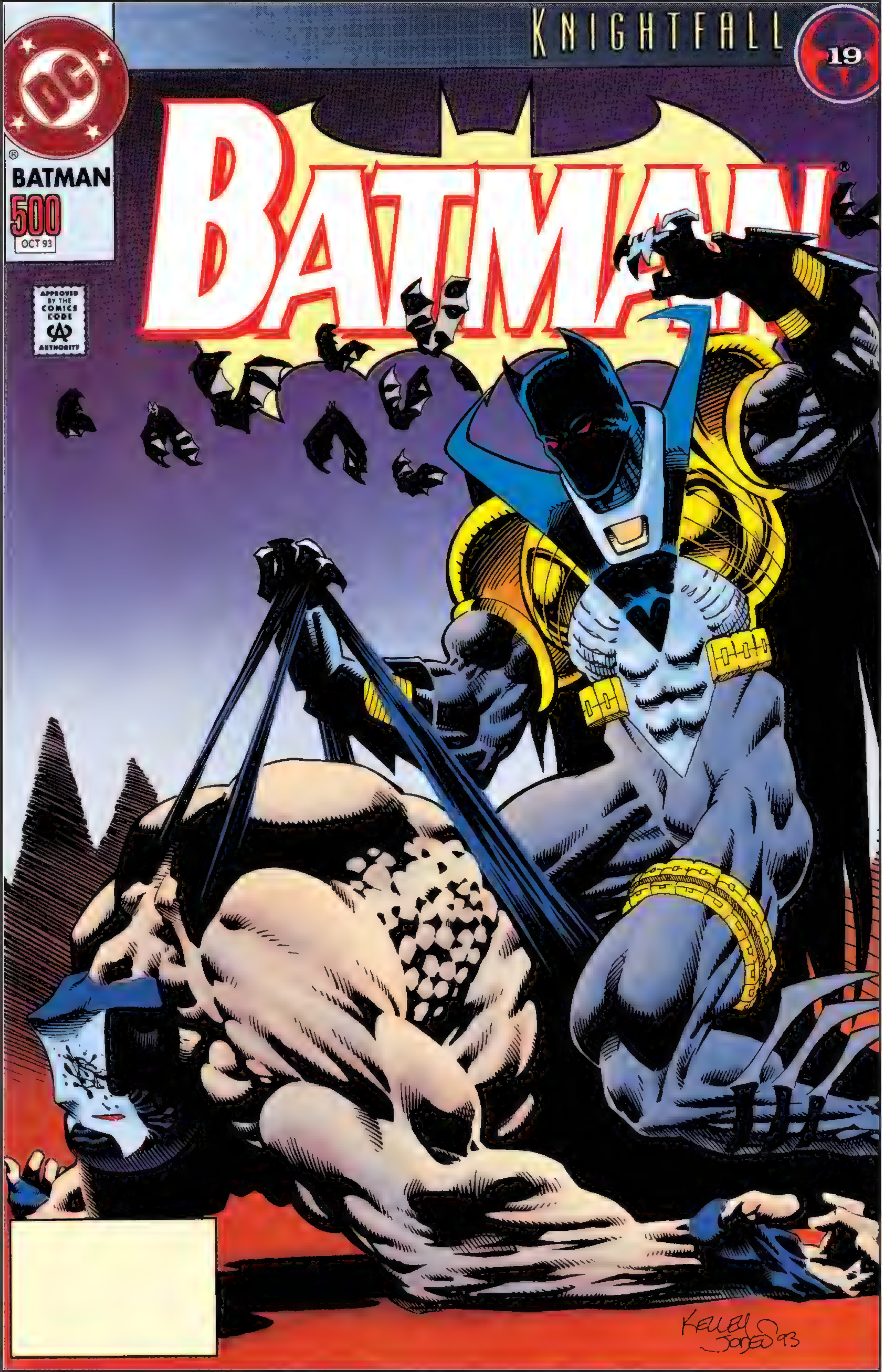
EVEN IN HIS DEBILITATED
CONDITION YOUR MENTOR
LASTED LONGER THAN
THIS.

PERHAPS IF YOU
HAD MORE TIME TO
TEMPER YOUR
SKILLS.



A PITY THAT
WE WILL NEVER
KNOW, EH?

TO BE CONTINUED IN BATMAN 500!!!



DARK ANGEL

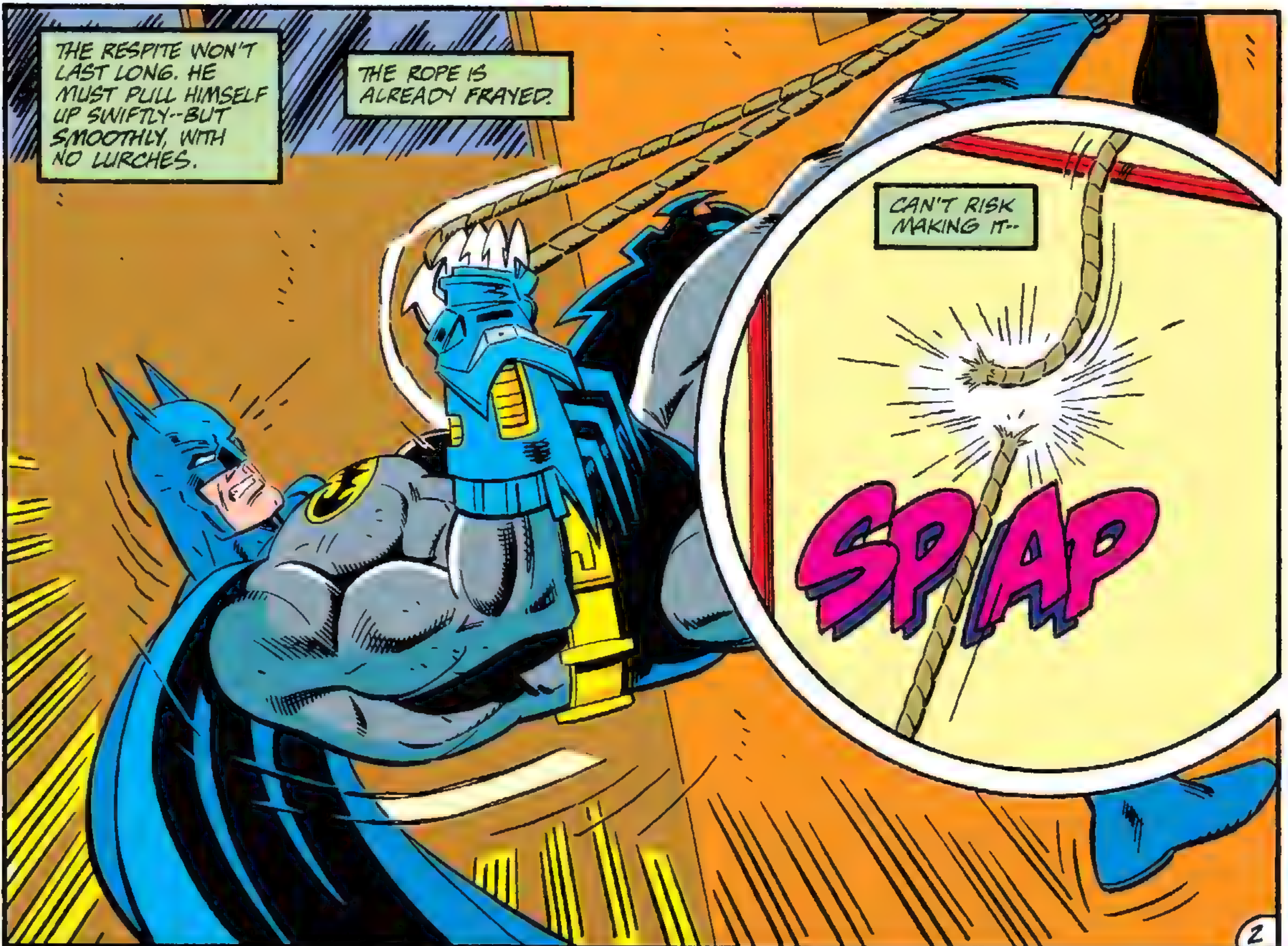
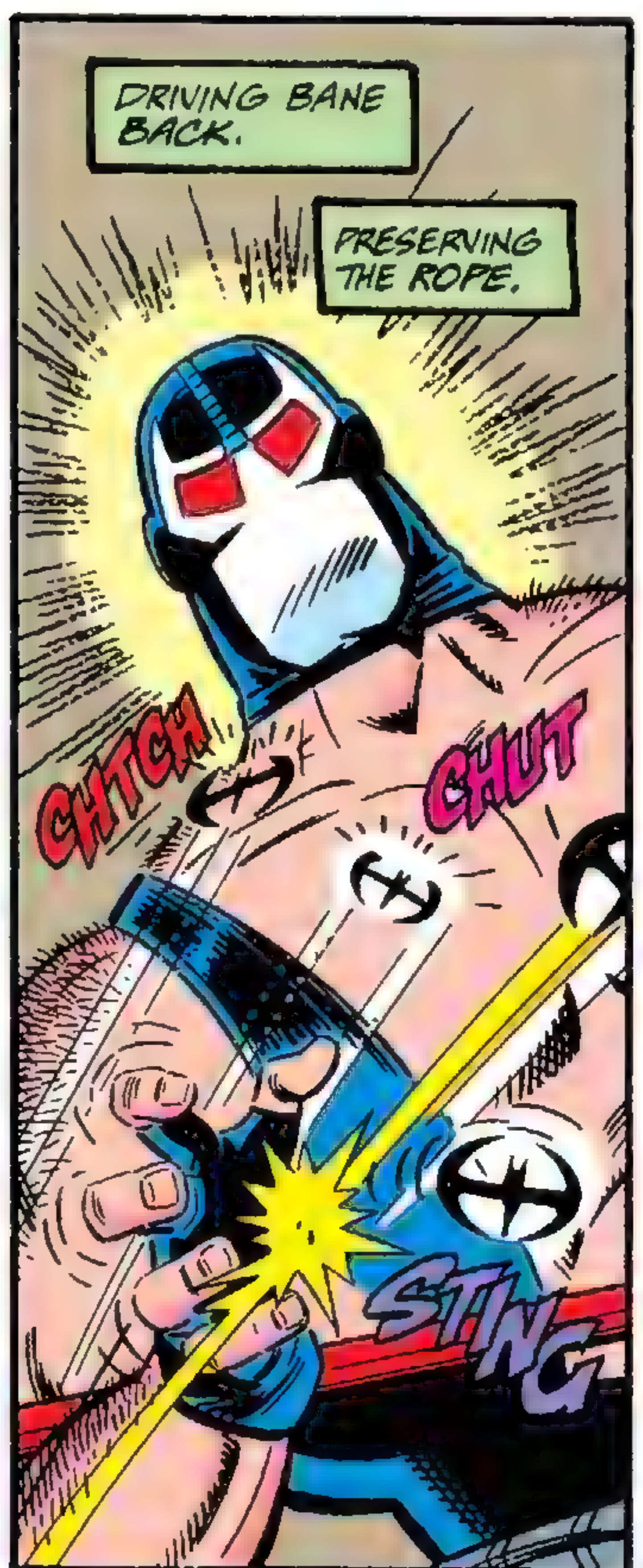
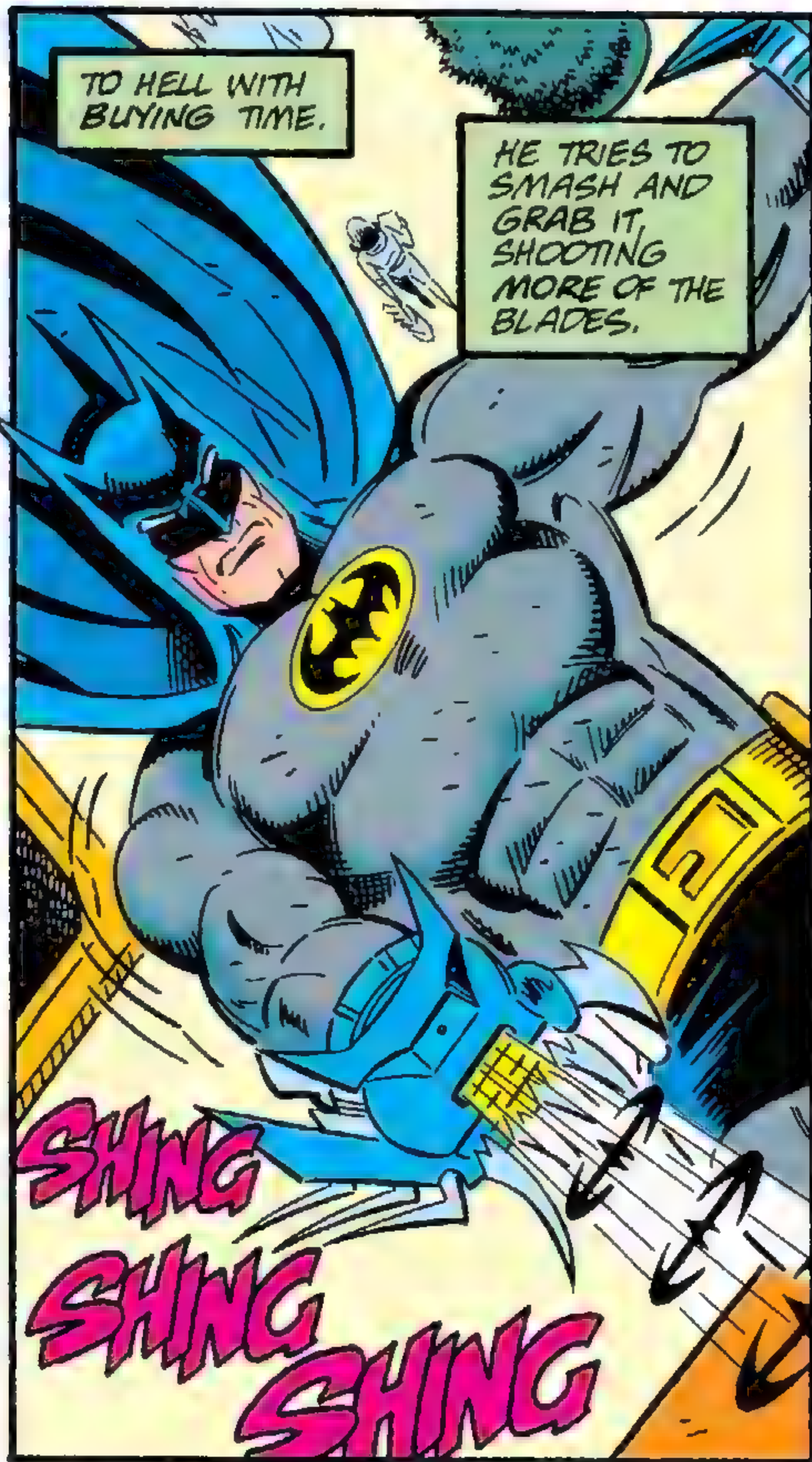
I: THE FALL

HIS FIRST REAL TEST AS THE BATMAN--AND HE HAD HIM, HAD BANE UNDER HIS FIST.

COULD HAVE DROPPED HIM.

INSTEAD, HE FELL.

DOUG MOENCH--JIM APARO & TERRY AUSTIN--MIKE MANLEY
WRITER Pages 1-28 ARTISTS Pages 29-56
ADRIENNE ROY--KEN BRUZENAK--JORDAN B. GORFINKEL--DENNIS O'NEIL--BATMAN CREATED BY
COLORIST LETTERER ASSISTANT EDITOR EDITOR BOB KANE



SEVERED, THE ROPE
IS USELESS.

HE KICKS
IT FREE.

ABOVE, BANE THINKS
HE IS DEAD.

HRHHH!

AND WITH NO SECURE
PURCHASE FOR HIS
GRAPNEL, IT WOULD BE
HARD TO ARGUE.

HE SHOOTS FOR
LIFE ANYWAY.

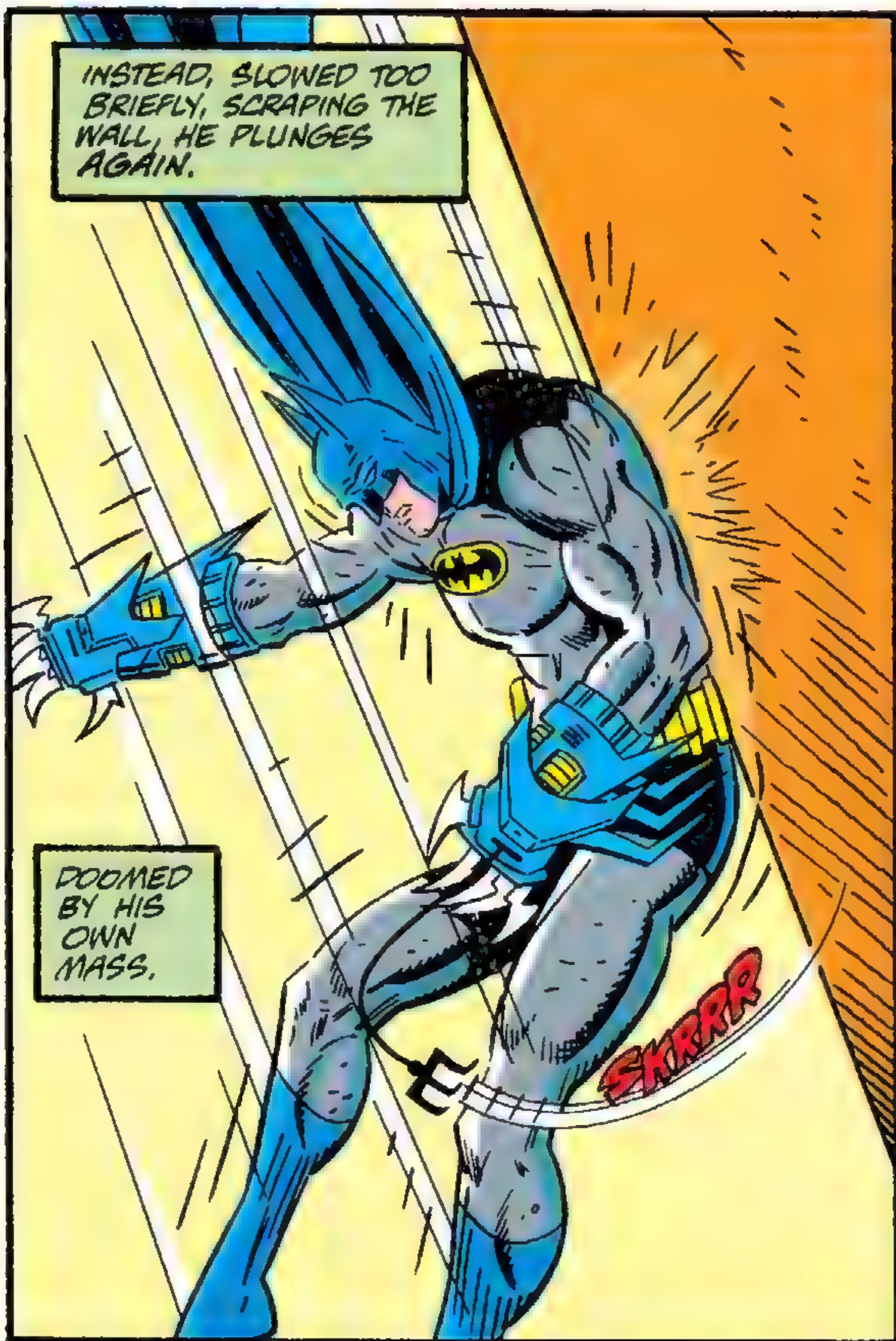
THE GRAPNEL
CATCHES POORLY,
AS EXPECTED, AND
EVEN AS THE BREATH
IS SLAMMED FROM
HIS BODY--

HE FEELS THE
LINE SLACKEN
IN HIS
GRASP.

HE WISHES HE
COULD FLY.

WUMPT

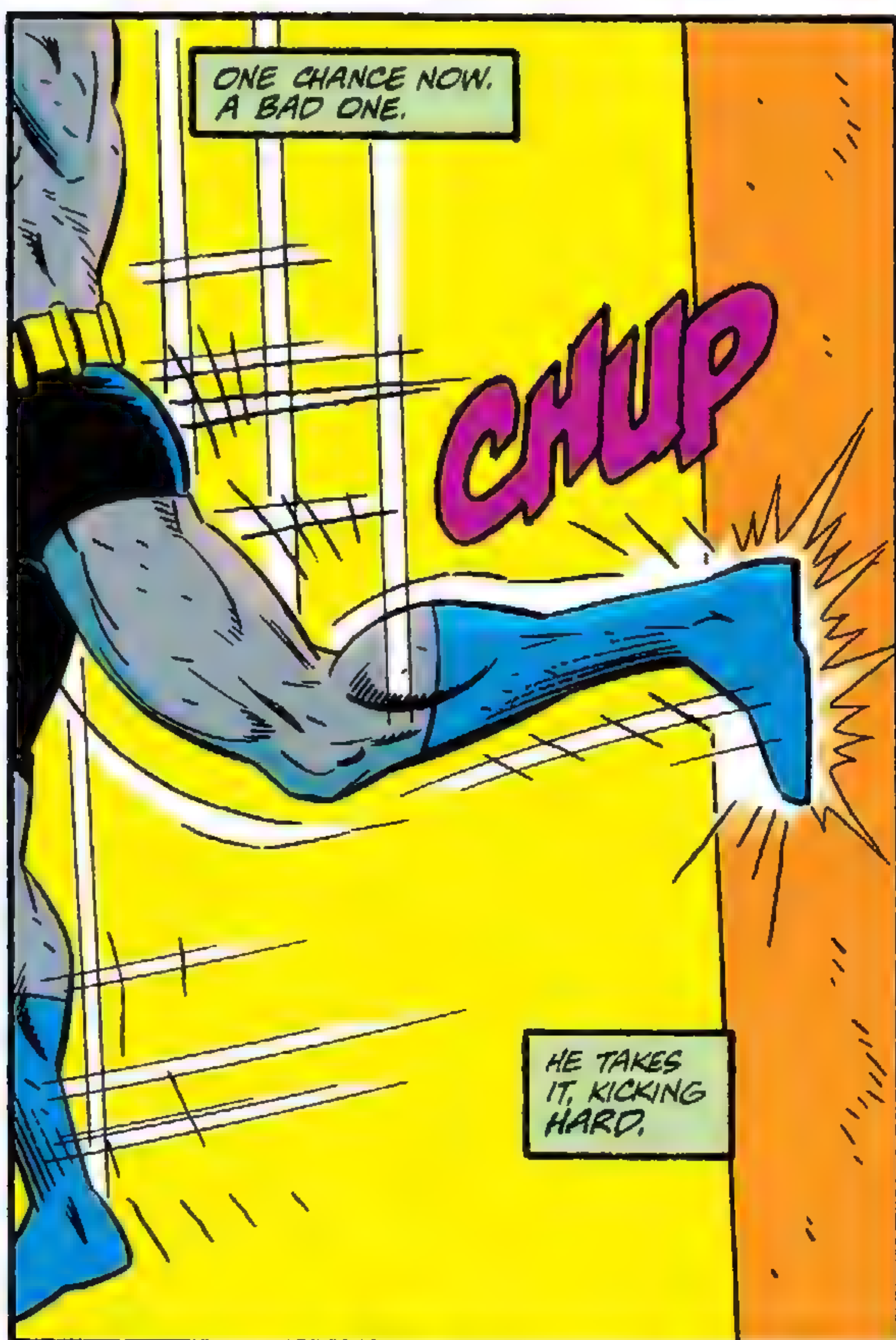
SKRIKT



INSTEAD, SLOWED TOO BRIEFLY, SCRAPING THE WALL, HE PLUNGES AGAIN.

DOOMED BY HIS OWN MASS.

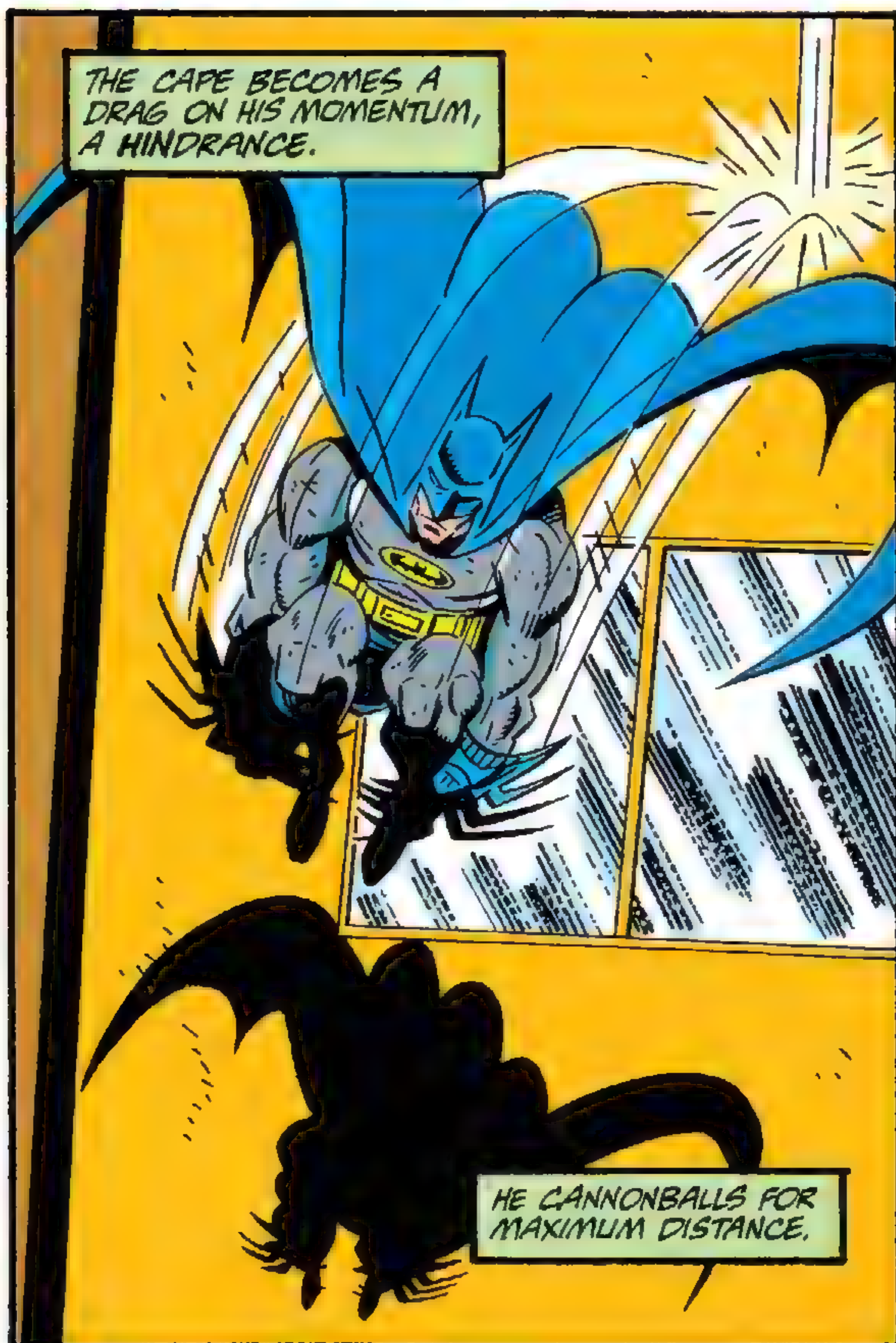
SKRRR



ONE CHANCE NOW. A BAD ONE.

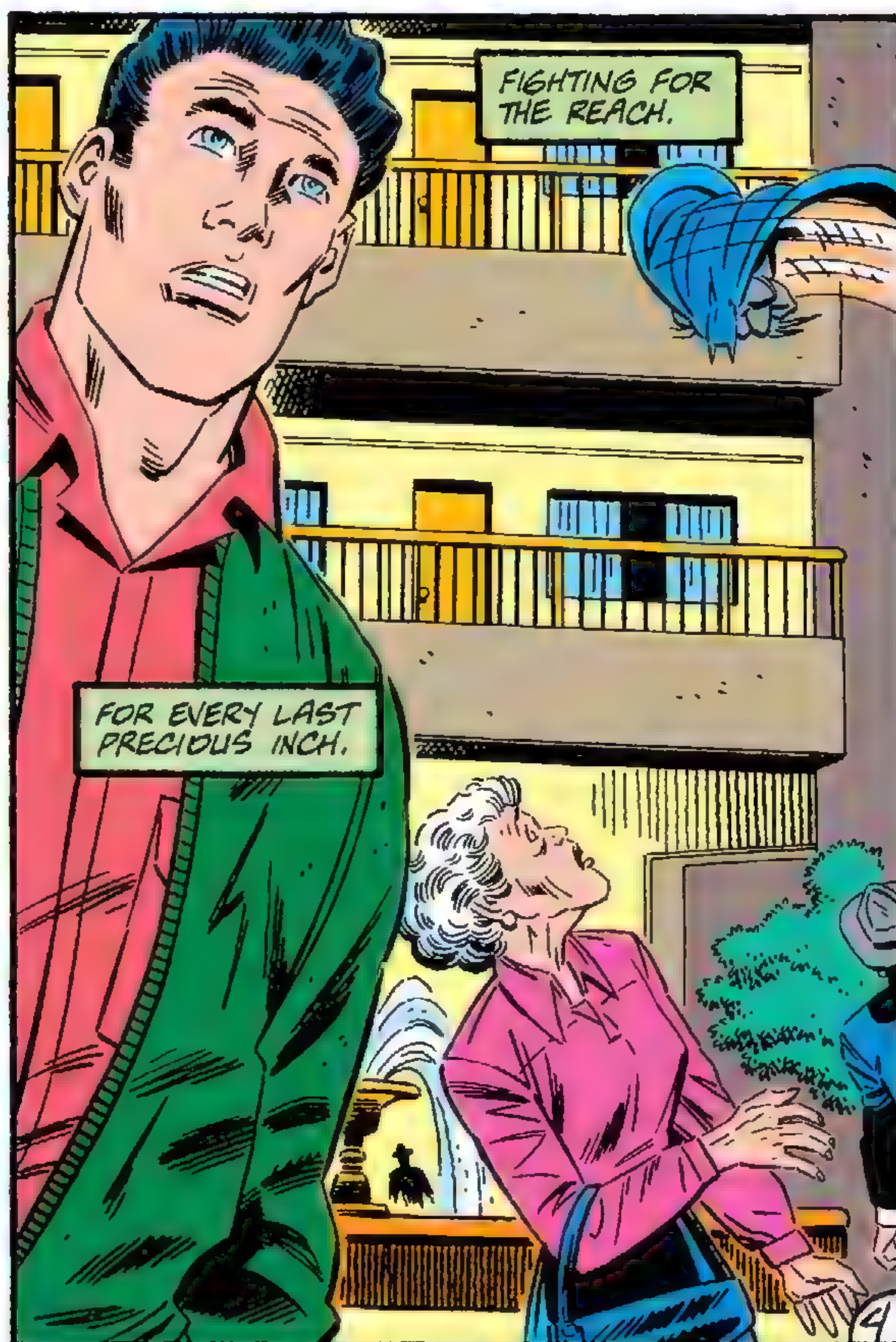
CHUP

HE TAKES IT, KICKING HARD.



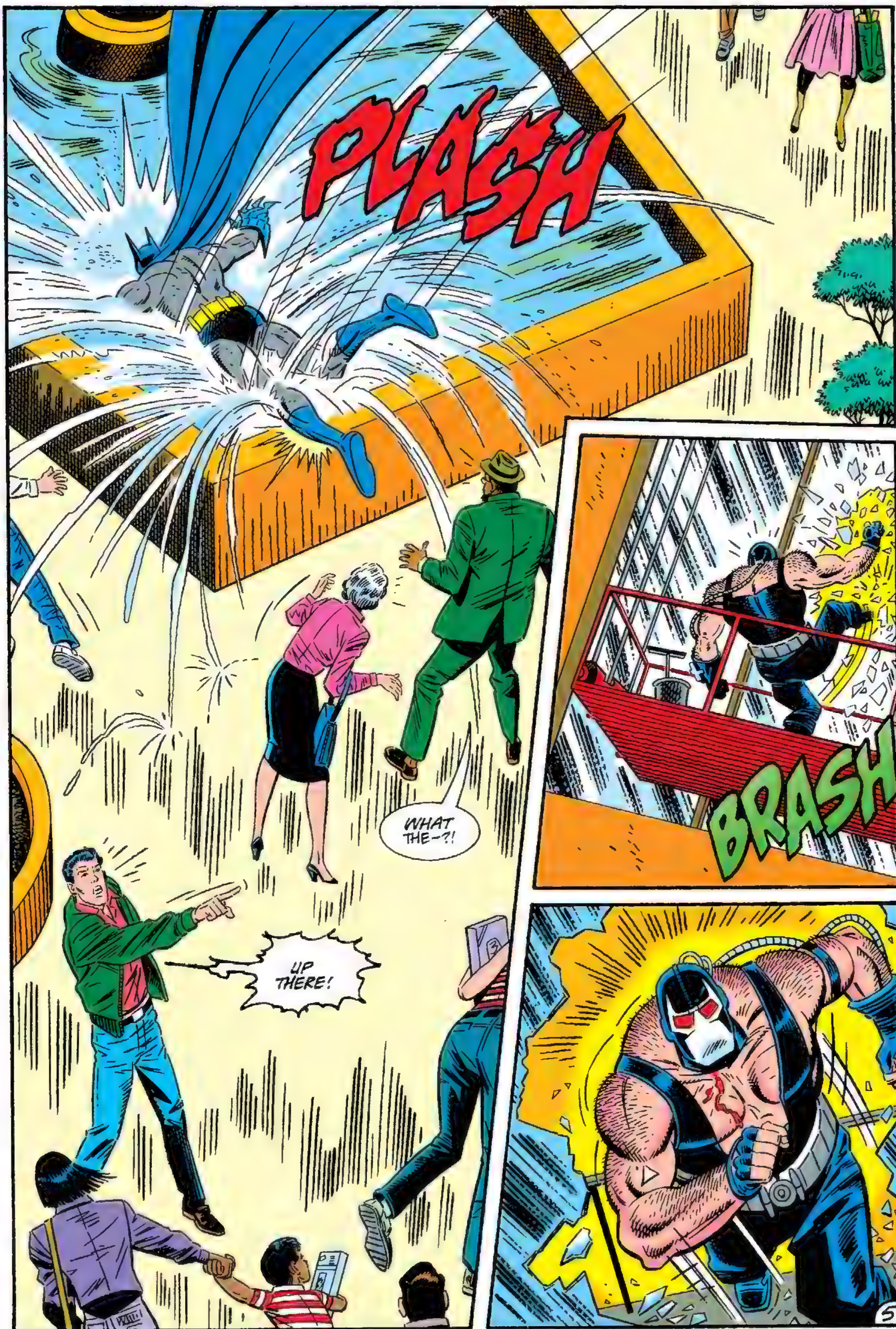
THE CAPE BECOMES A DRAG ON HIS MOMENTUM, A HINDRANCE.

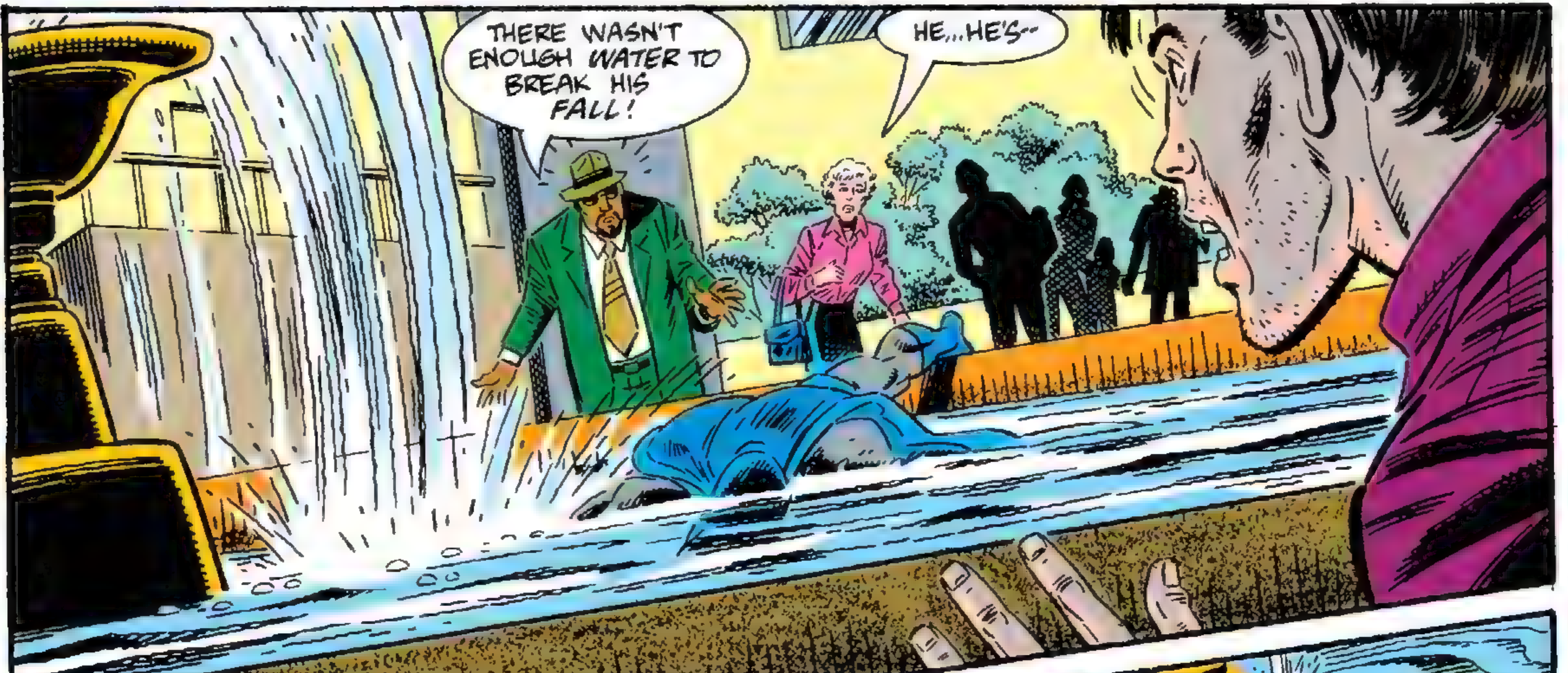
HE CANNONBALLS FOR MAXIMUM DISTANCE.



FIGHTING FOR THE REACH.

FOR EVERY LAST PRECIOUS INCH.





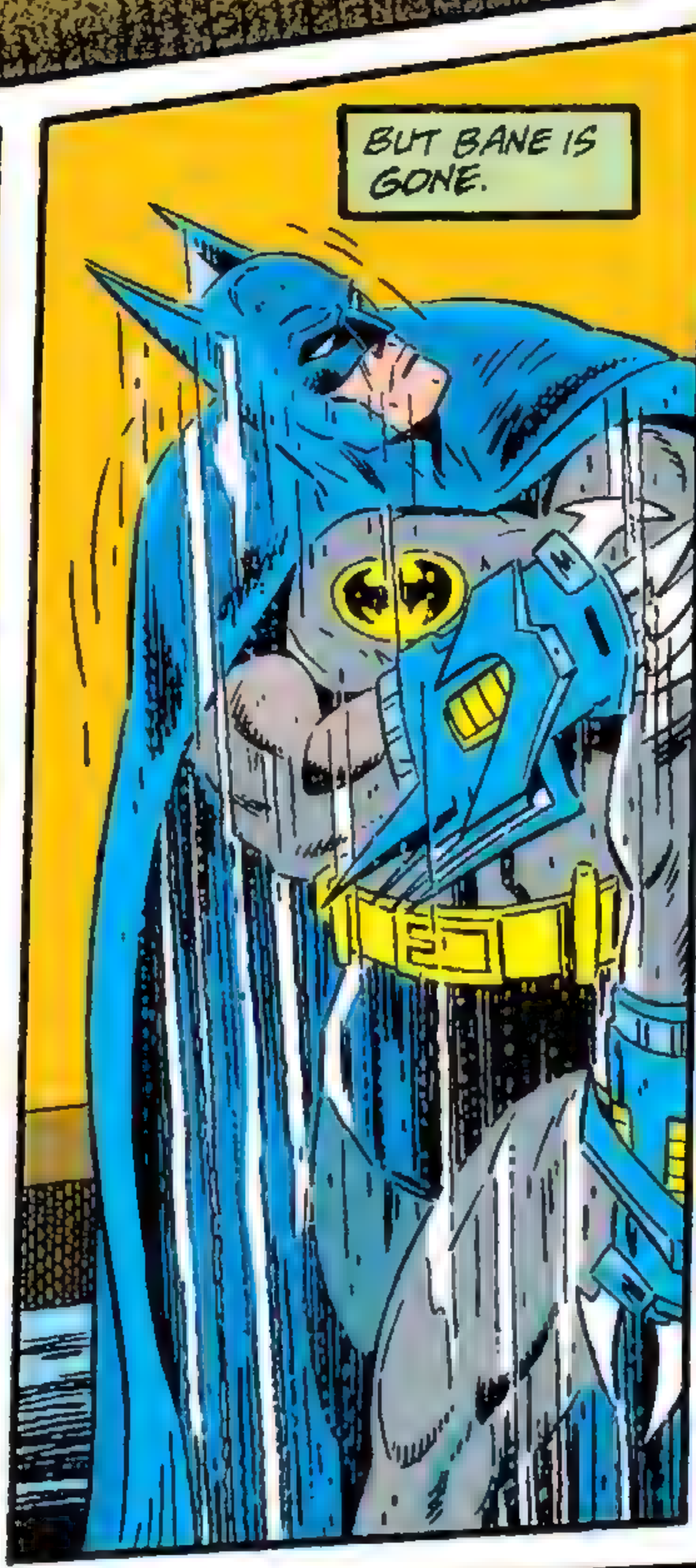
THERE WASN'T ENOUGH WATER TO BREAK HIS FALL!

HE...HE'S--



GHASP!

ALIVE.

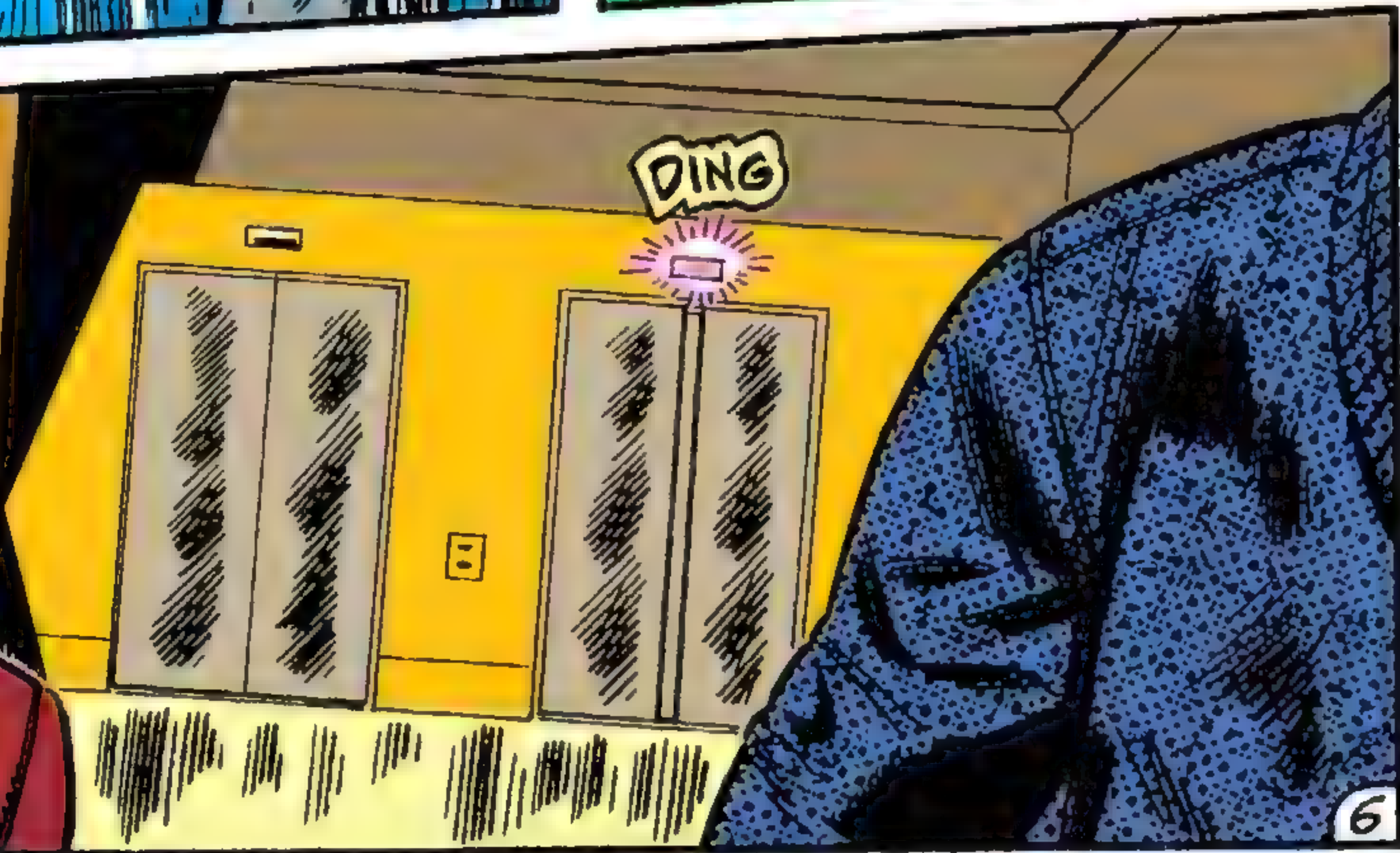
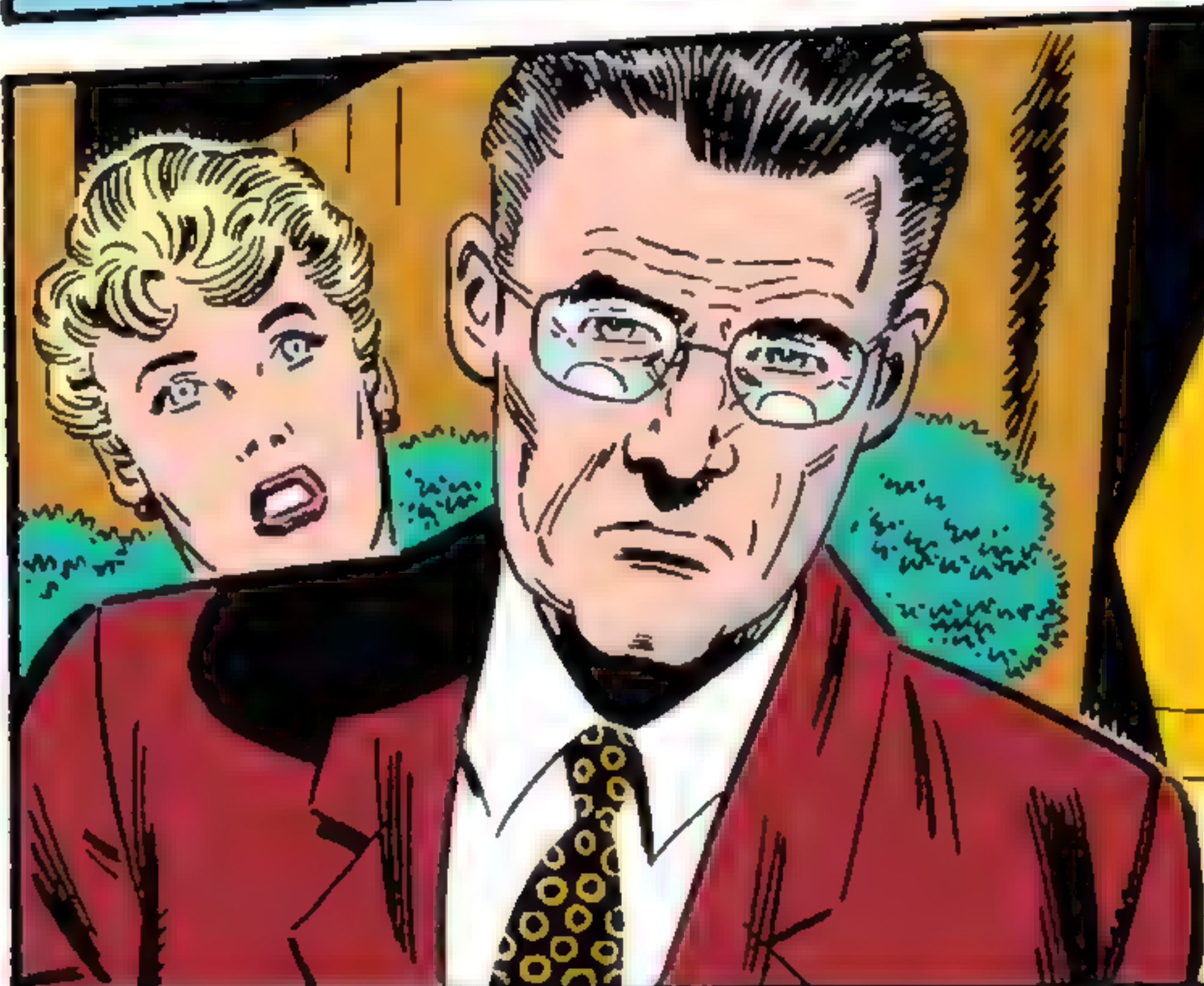


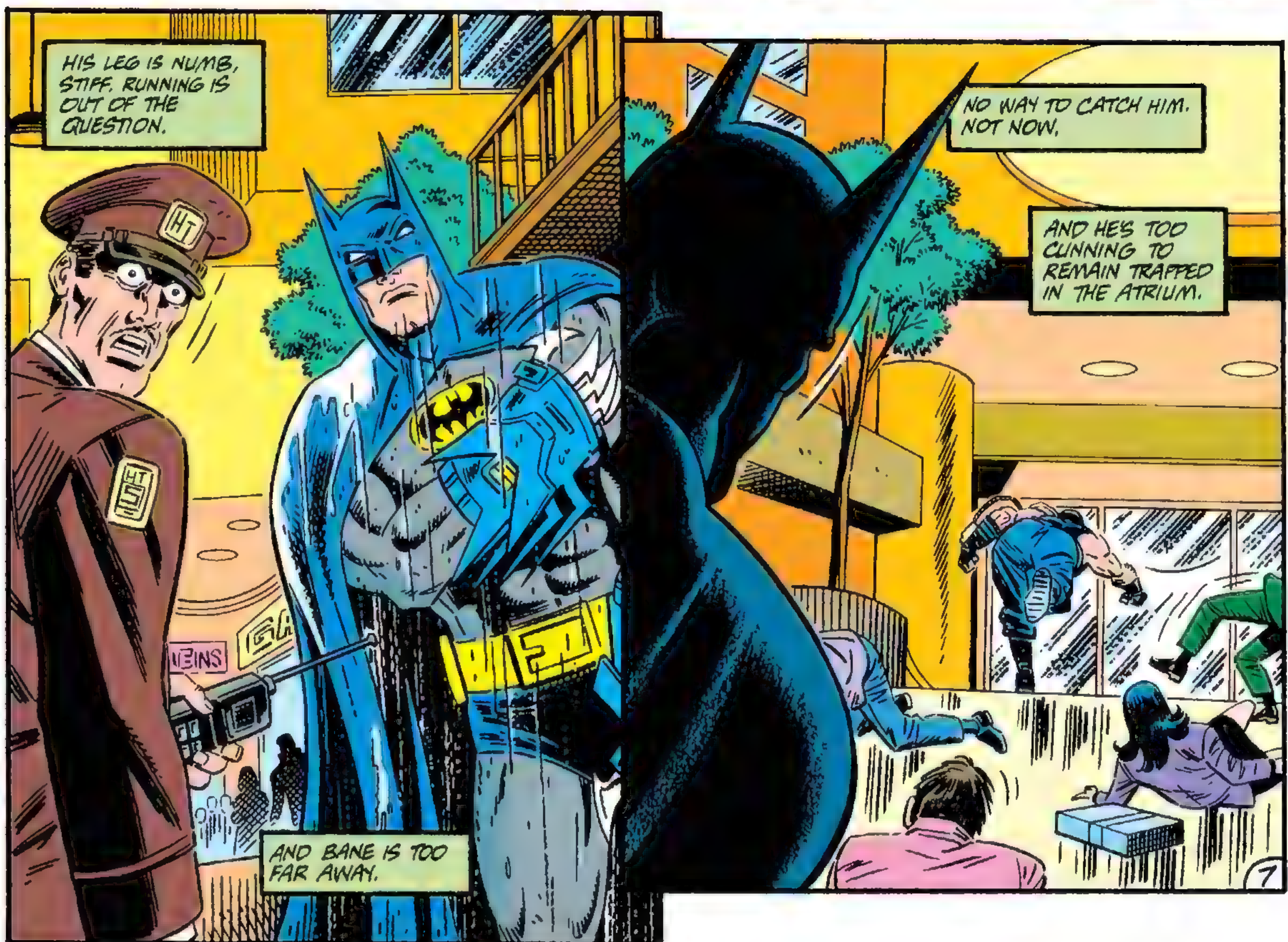
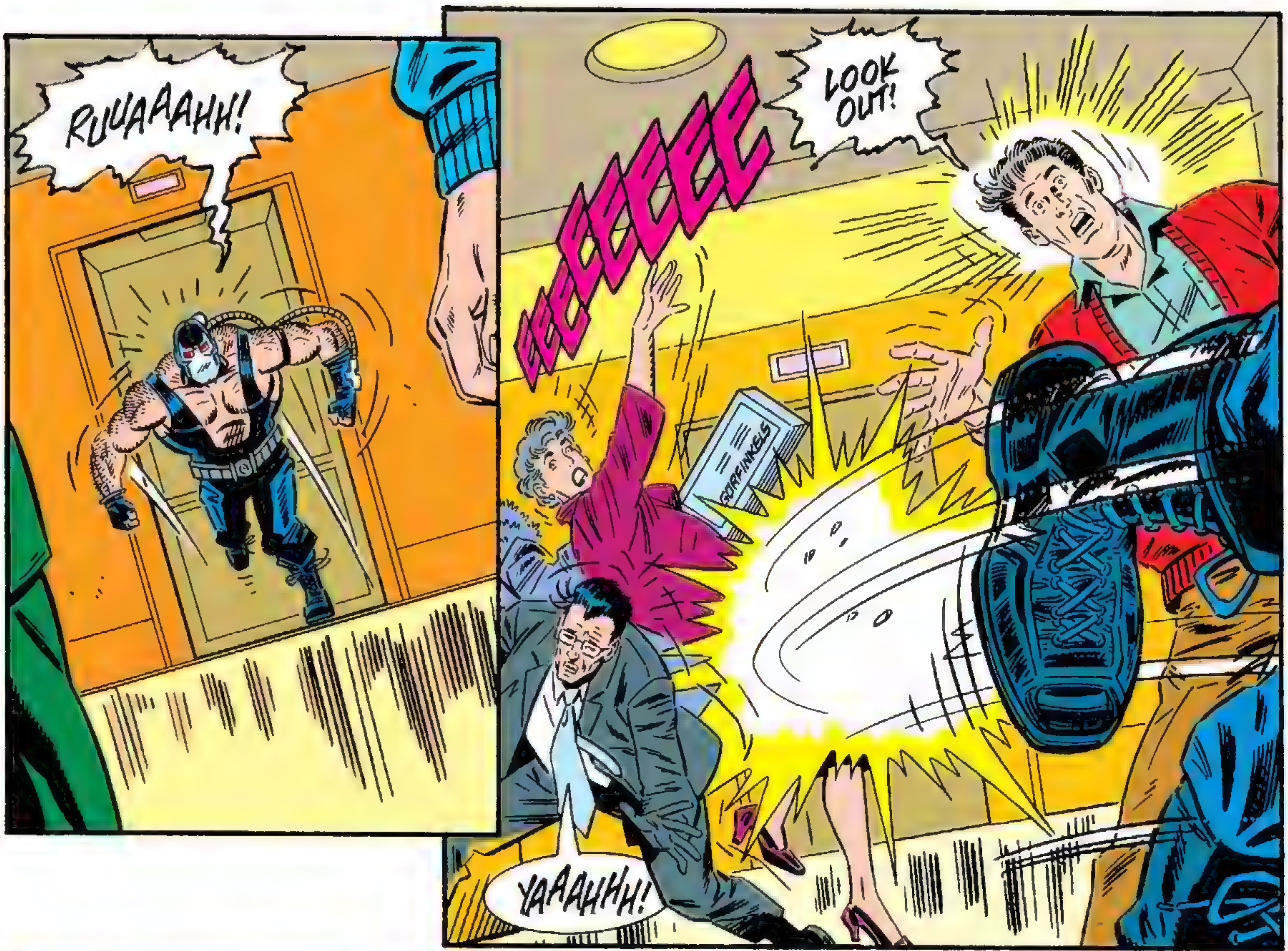
BUT BANE IS GONE.

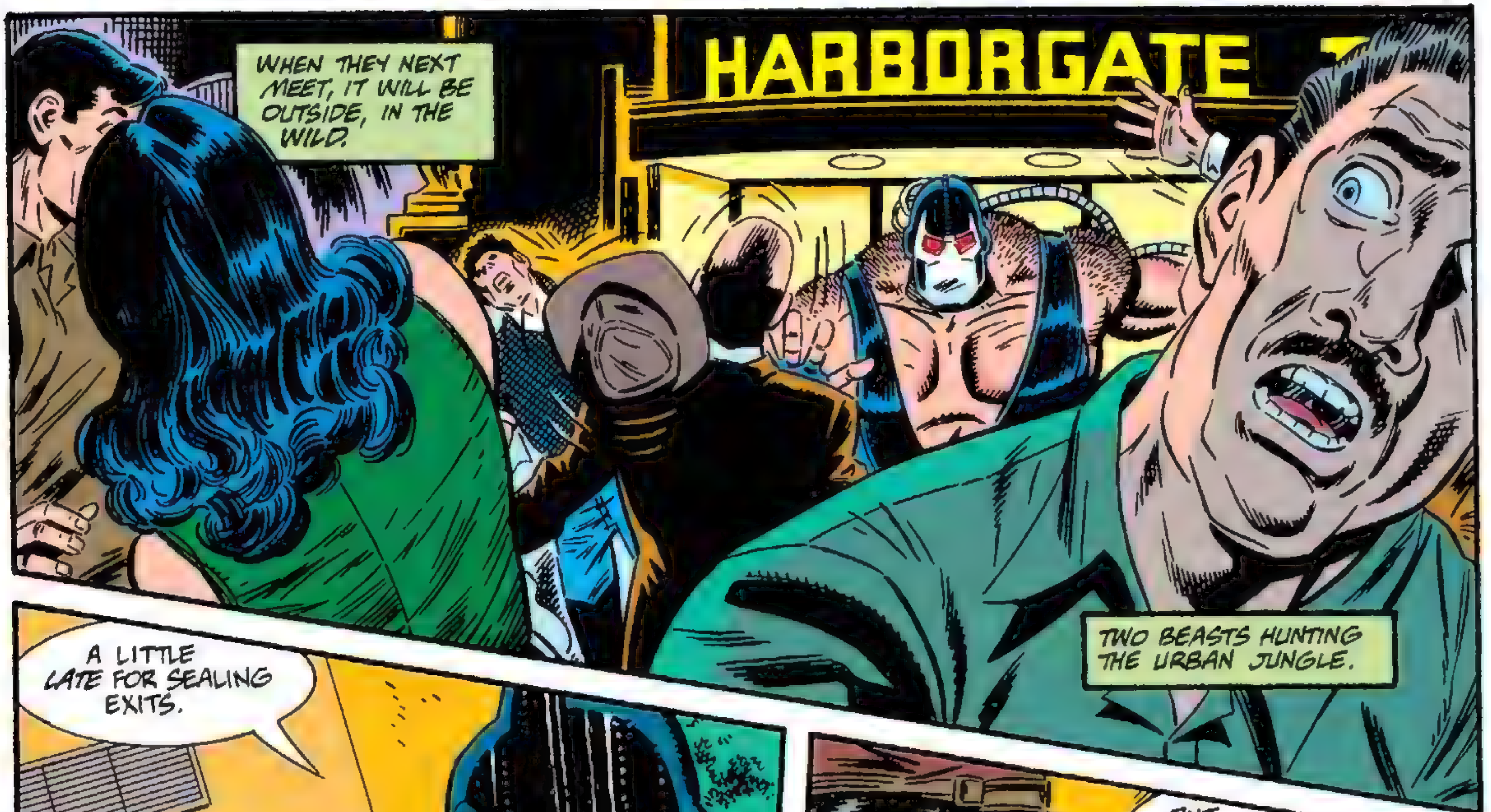


I CALLED THE POLICE.

SHOULD WE SEAL THE EXITS?

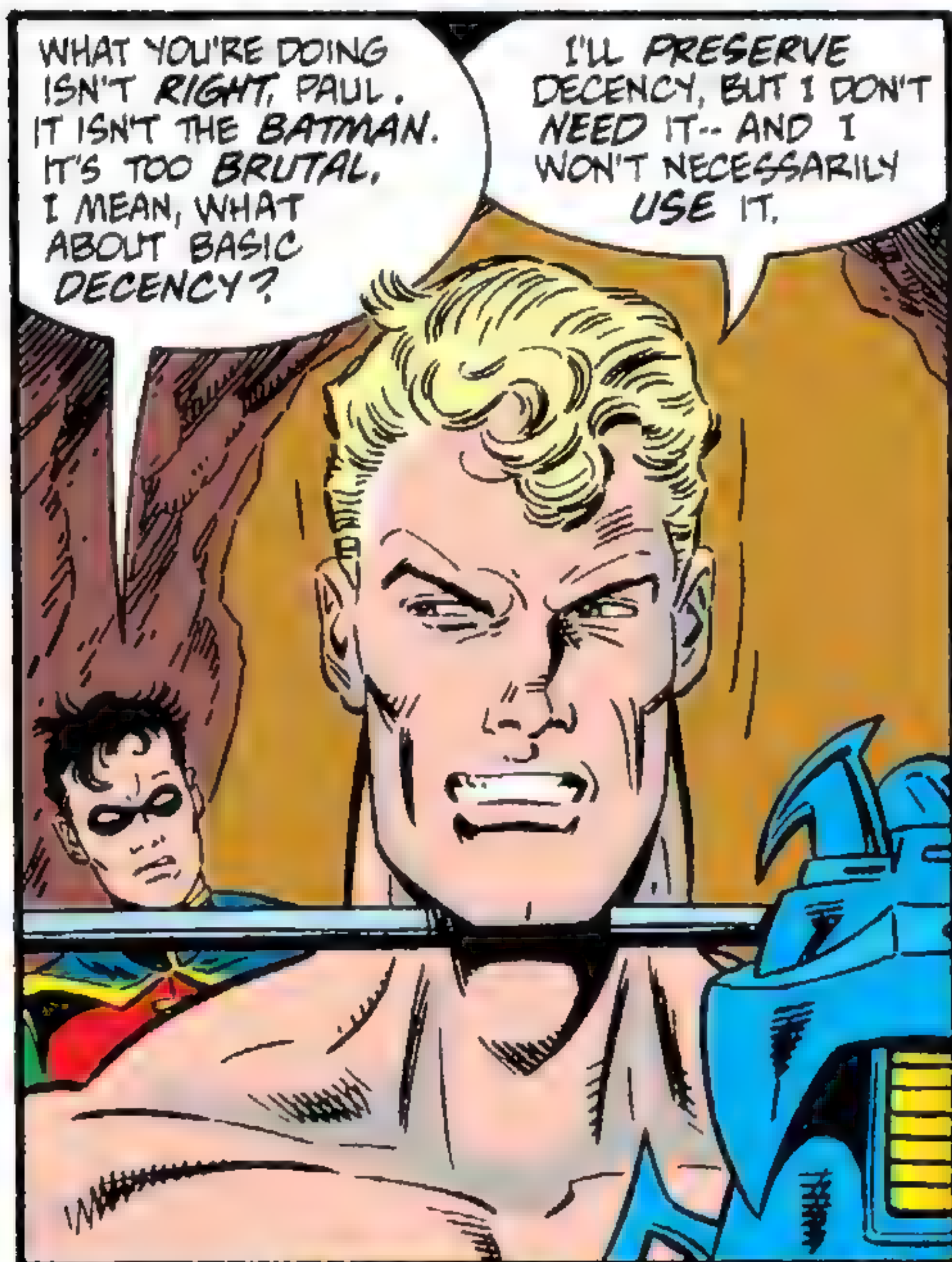
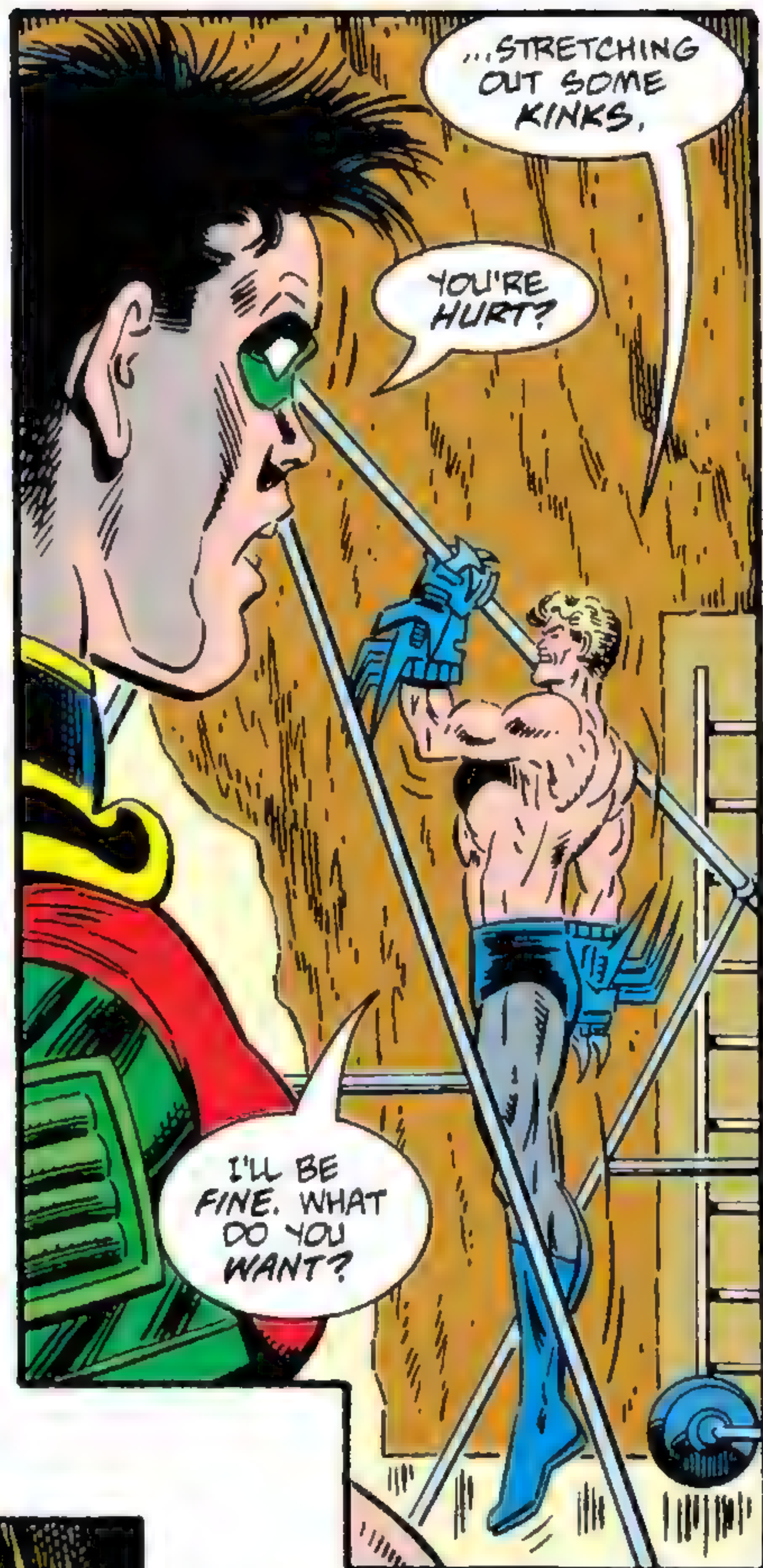
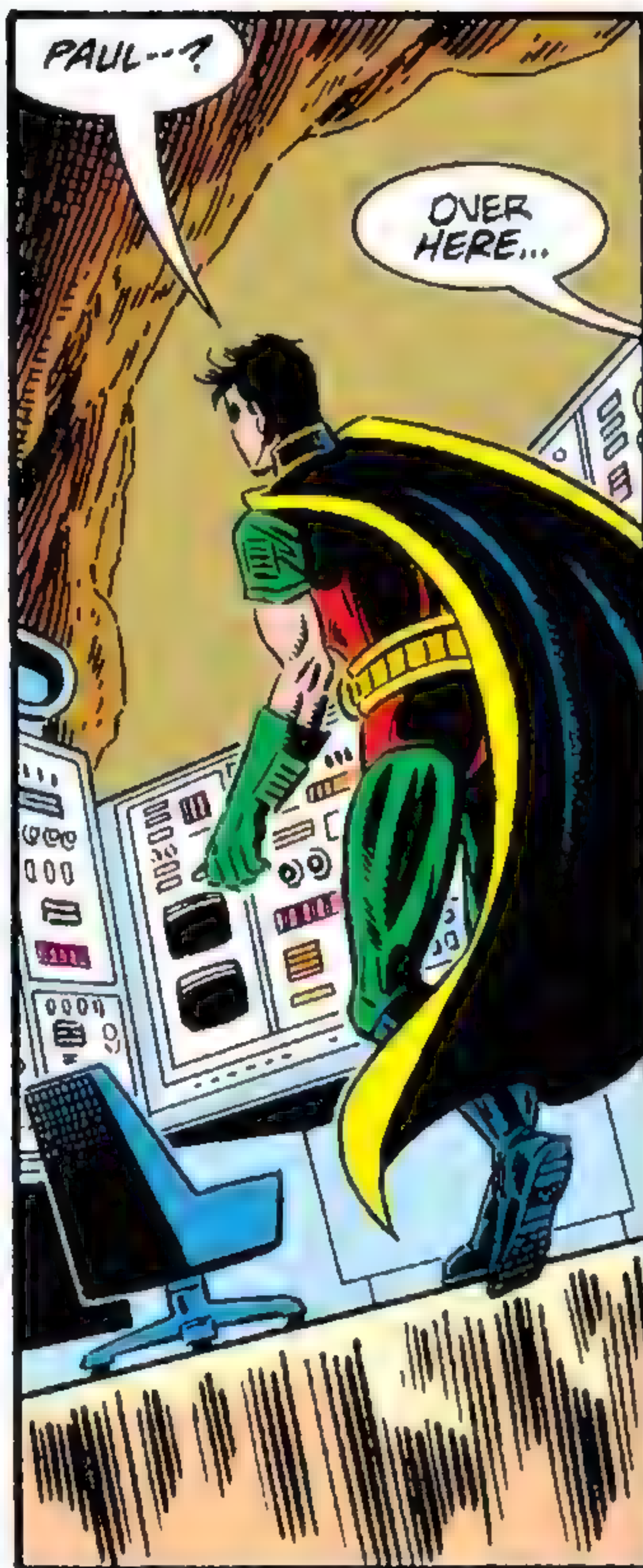


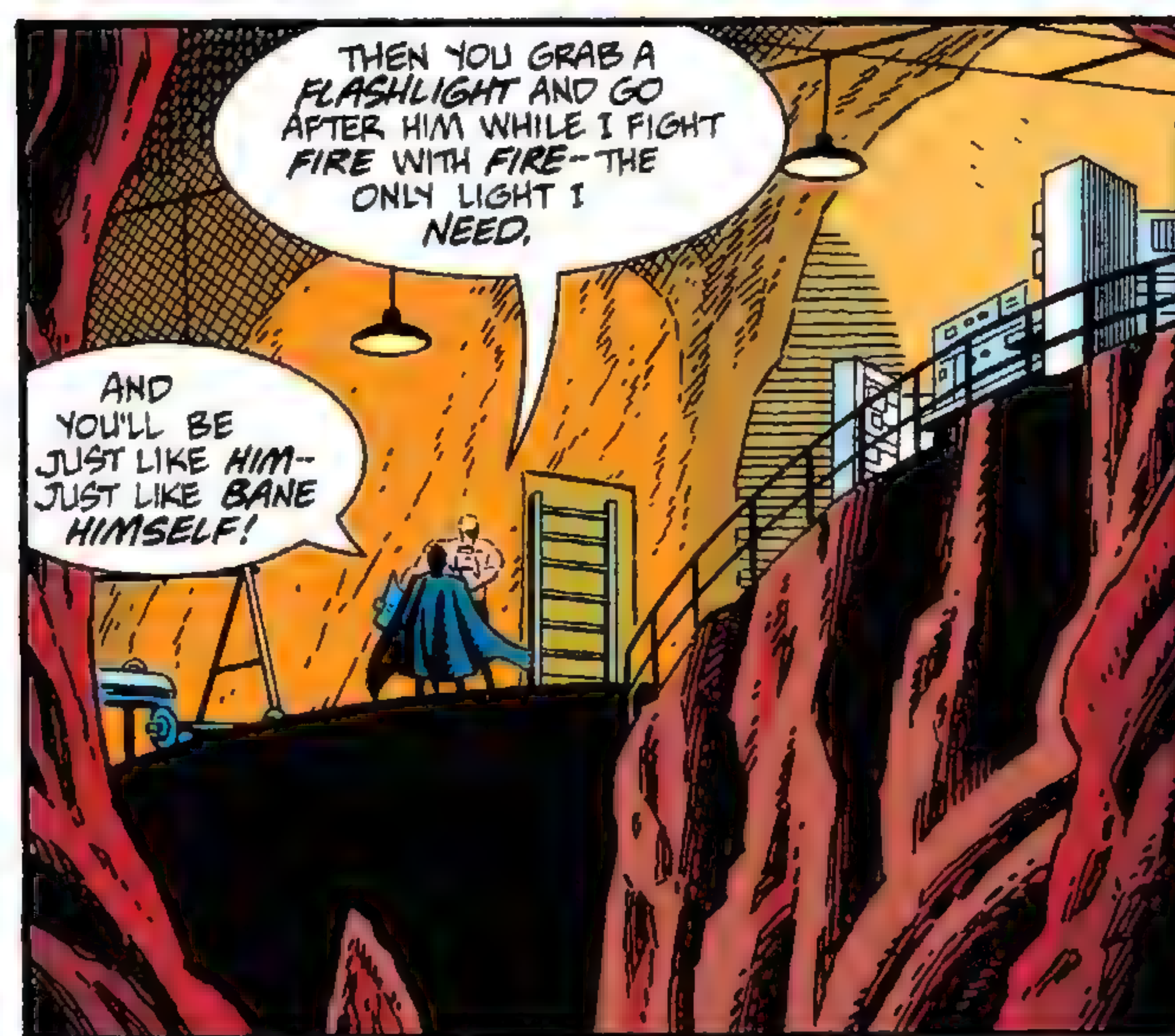
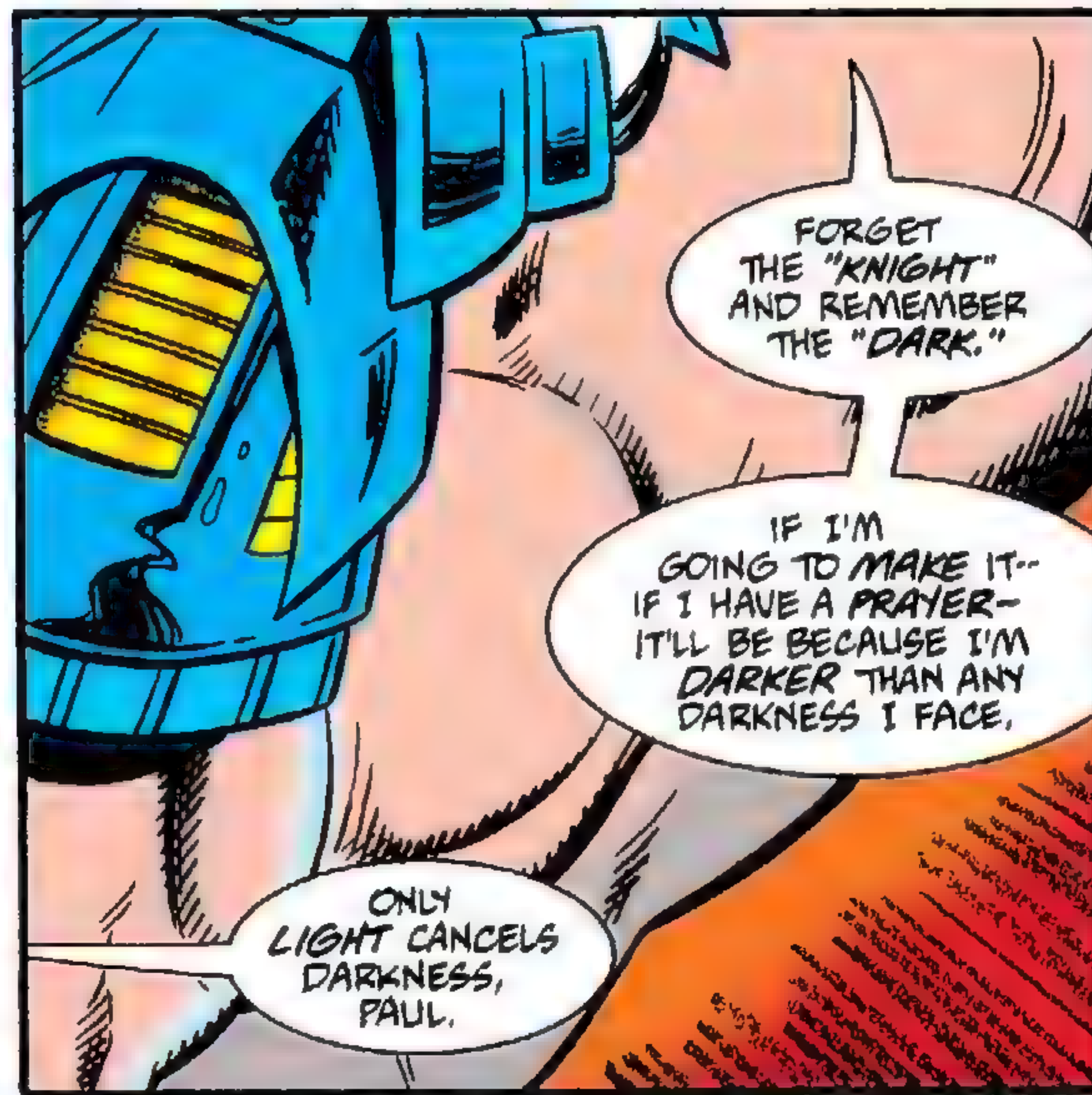
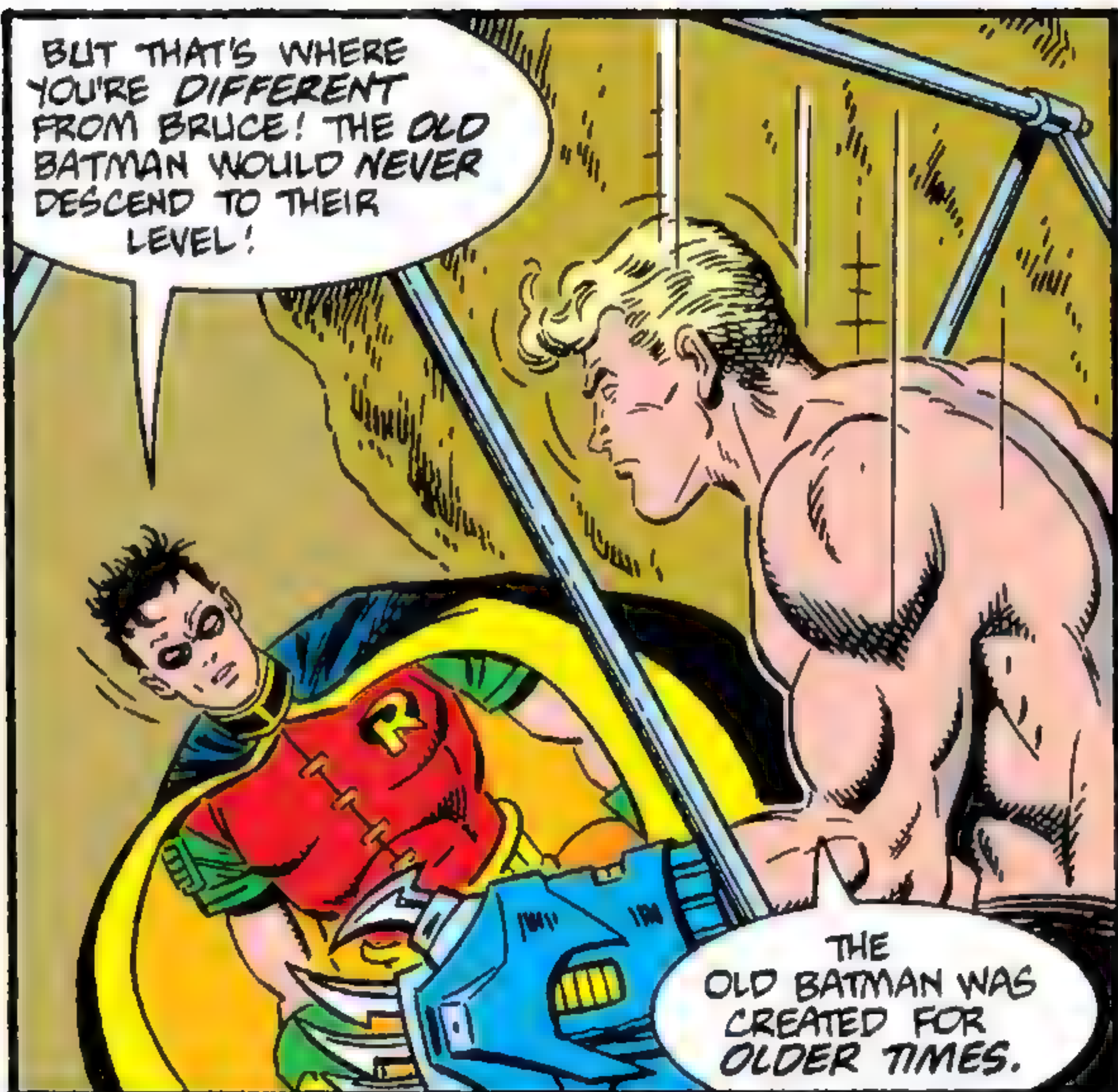


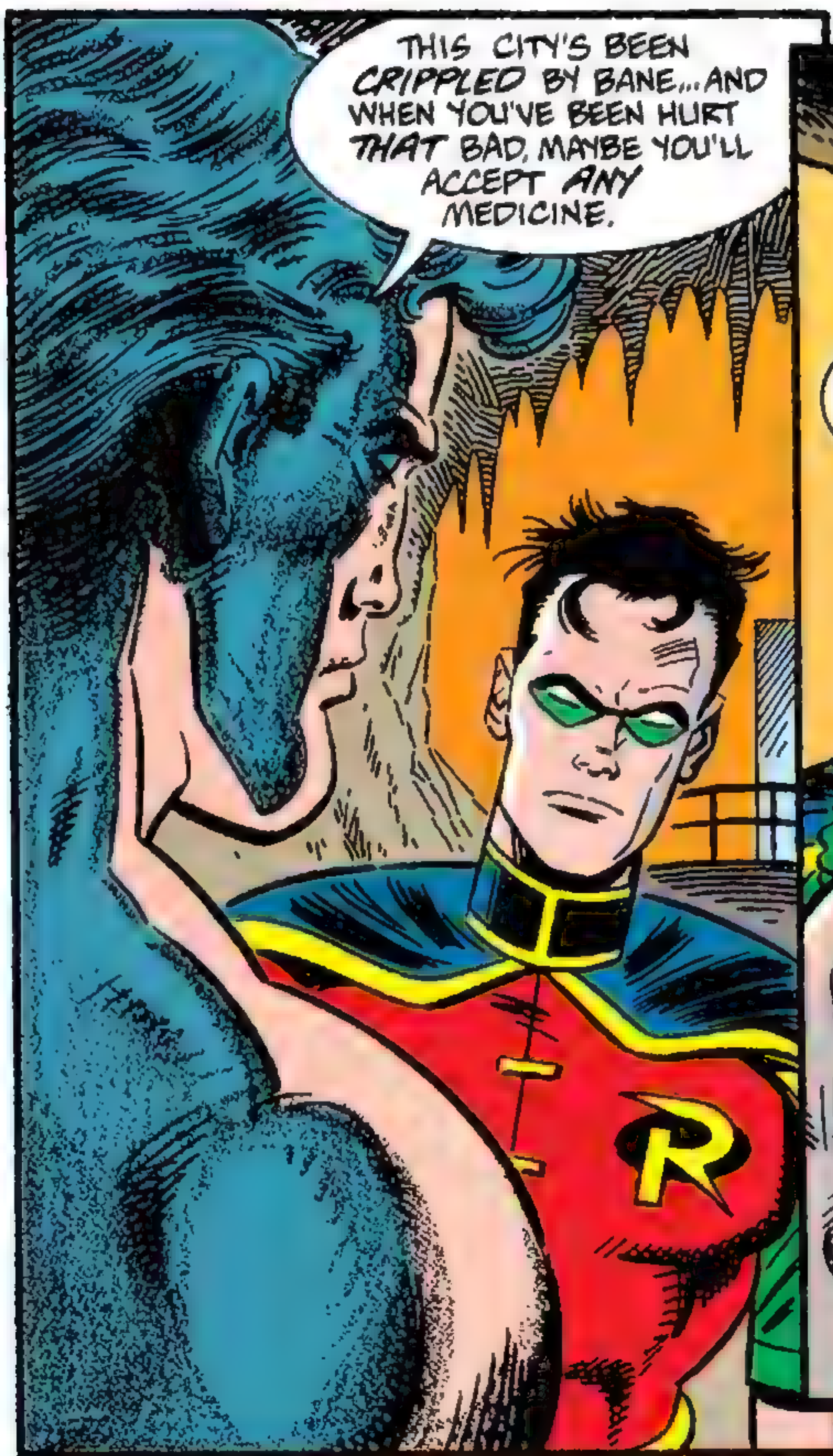












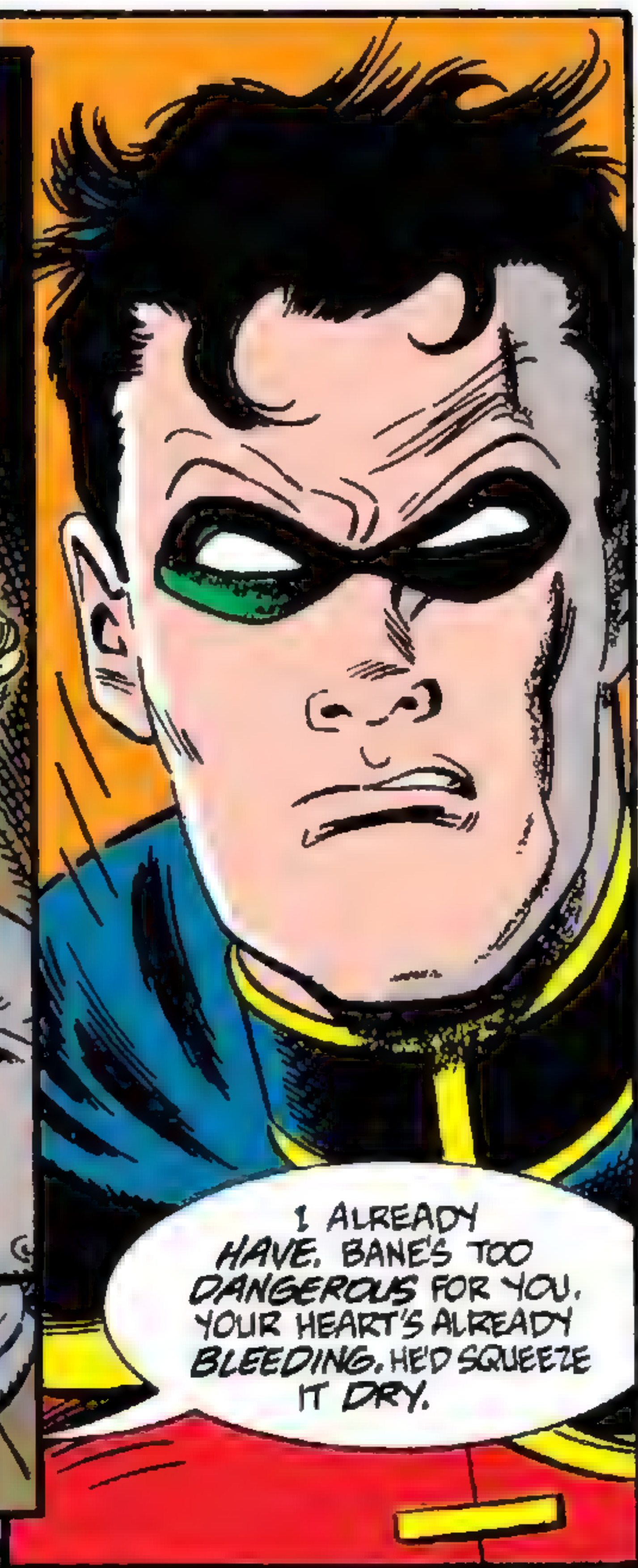
THIS CITY'S BEEN CRIPPLED BY BANE...AND WHEN YOU'VE BEEN HURT THAT BAD, MAYBE YOU'LL ACCEPT ANY MEDICINE.



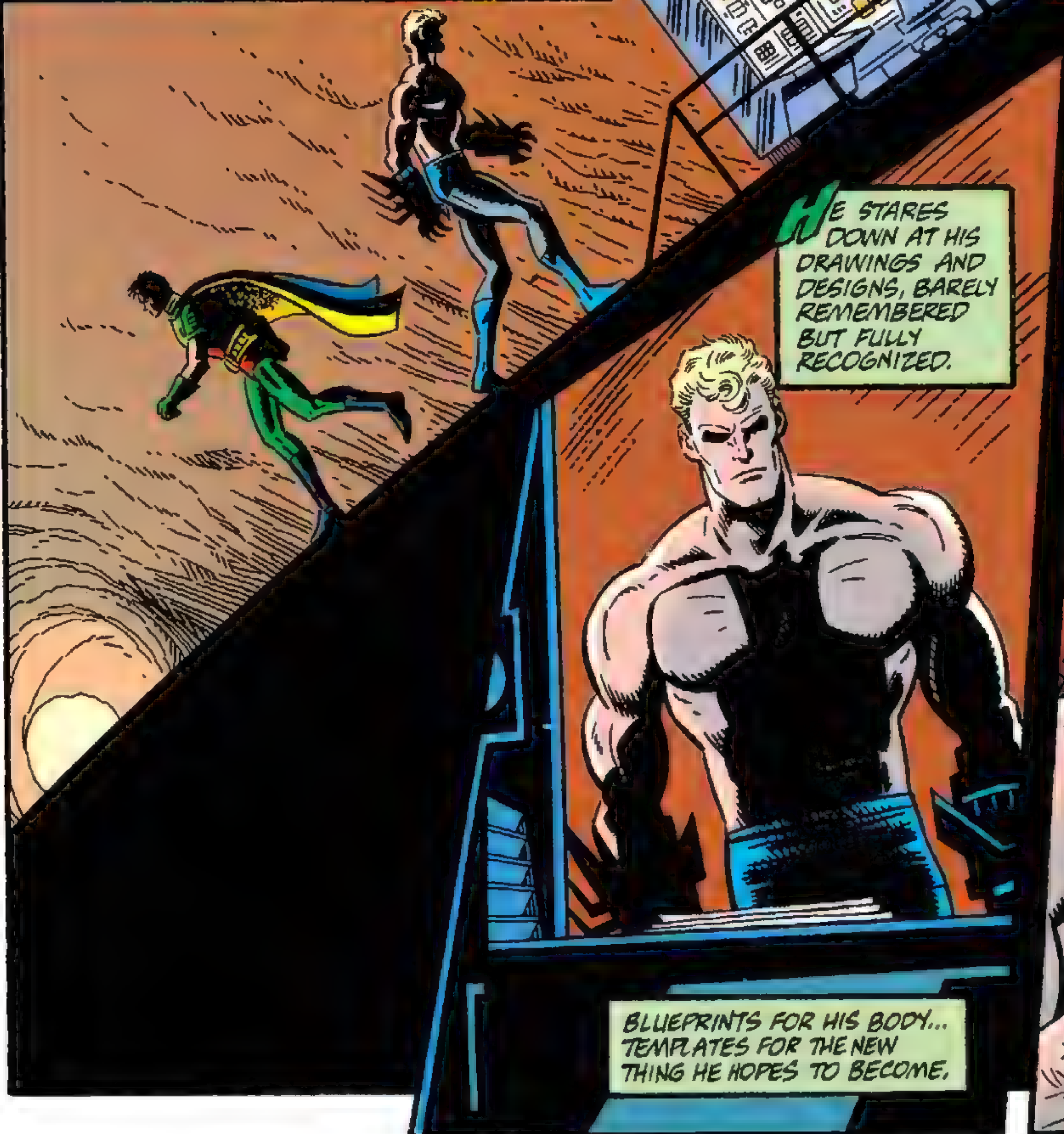
THE OLD BATMAN'S BROKEN AND GONE, ROBIN,

IT'S TIME FOR SOMETHING NEW.

THEN YOU CAN JUST COUNT ME OUT, PAUL!

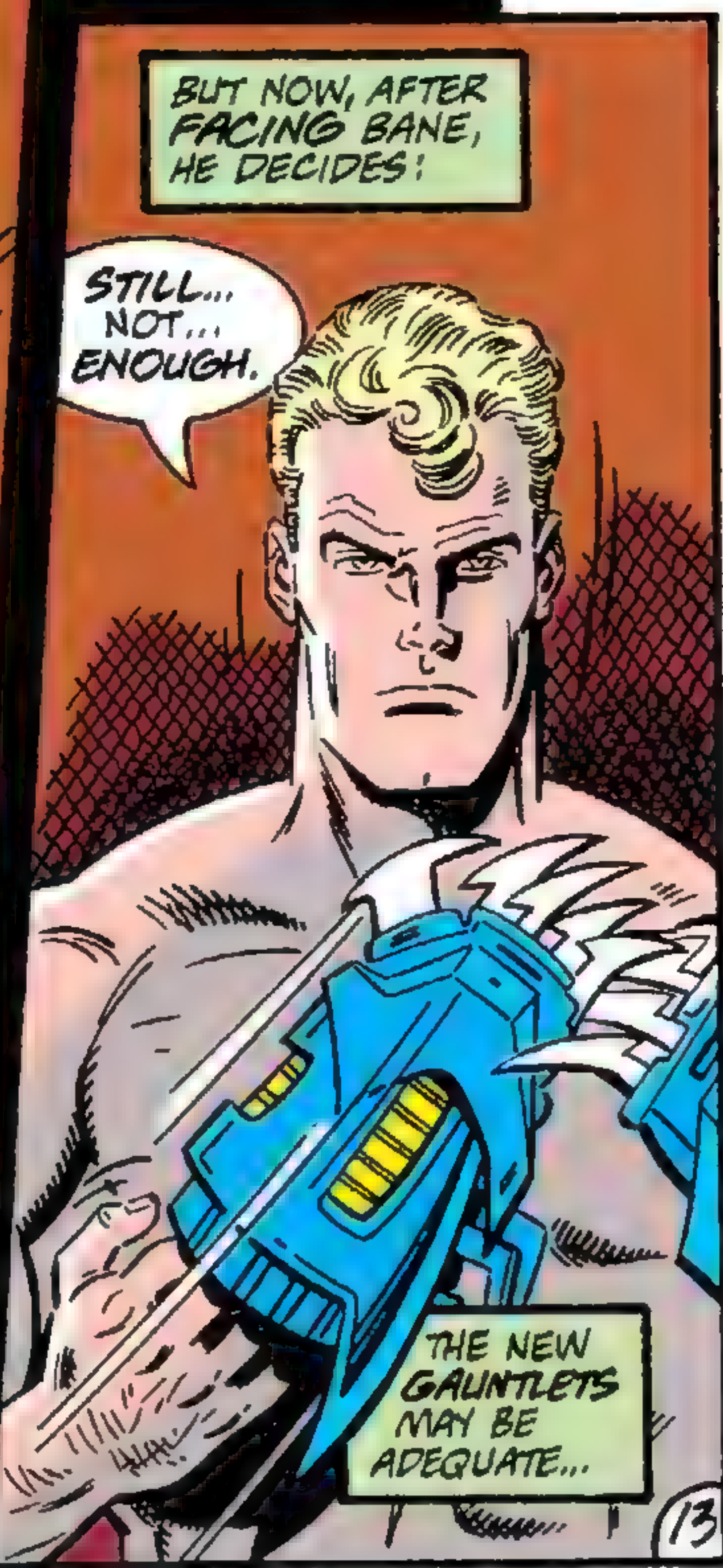


I ALREADY HAVE. BANE'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU. YOUR HEART'S ALREADY BLEEDING. HE'D SQUEEZE IT DRY.



HE STARES DOWN AT HIS DRAWINGS AND DESIGNS, BARELY REMEMBERED BUT FULLY RECOGNIZED.

BLUEPRINTS FOR HIS BODY... TEMPLATES FOR THE NEW THING HE HOPES TO BECOME.



BUT NOW, AFTER FACING BANE, HE DECIDES!

STILL... NOT... ENOUGH.

THE NEW GAUNTLETS MAY BE ADEQUATE...

BUT THE CAPE,
AFTER ALL, ALMOST
KILLED HIM.

I...NEED...
MORE.

HIS VISION CLOUDS, STOLEN BY
SOME THIRD EYE, AS HIS HAND
MOVES SWIFTLY, SURELY..

HIS VISION CLOUDS, STOLEN BY
SOME THIRD EYE, AS HIS HAND
MOVES SWIFTLY, SURELY..

...AND HE BECOMES LOST IN THE
TWISTING WAYS OF THE SYSTEM,
EMBEDDED DEEPLY AND
MYSTERIOUSLY IN HIS MIND.

EVENTUALLY,
HE WILL EMERGE
FROM HIS
TRANCE,
RETURNING FROM
THIS PRIVATE
LABYRINTH...

...AND HE WILL BE
CHANGED.

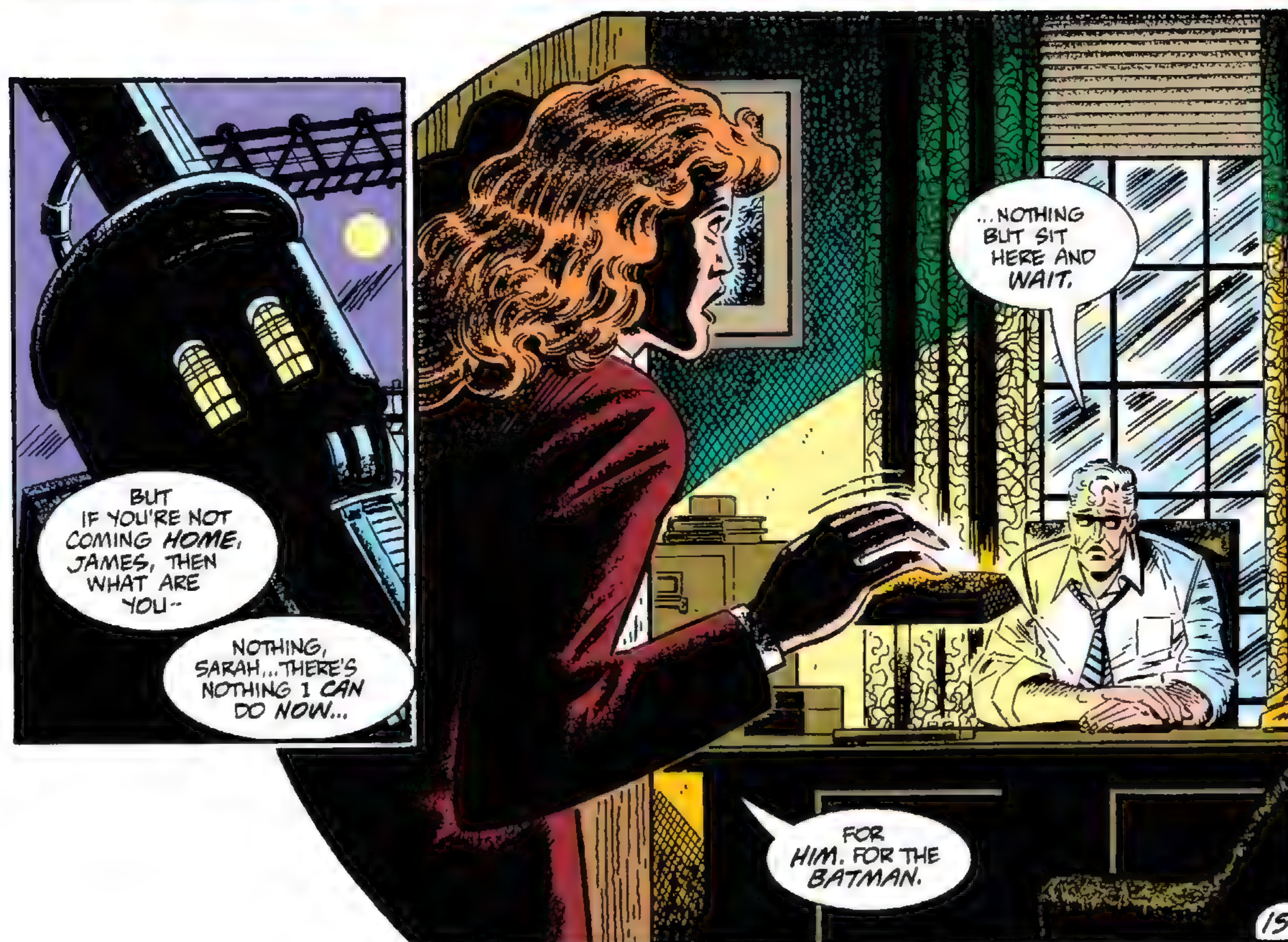
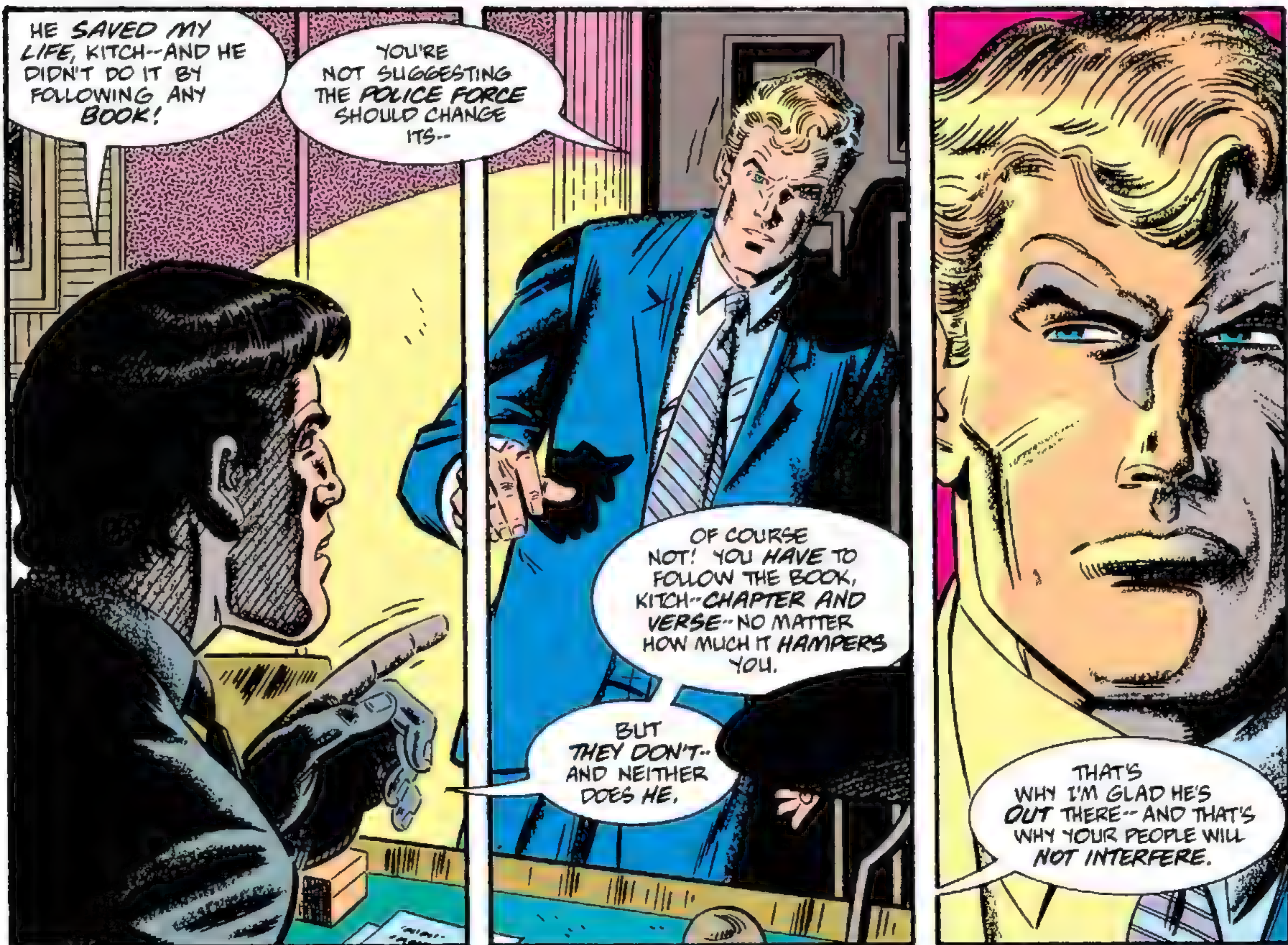
-- CAN'T
APPROVE OF THE
CHANGE IN BATMAN'S
TACTICS,
MR. MAYOR.

I'VE
GONE BY THE
BOOK EVER
SINCE I
BECAME A
COP.-

--AND THERE'S NO CHAPTER COVERING RUTHLESS VIGILANTES.

**FORGET
THE BOOK, LIEUTENANT
KITCH! THIS IS REALITY--
AND I'VE JUST LIVED IT!
EVERY MOMENT I WAS
HELD BY SCARECROW
AND THE JOKER WAS
A NIGHTMARE!**

1 STARED
RIGHT INTO THE EVIL
HEART OF EVERYTHING
BATMAN FACES EVERY NIGHT.





YES... FOR HIM
TO MAKE A MOVE...
AS EVER.

HE'S
NEVER LET
YOU DOWN
BEFORE.



YOU'VE NEVER LET ME
DOWN EITHER, SARAH,
AND NOW... JUST AS
YOU'RE PREPARED TO
ACCEPT THE
BATMAN...

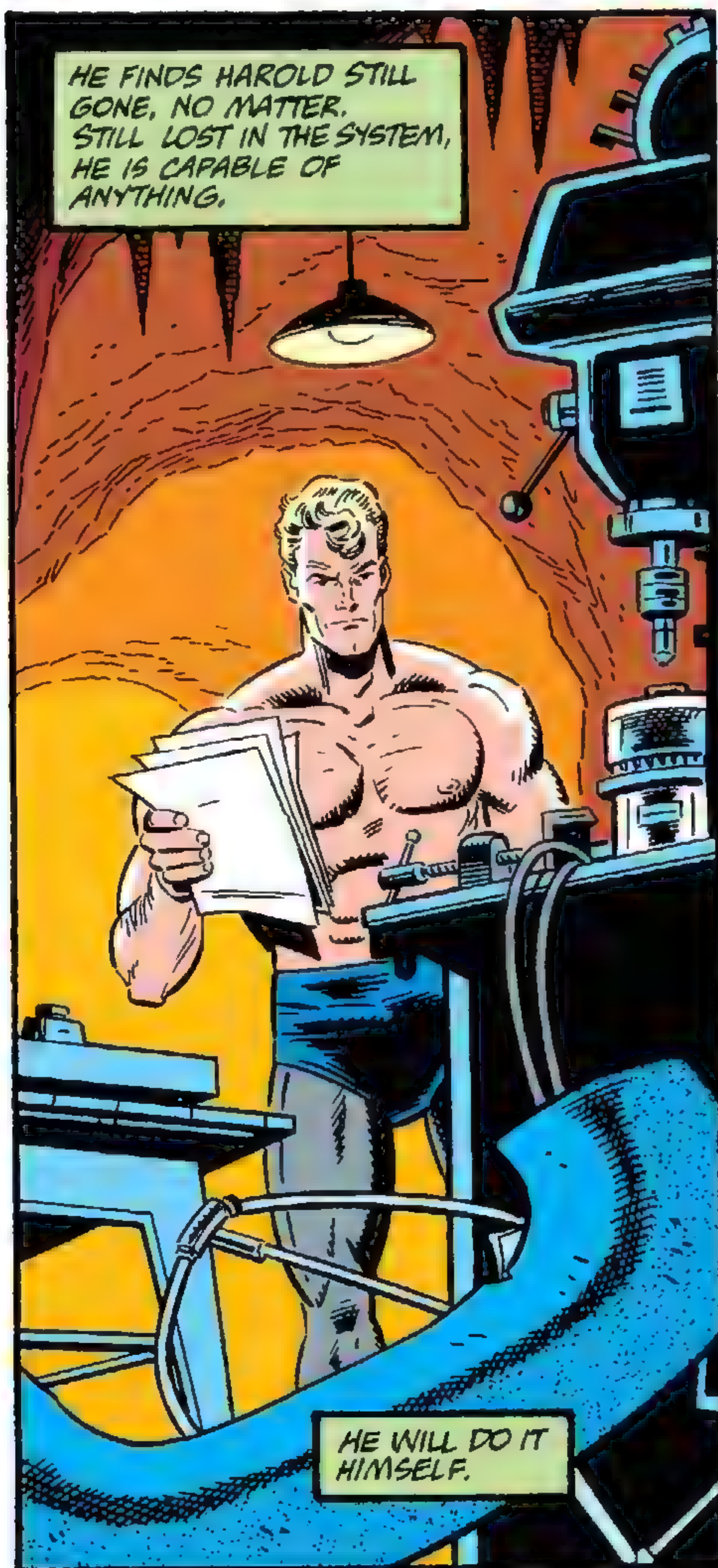
YOU'RE
HAVING
DOUBTS?



HE'S NOT THE SAME,
SARAH. SOMETHING'S
HAPPENED TO
HIM.

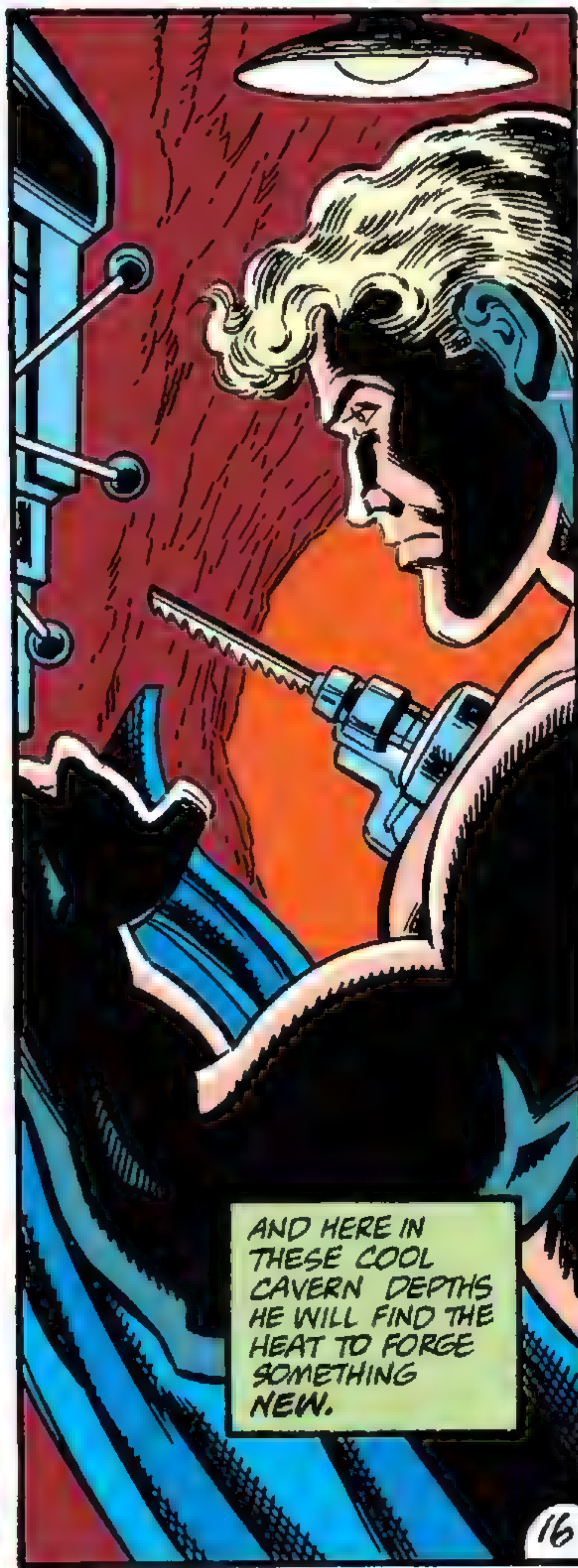
HE'S
CHANGED.

HE'S
DIFFERENT.



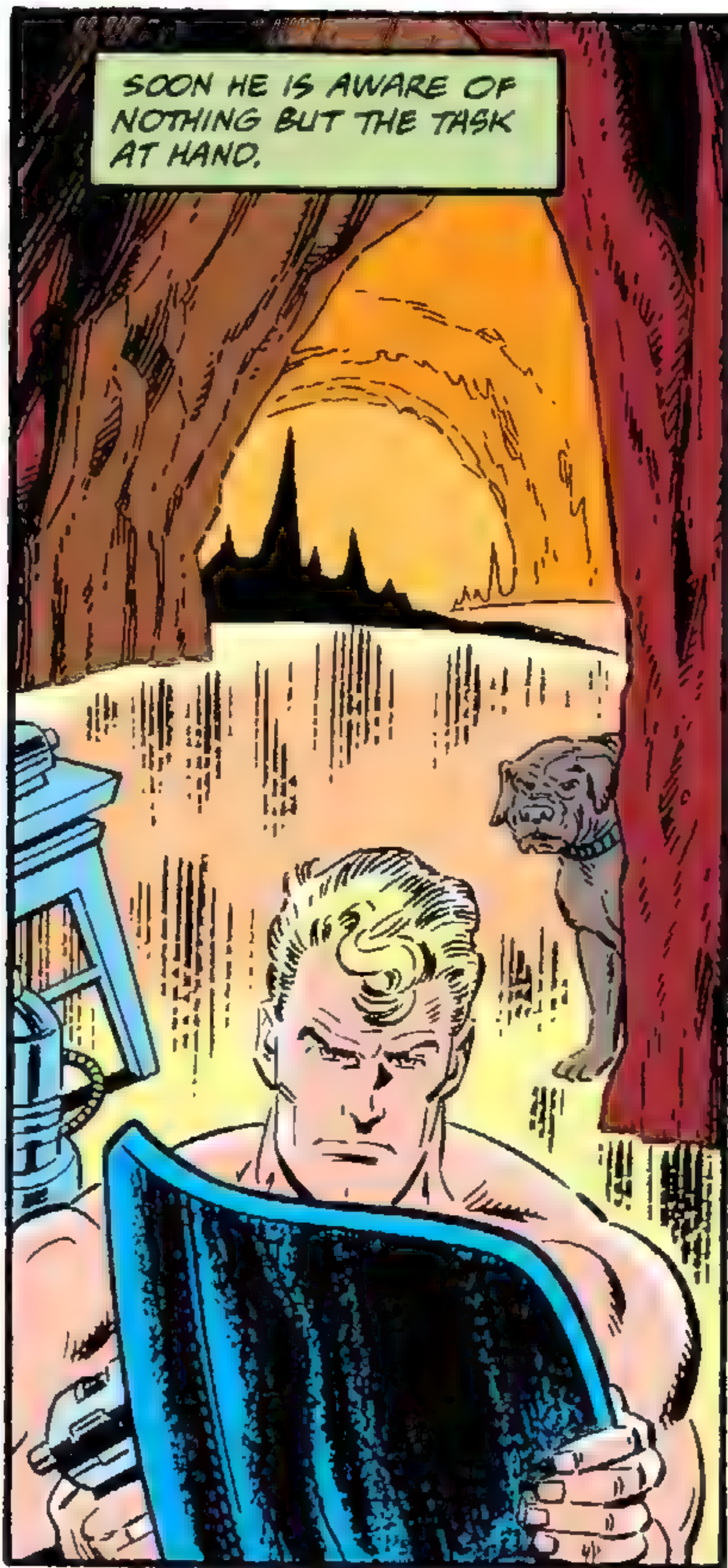
HE FINDS HAROLD STILL
GONE, NO MATTER.
STILL LOST IN THE SYSTEM,
HE IS CAPABLE OF
ANYTHING.

HE WILL DO IT
HIMSELF.

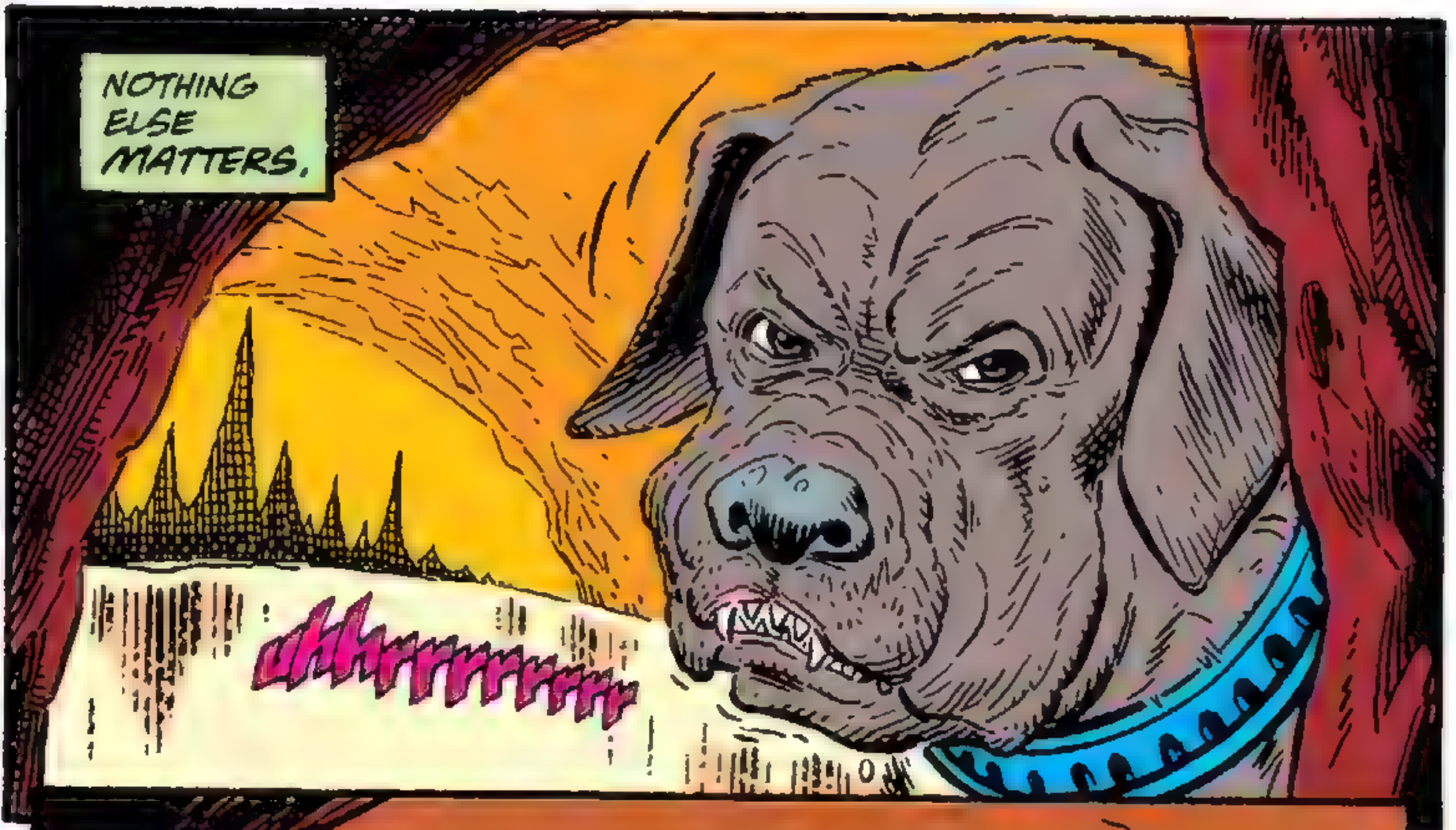


AND HERE IN
THESE COOL
CAVERN DEPTHS
HE WILL FIND THE
HEAT TO FORGE
SOMETHING
NEW.

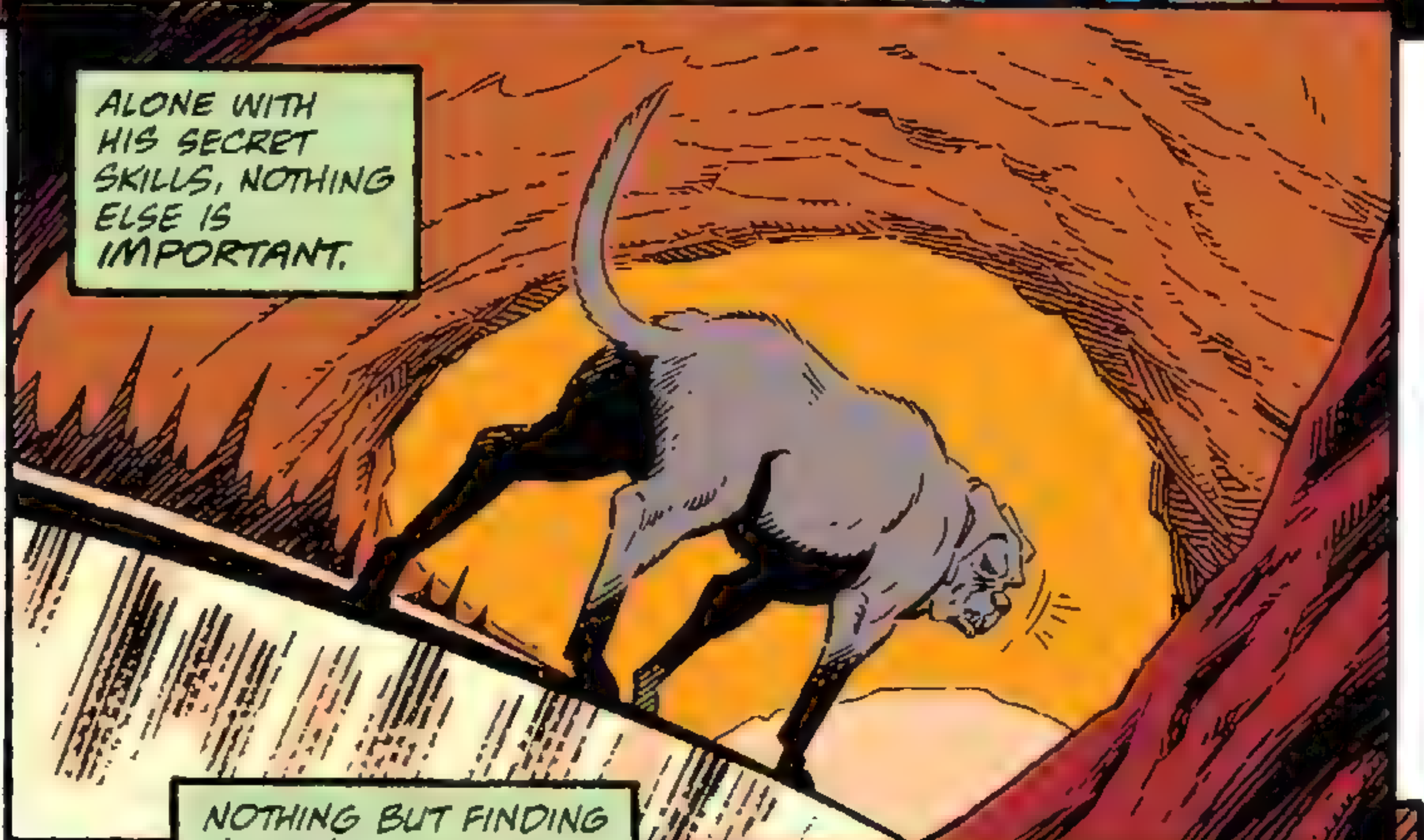
16



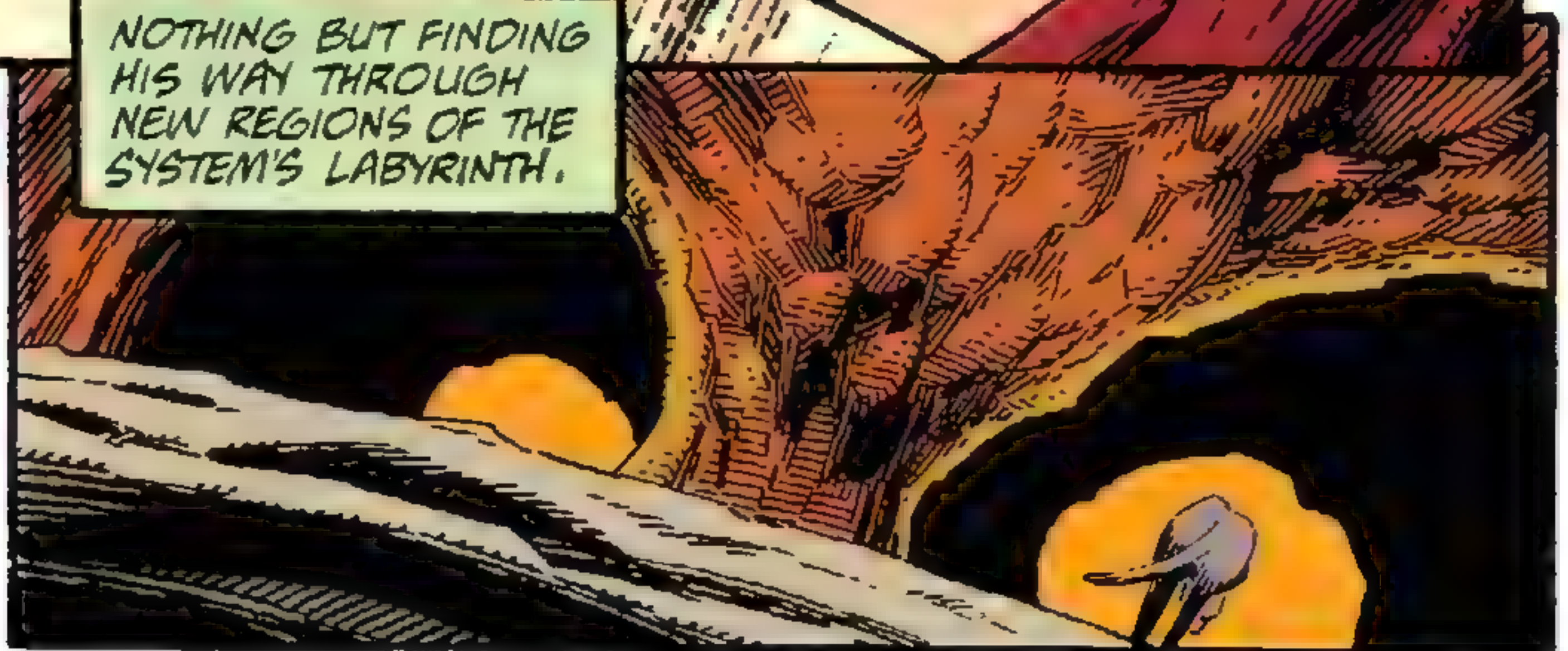
SOON HE IS AWARE OF
NOTHING BUT THE TASK
AT HAND.



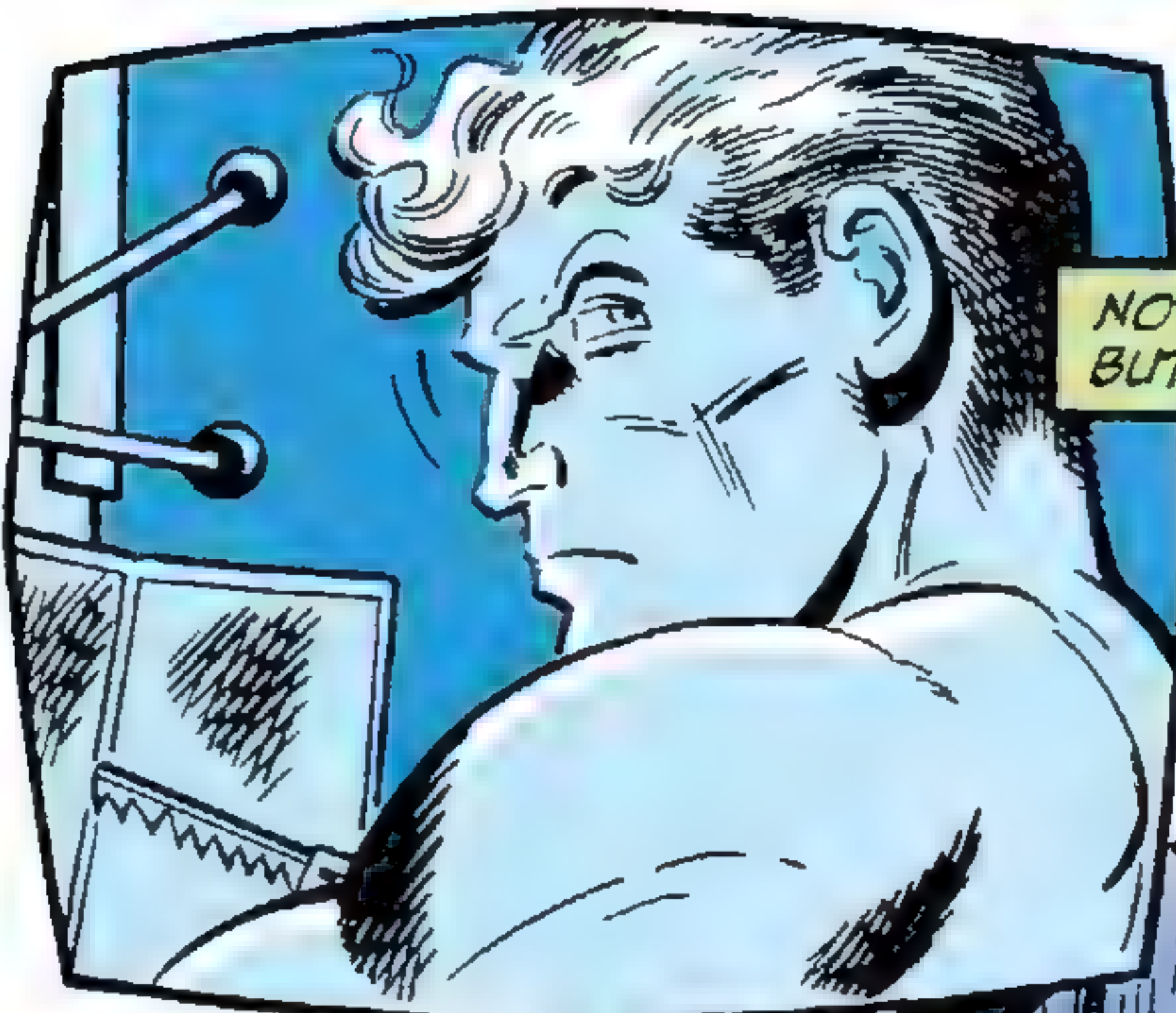
NOTHING
ELSE
MATTERS.



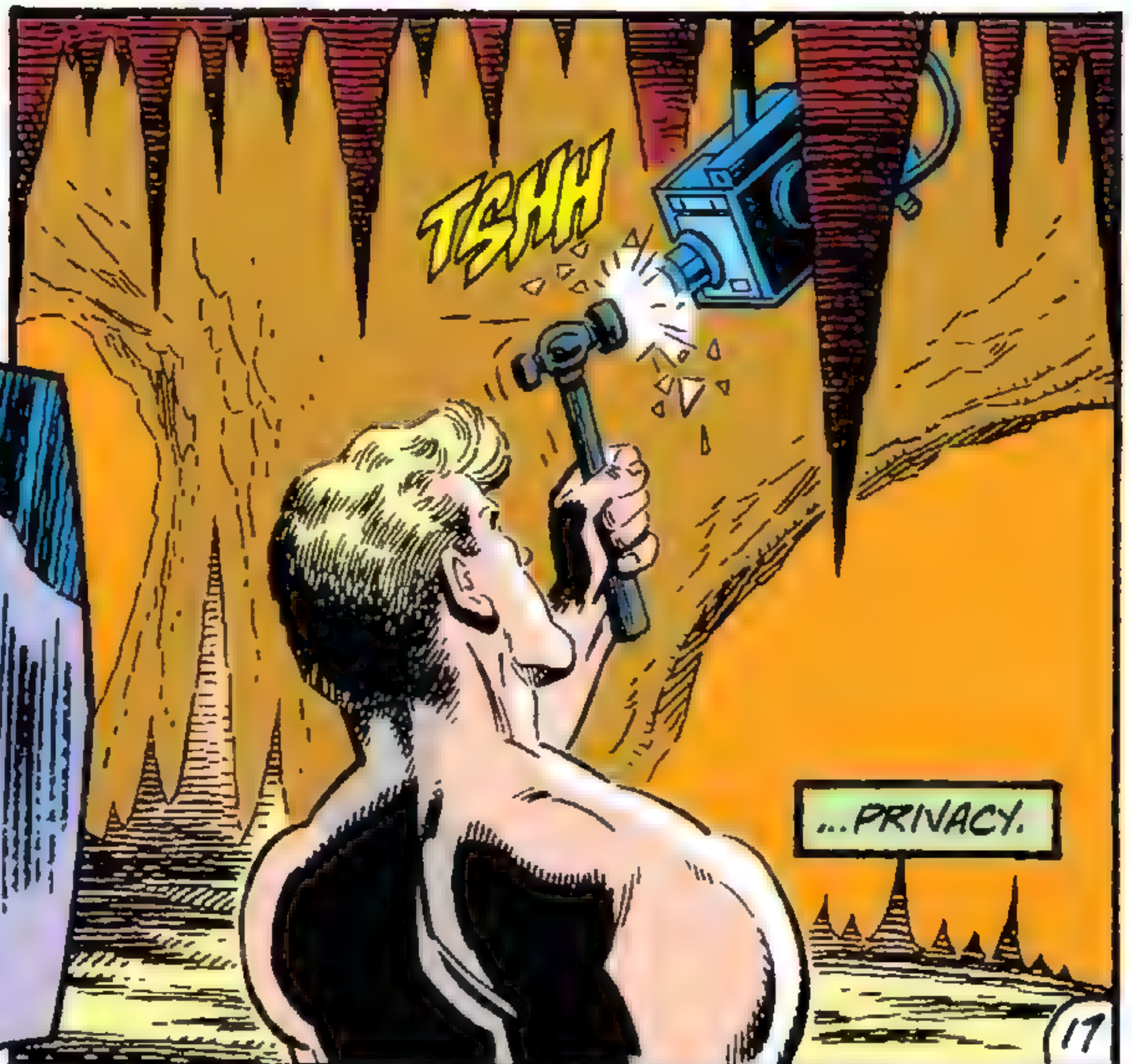
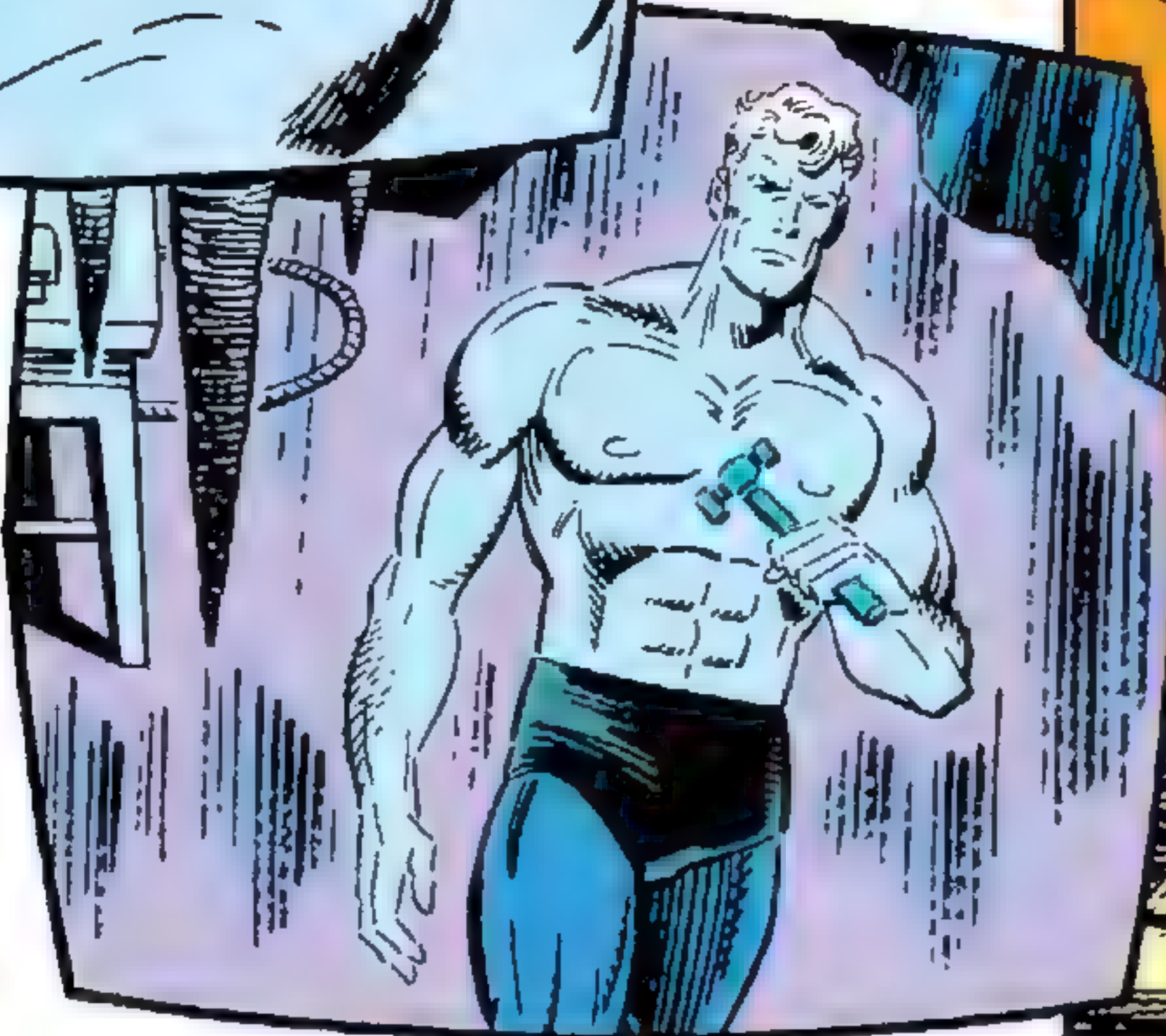
ALONE WITH
HIS SECRET
SKILLS, NOTHING
ELSE IS
IMPORTANT.



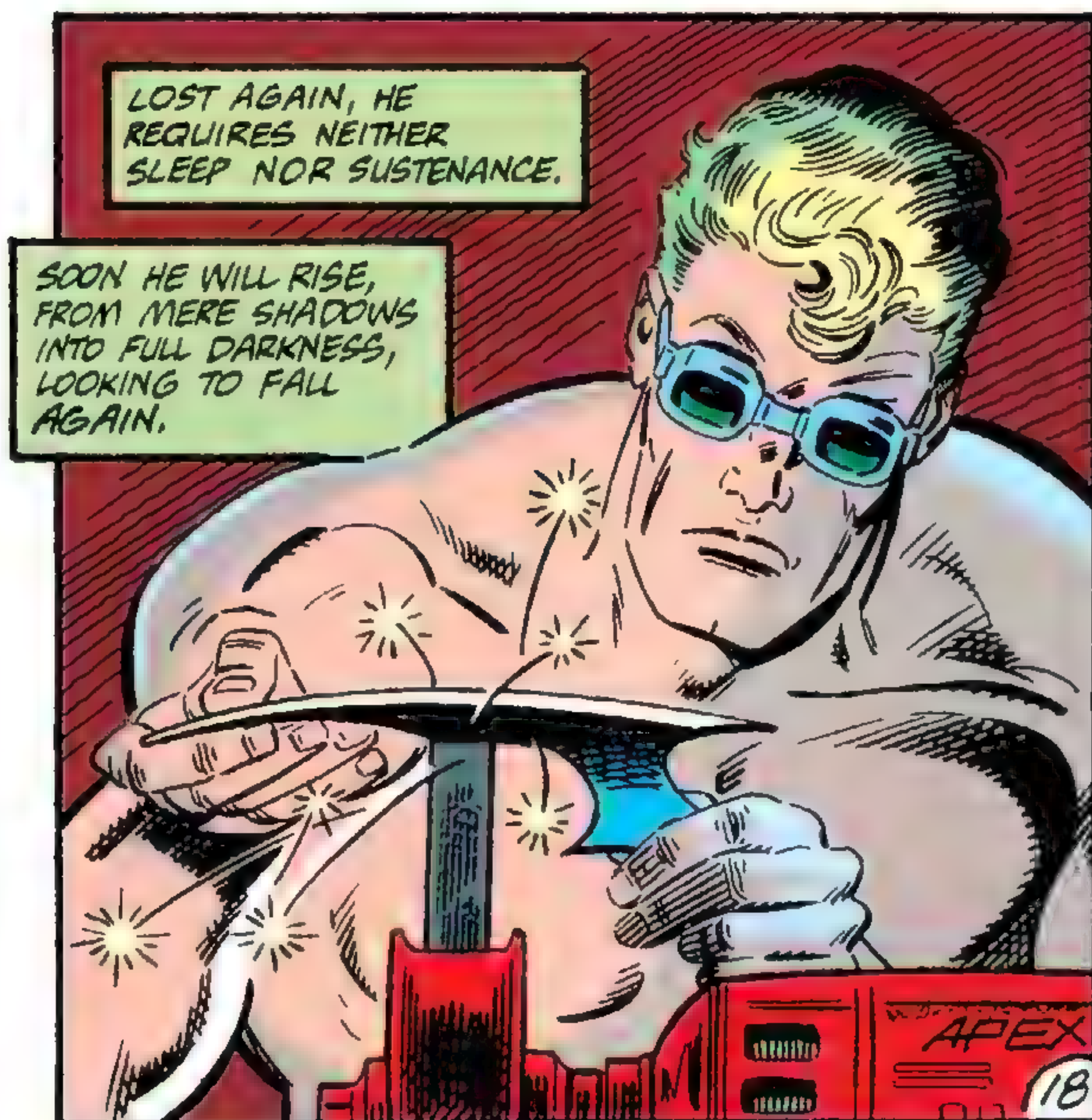
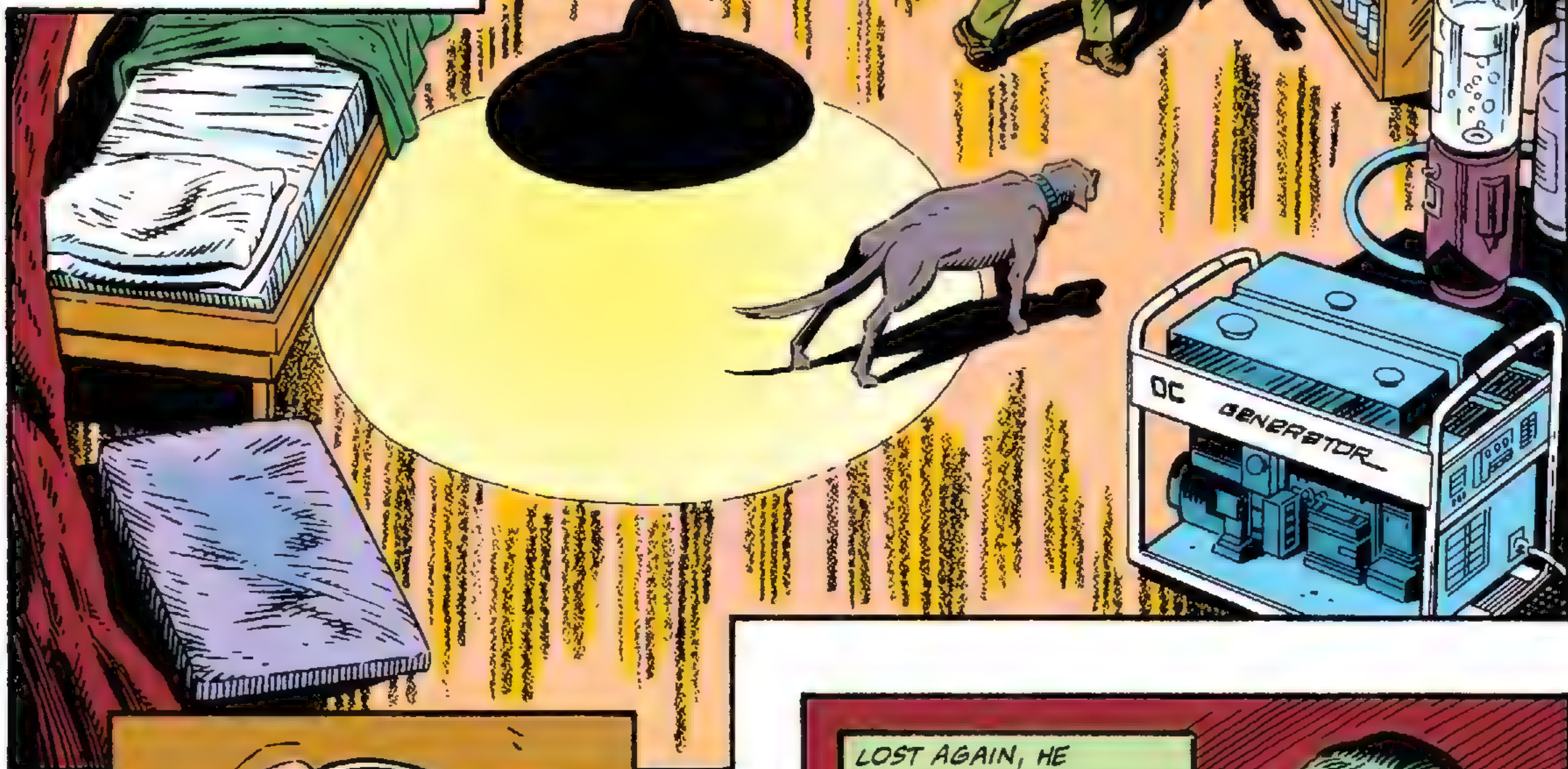
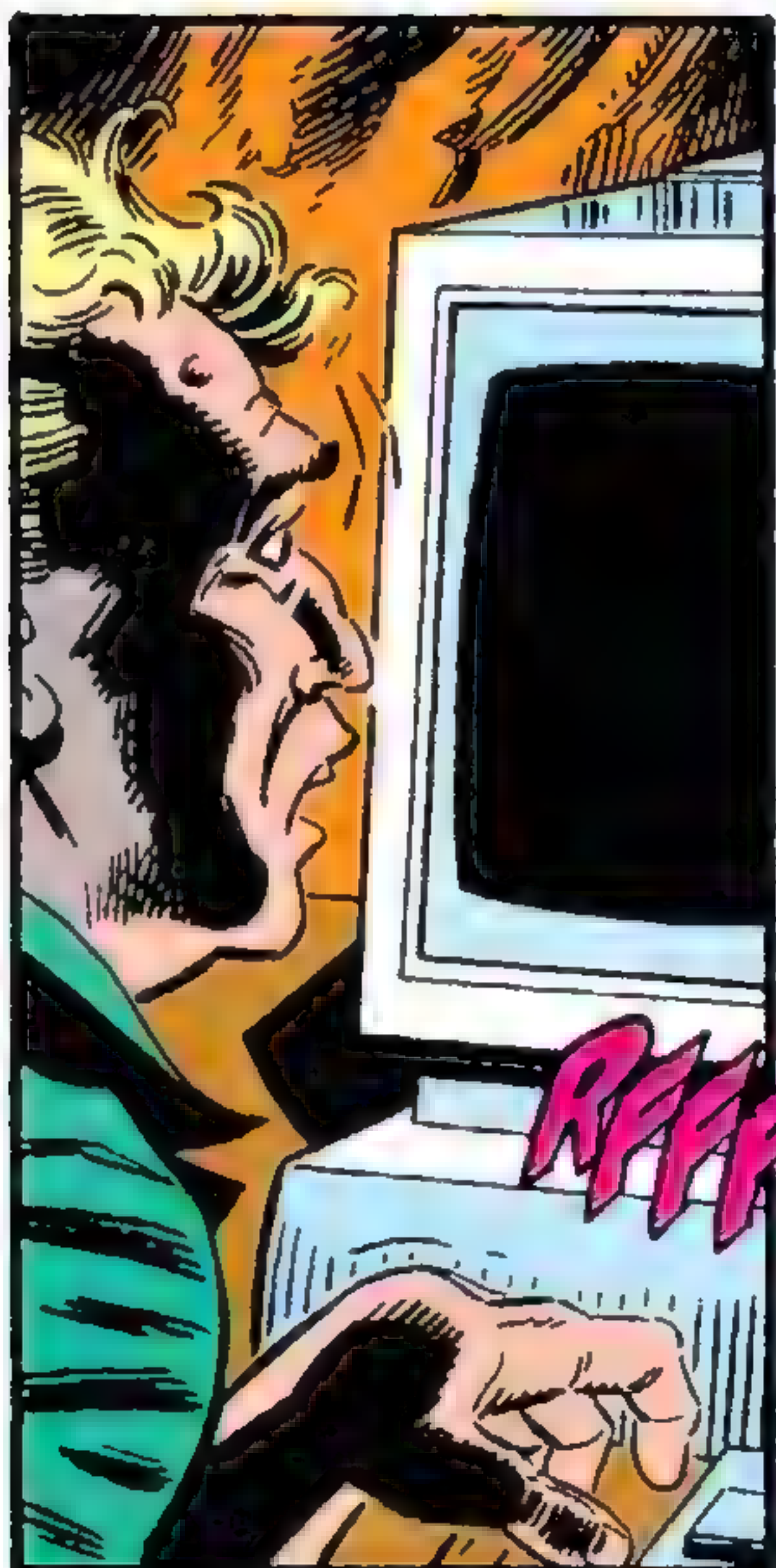
NOTHING BUT FINDING
HIS WAY THROUGH
NEW REGIONS OF THE
SYSTEM'S LABYRINTH.

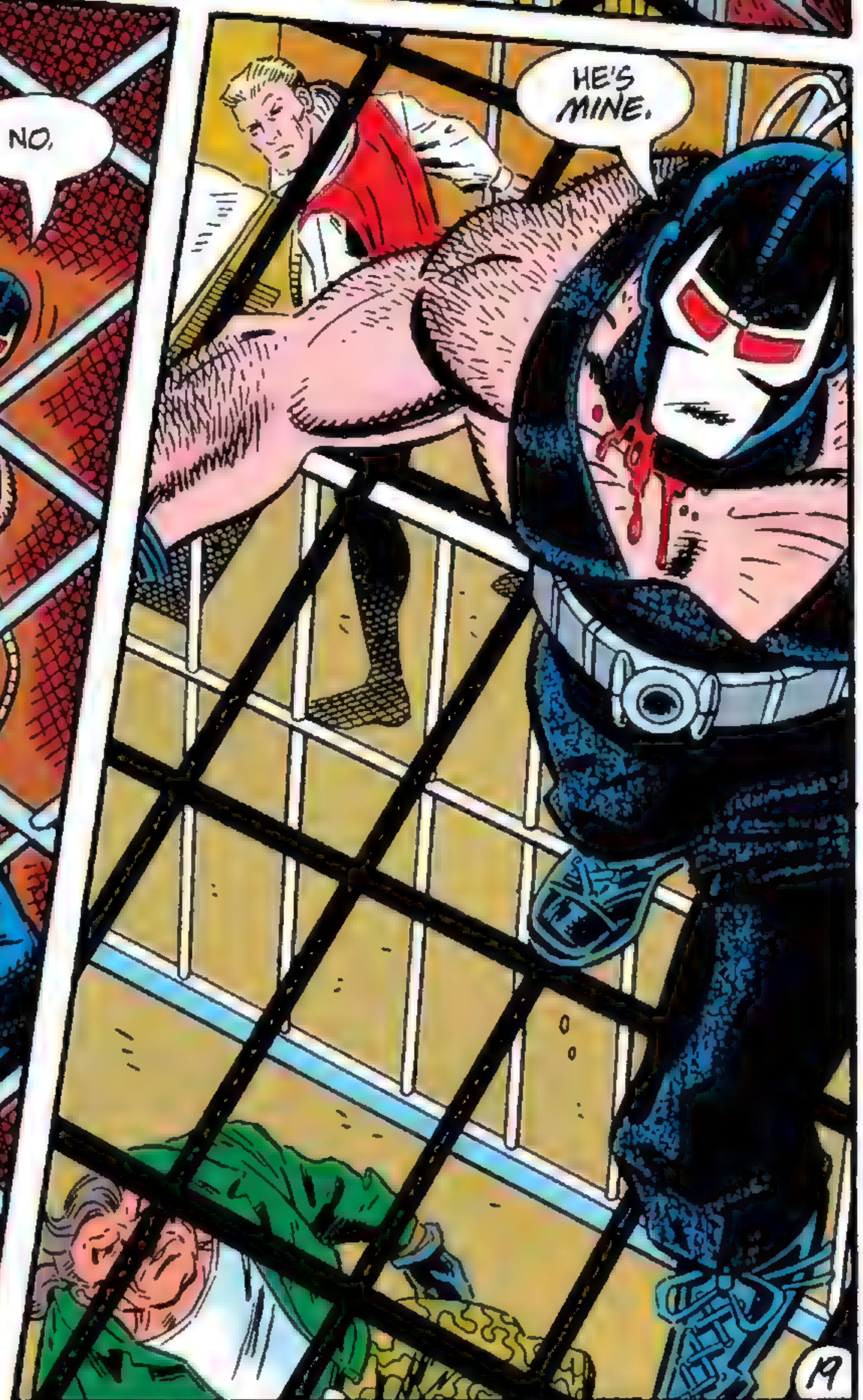
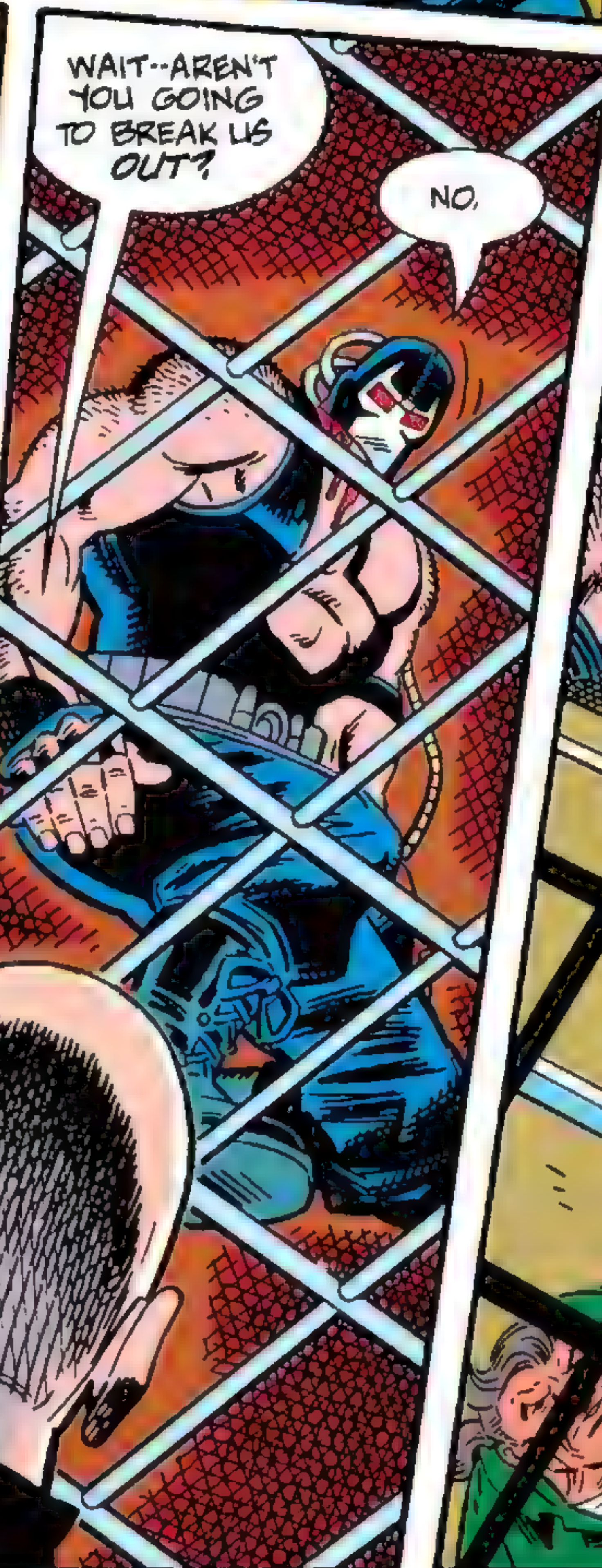
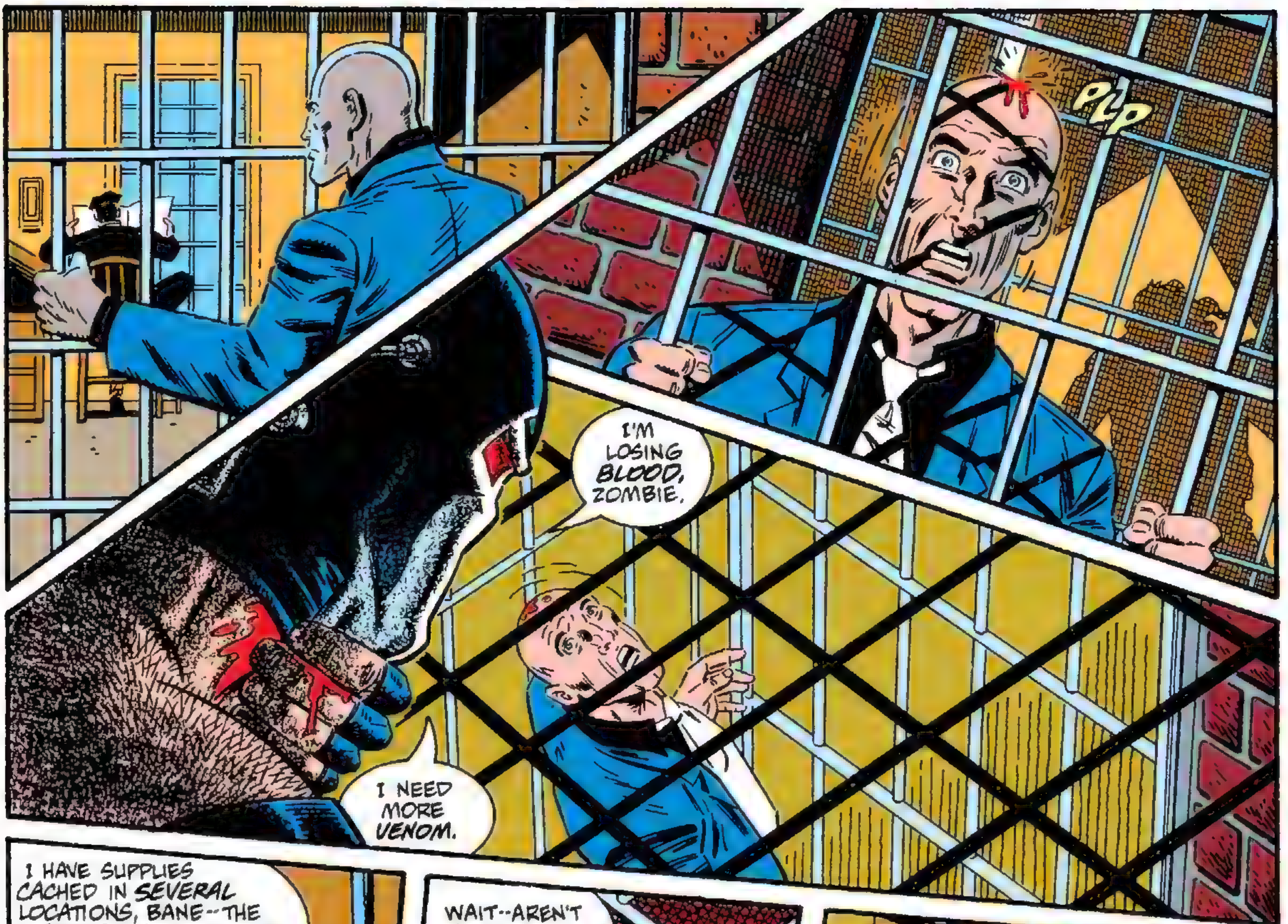


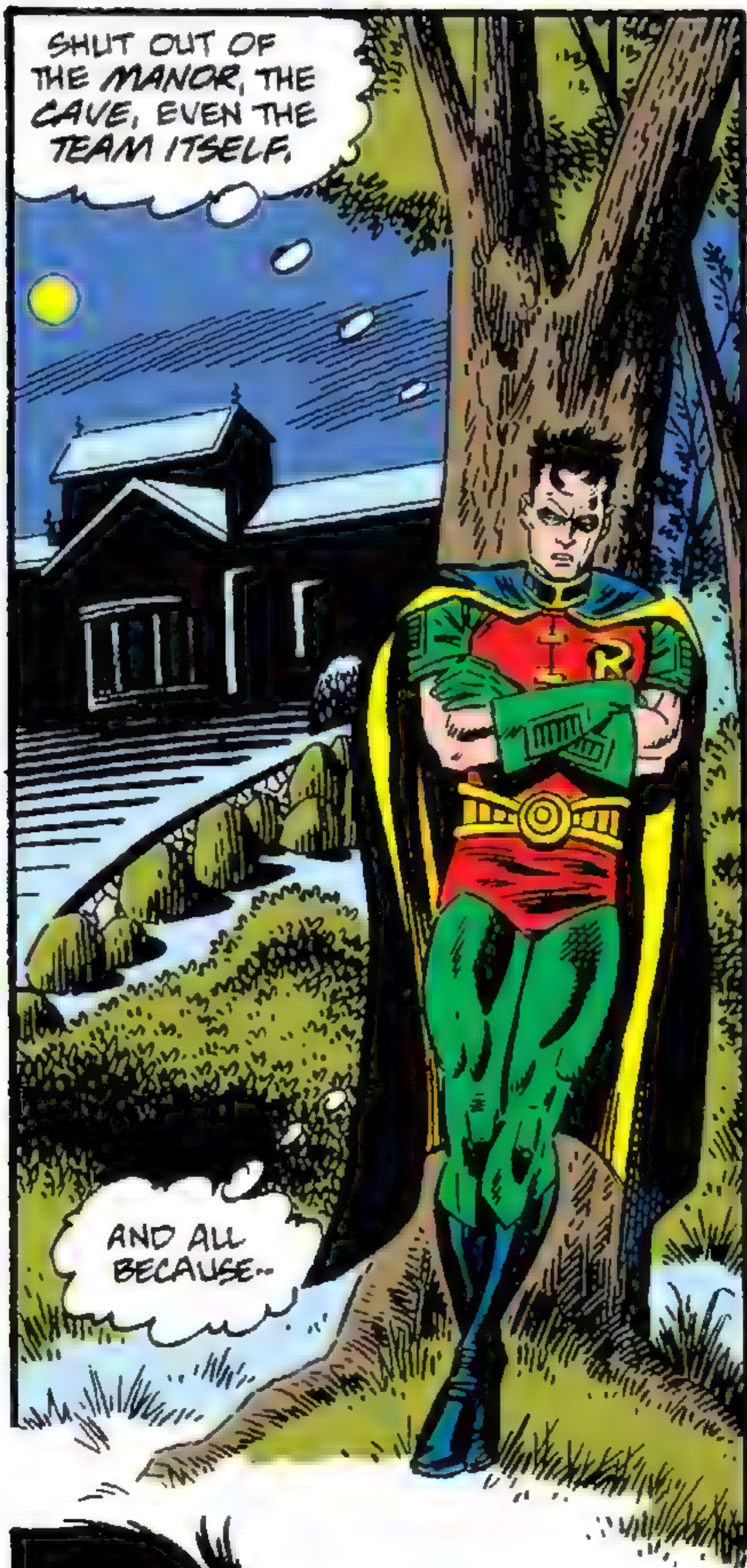
NOTHING
BUT...



...PRIVACY.







SHUT OUT OF THE MANOR, THE CAVE, EVEN THE TEAM ITSELF.

AND ALL BECAUSE--



BRUCE IS OUT OF DANGER,

NIGHTWING--!



HOW DID YOU KNOW HE WAS--

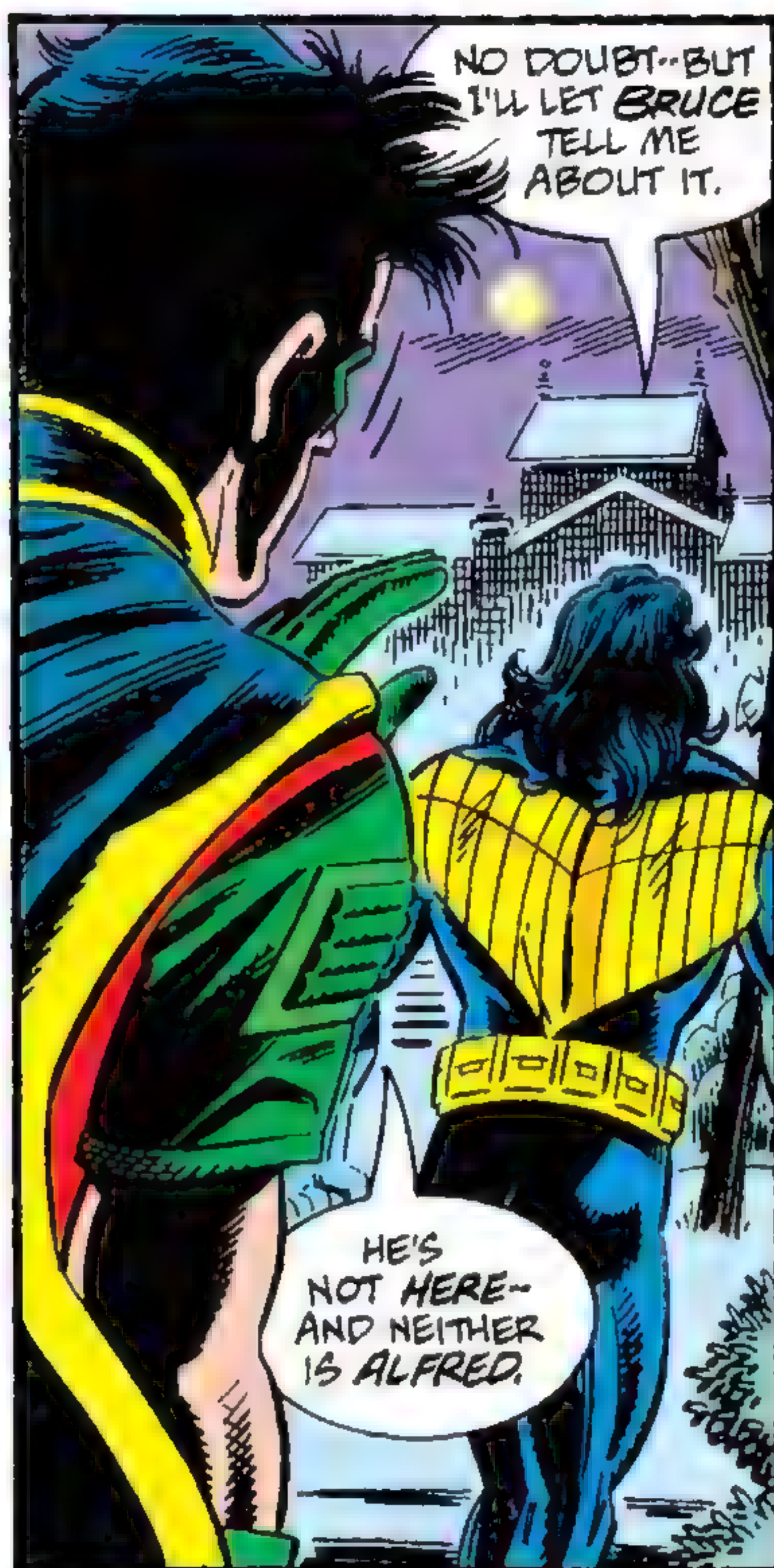
I HAD TO LEARN IT FROM ORACLE.



UH, SORRY... BUT BRUCE FIGURED IT'D BE BEST TO KEEP IT SECRET.

EVEN FROM ME?

HEY, IT'S BEEN KINDA FRANTIC AROUND HERE.



NO DOUBT--BUT I'LL LET BRUCE TELL ME ABOUT IT.

HE'S NOT HERE-- AND NEITHER IS ALFRED.

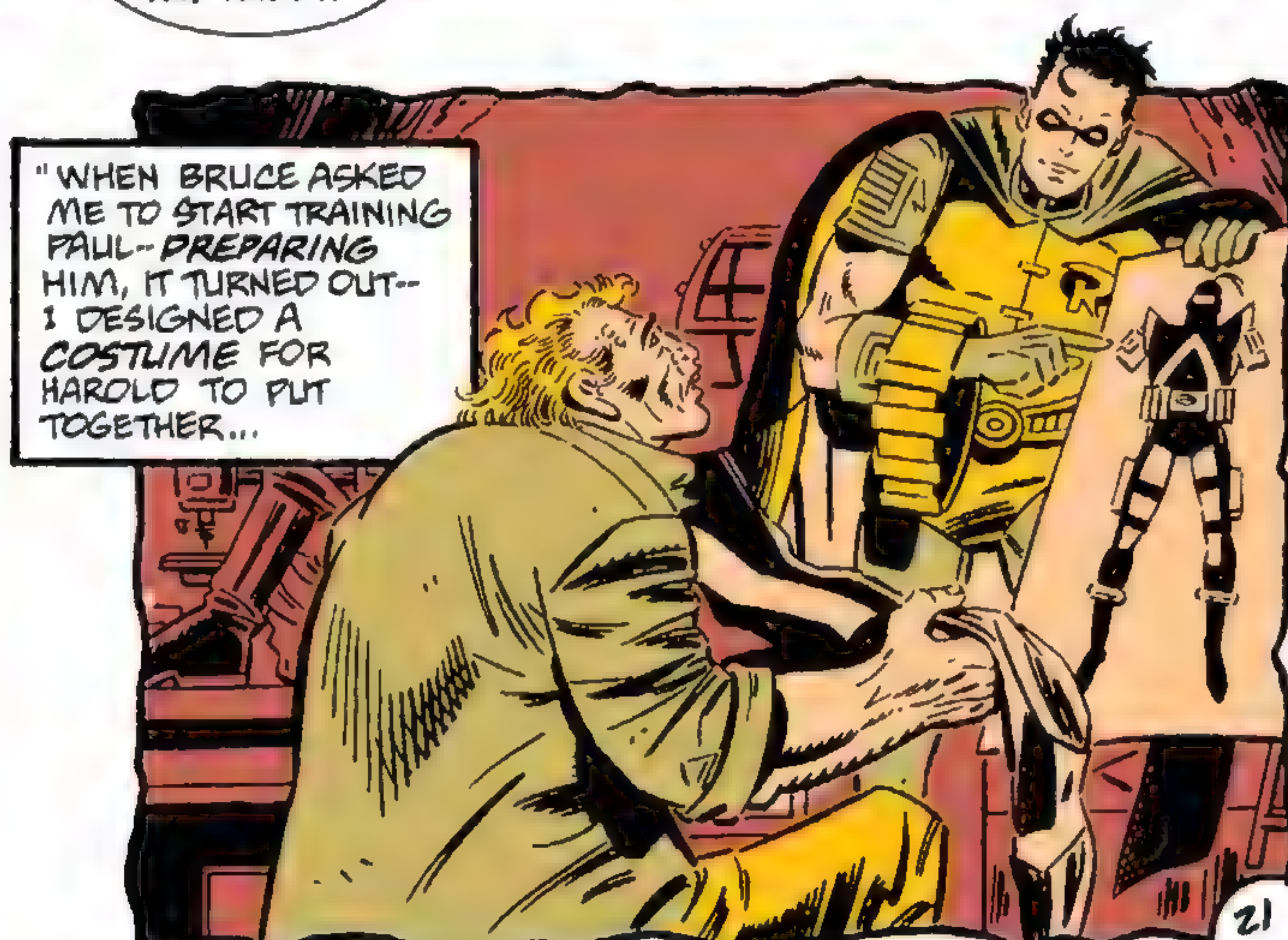
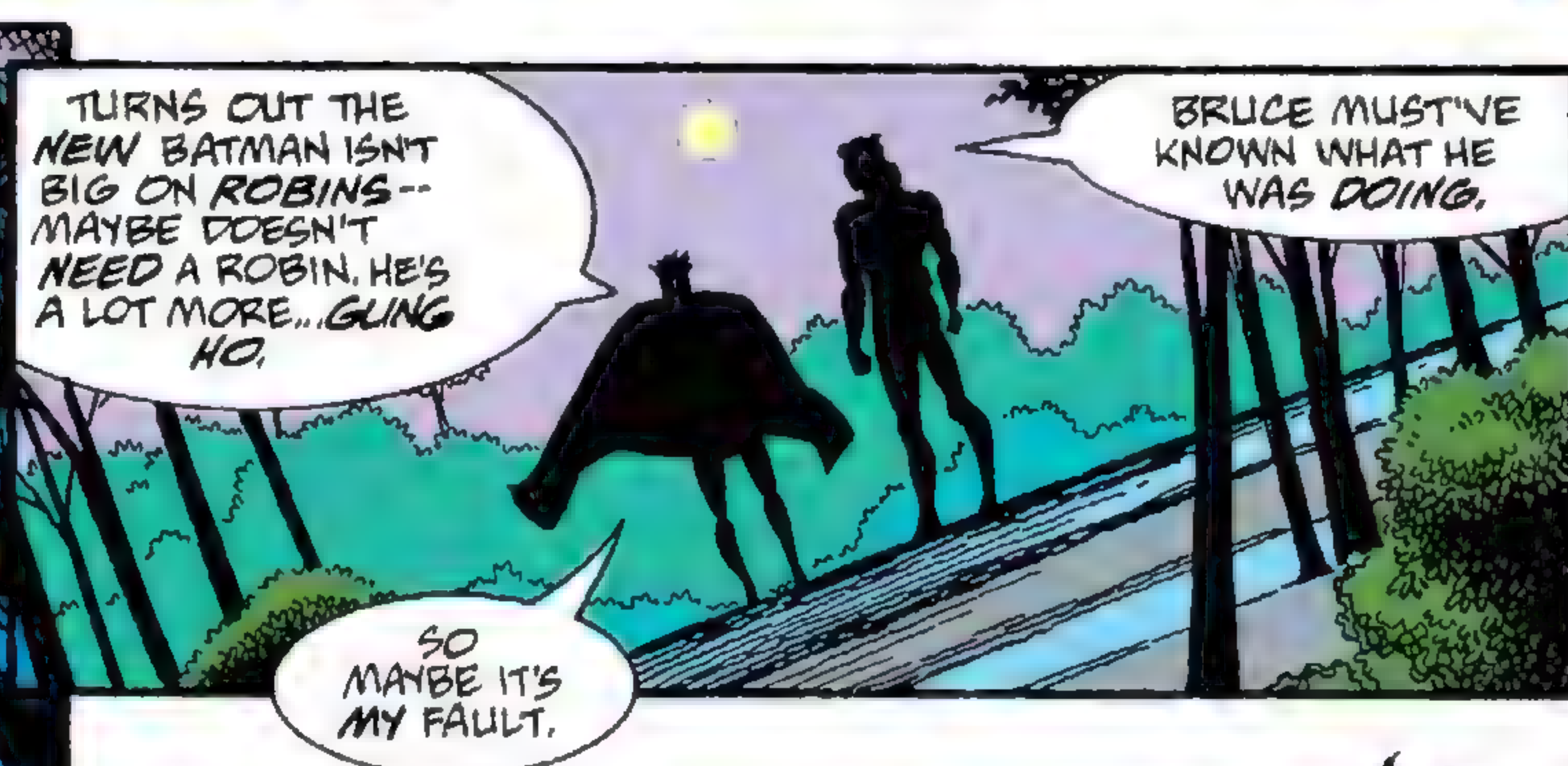
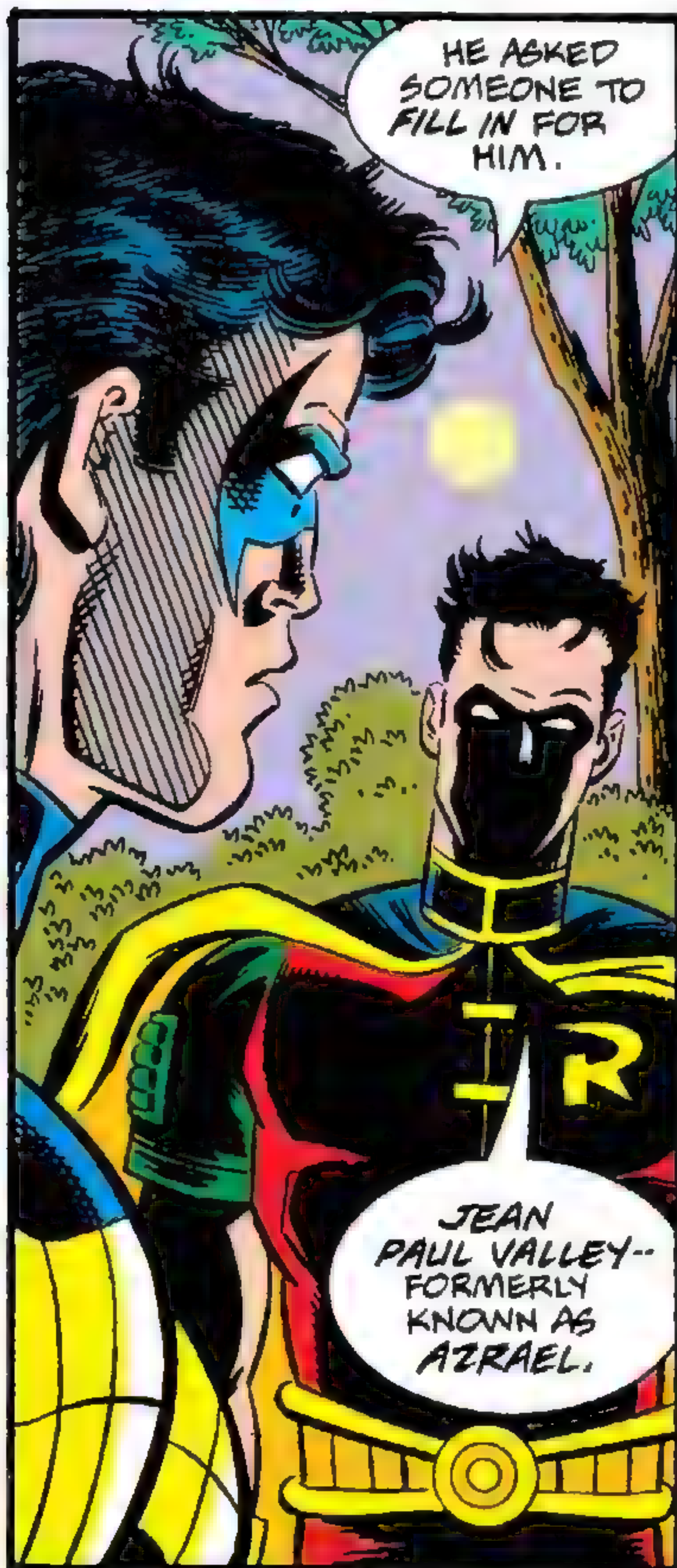


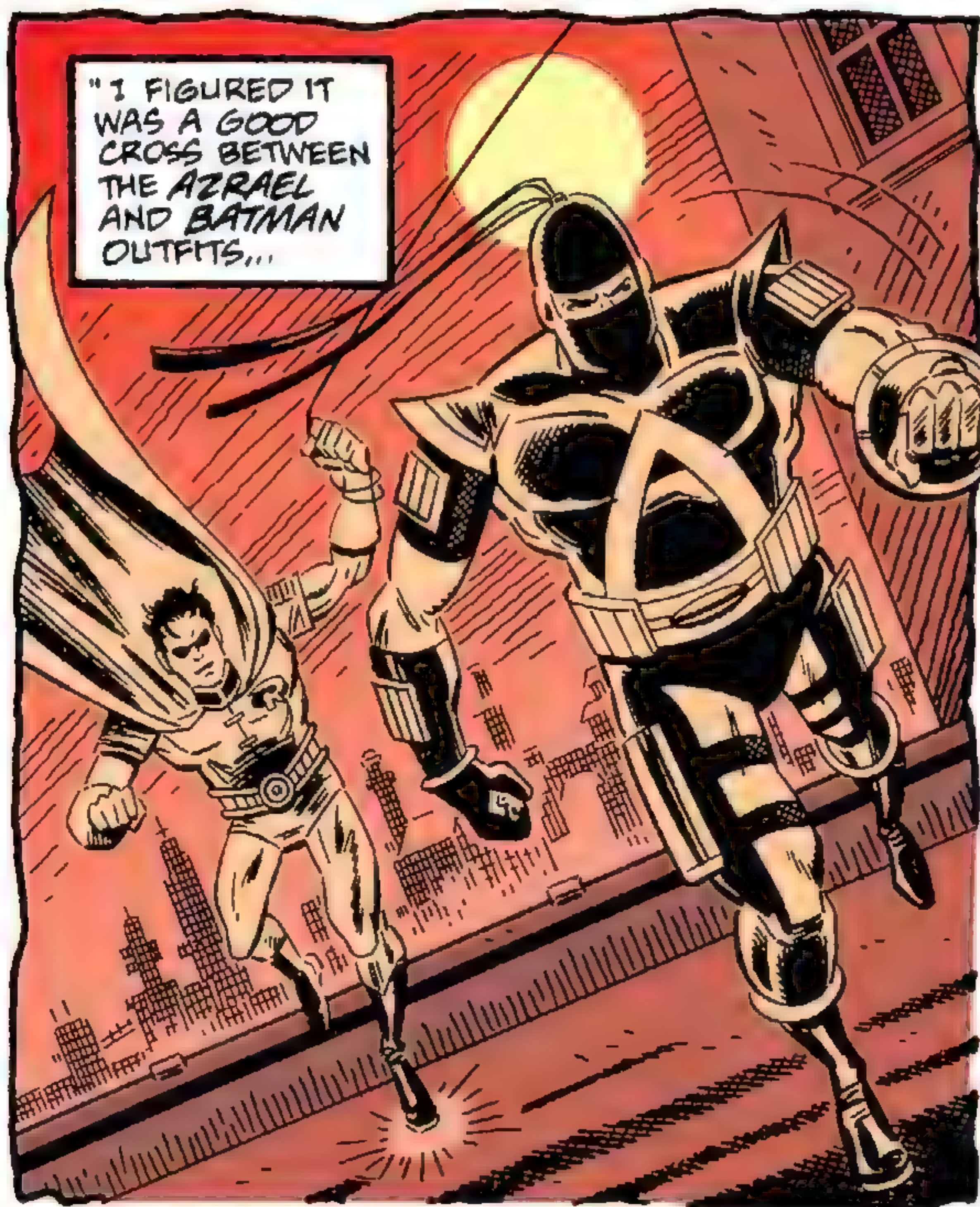
AND YET THE BATMAN LOOMS LARGE IN TODAY'S NEWS.

IT'S NOT HIM, NIGHTWING.

HE'S OUT OF DANGER, BUT... HE'S STILL IN A WHEELCHAIR.

20





"I FIGURED IT WAS A GOOD CROSS BETWEEN THE AZRAEL AND BATMAN OUTFITS..."



"...BUT MAYBE I MADE IT TOO SIMILAR TO A BAD GUY BRUCE HAD JUST PUT AWAY."

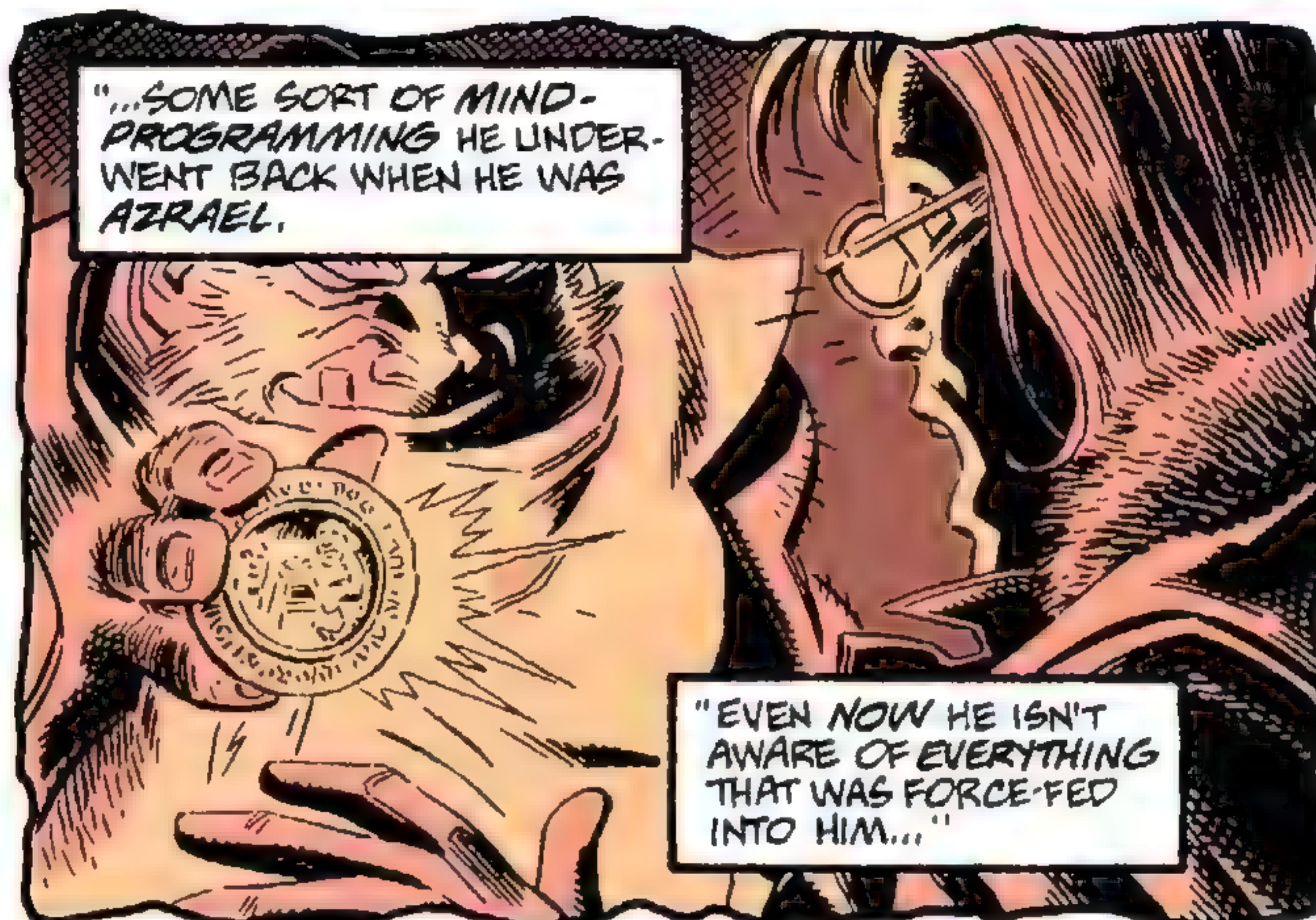
"LOOKING BACK, ASIDE FROM METALHEAD'S NASTY SPIKES, THE TWO OUTFITS WERE ALMOST IDENTICAL."



MAYBE IT GAVE PAUL SUBLIMINAL CUES--AND COMBINED WITH ALL THE WEIRD STUFF HIDDEN IN HIS HEAD...

COMBINED WITH WHAT?

HE CALLS IT "THE SYSTEM..."



"...SOME SORT OF MIND-PROGRAMMING HE UNDERWENT BACK WHEN HE WAS AZRAEL."

"EVEN NOW HE ISN'T AWARE OF EVERYTHING THAT WAS FORCED INTO HIM..."



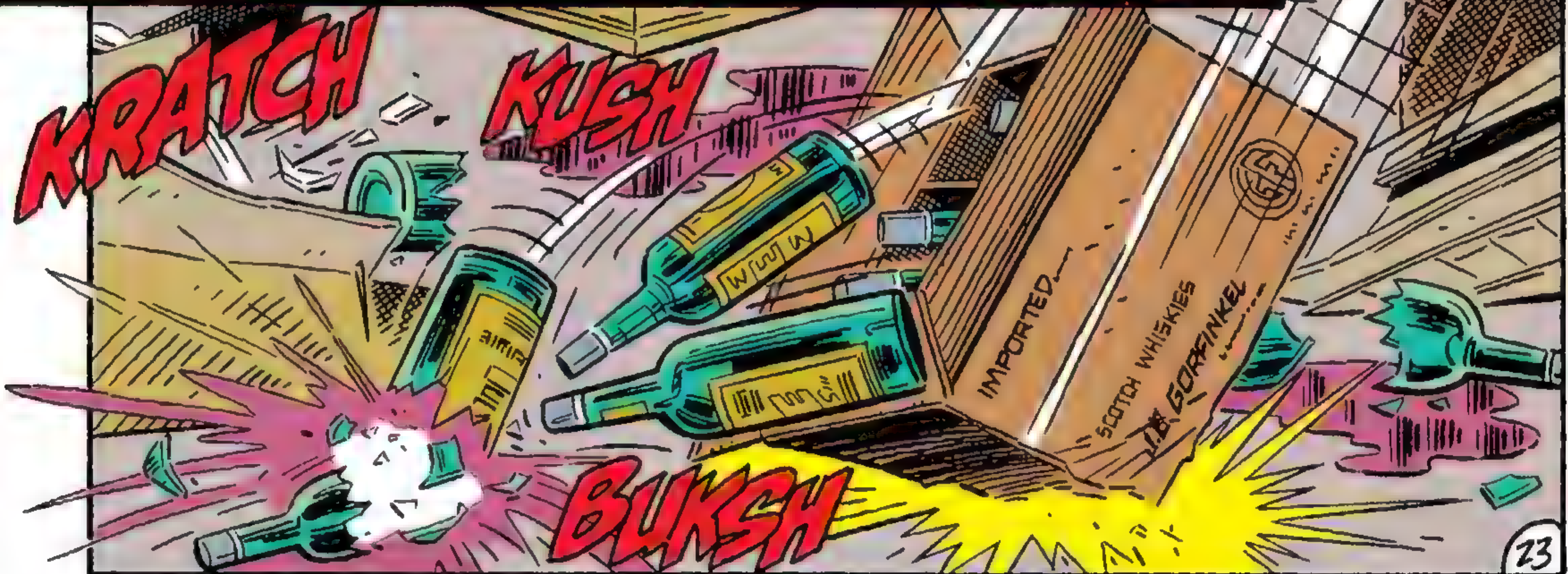
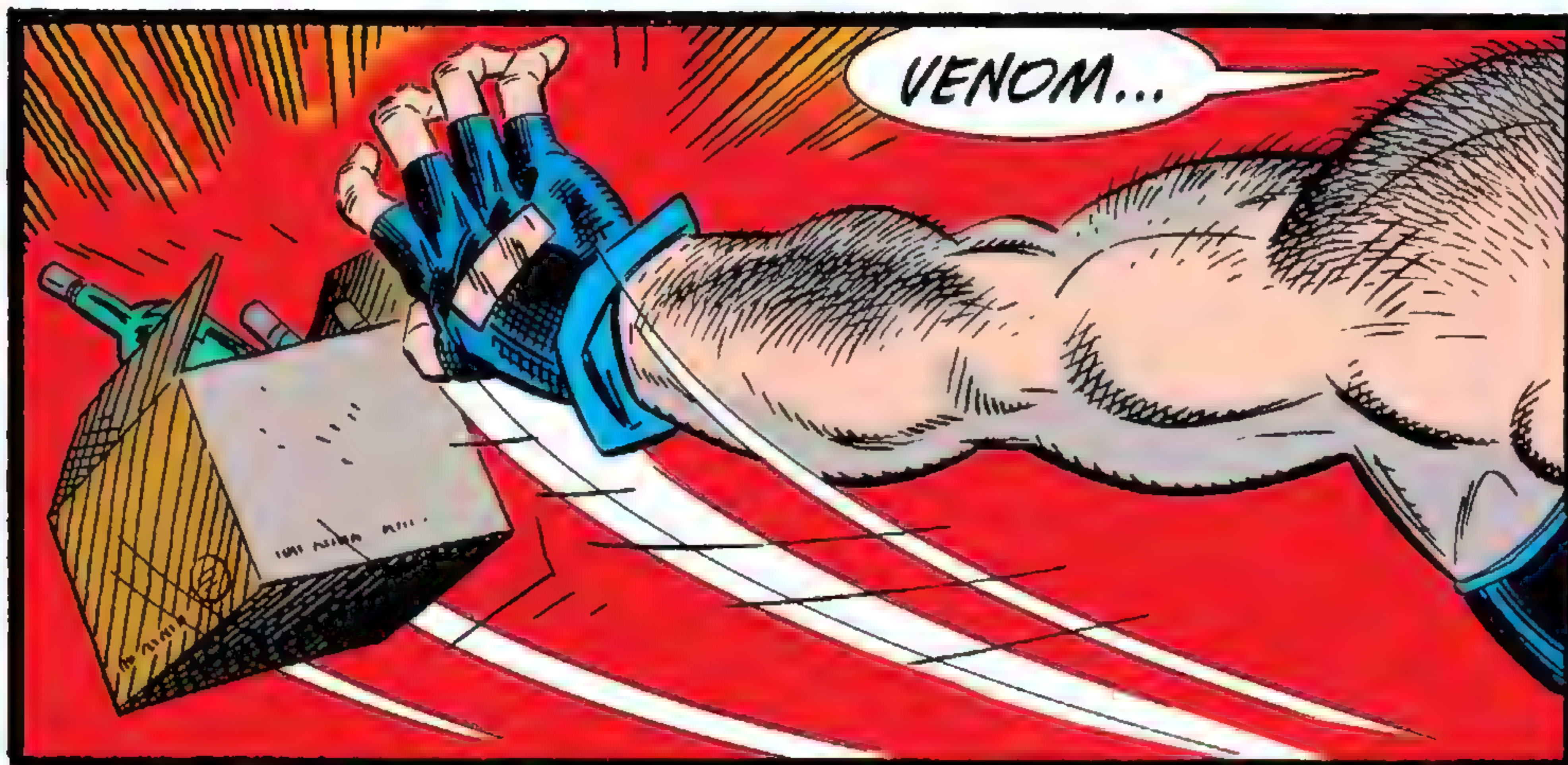
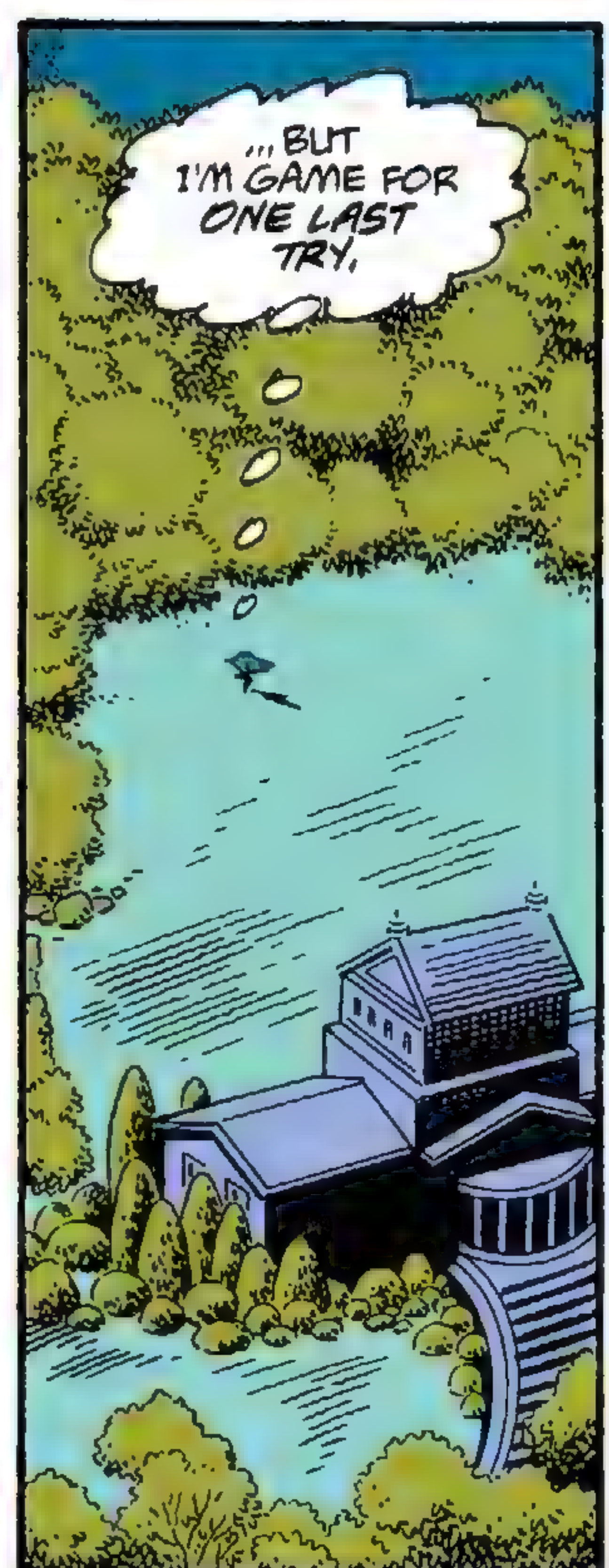
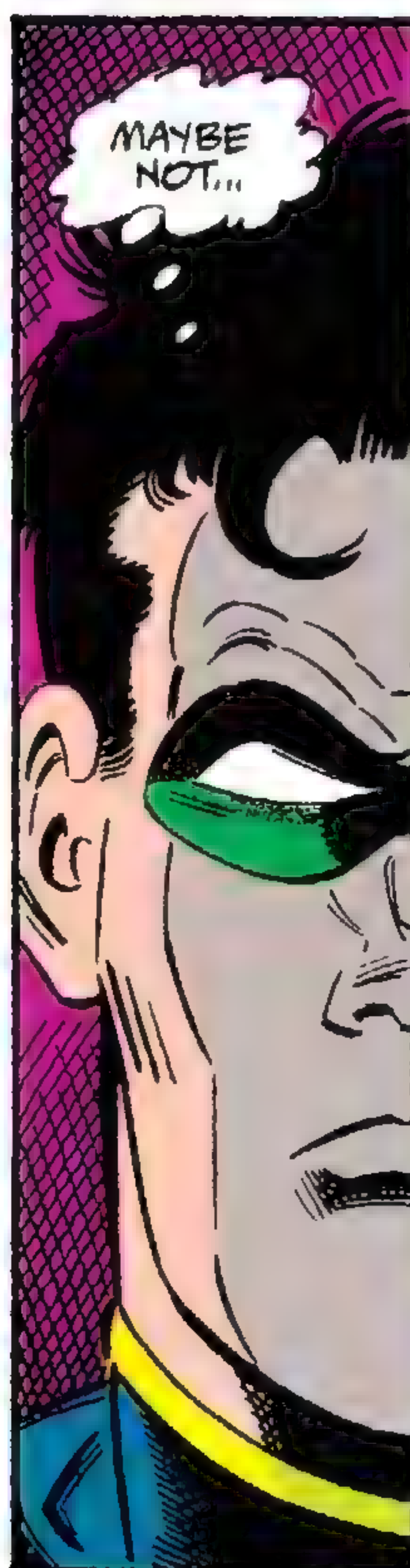
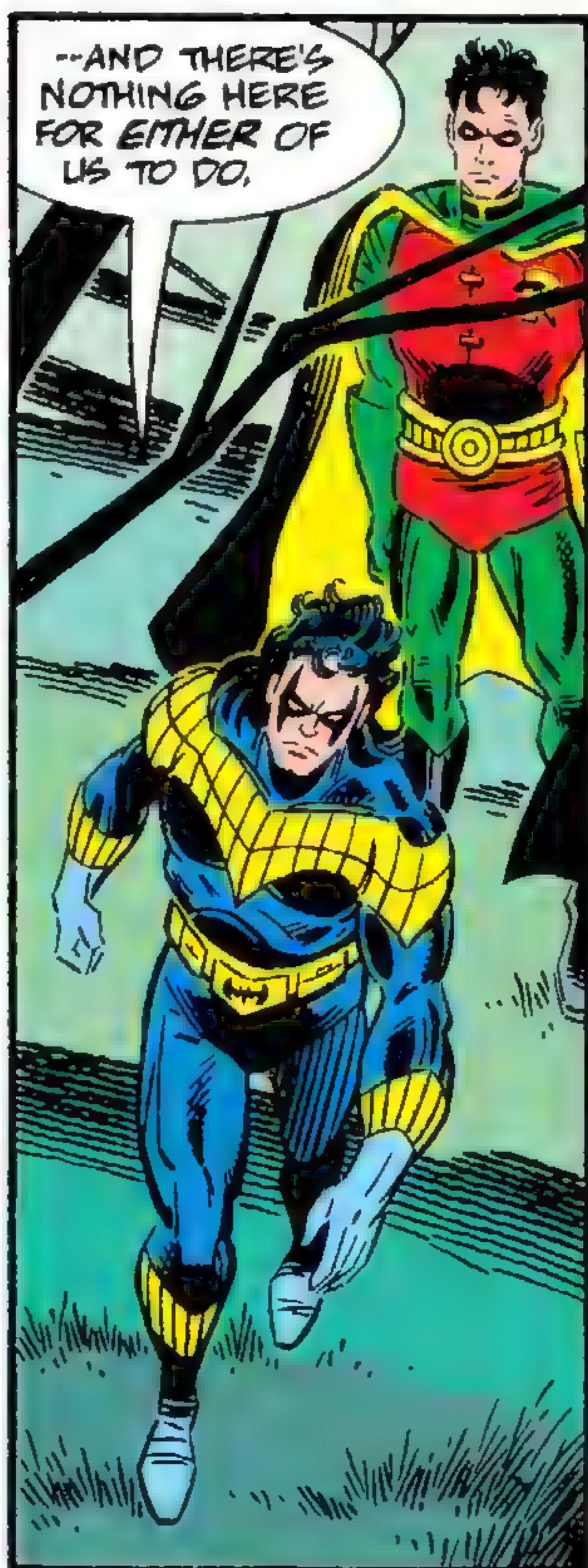
"...BUT SINCE THE ORDER OF SAINT DUMAS WAS CREATING AN 'AVENGING ANGEL'--AN ASSASSIN--IT CAN'T BE ALL GOOD..."

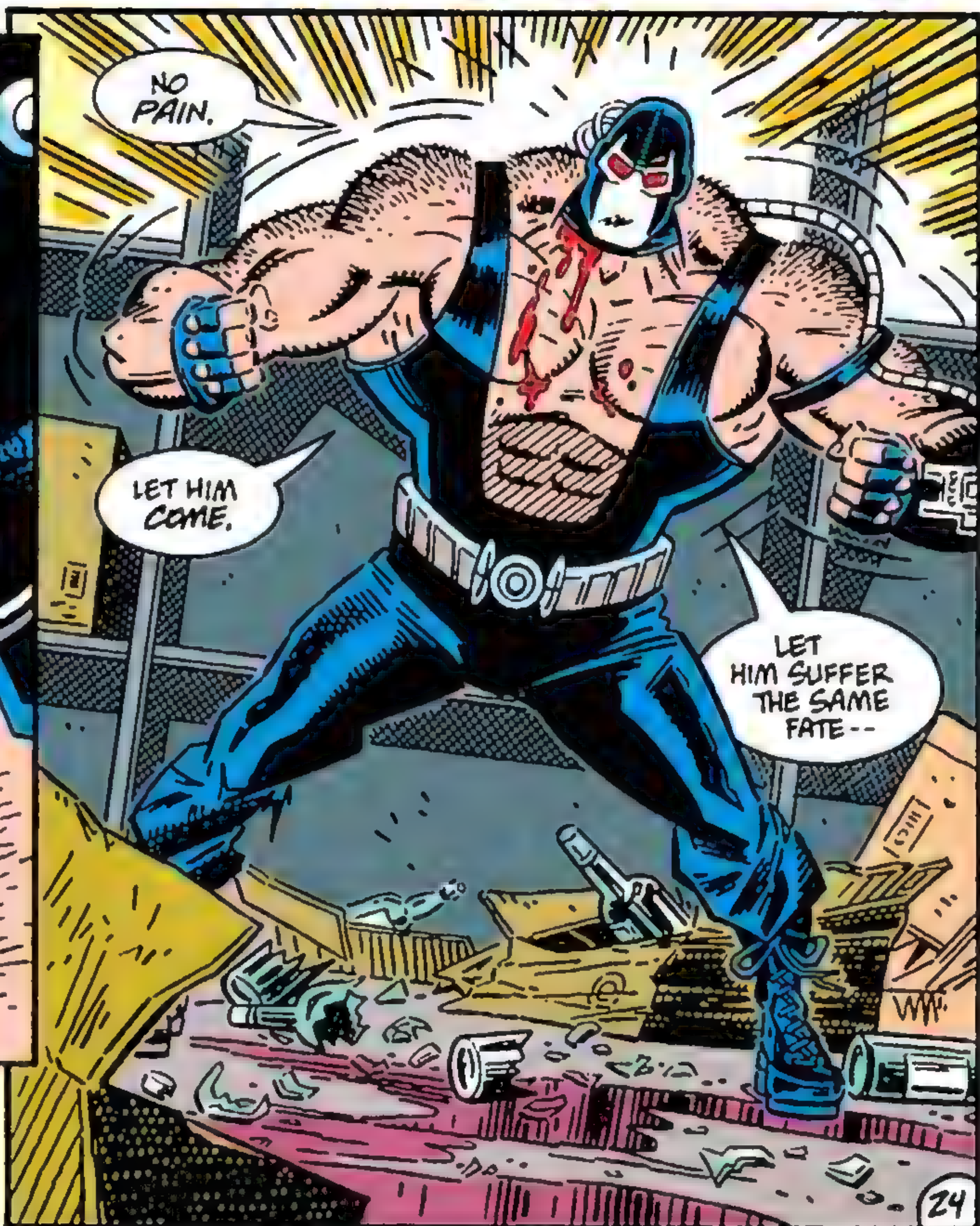
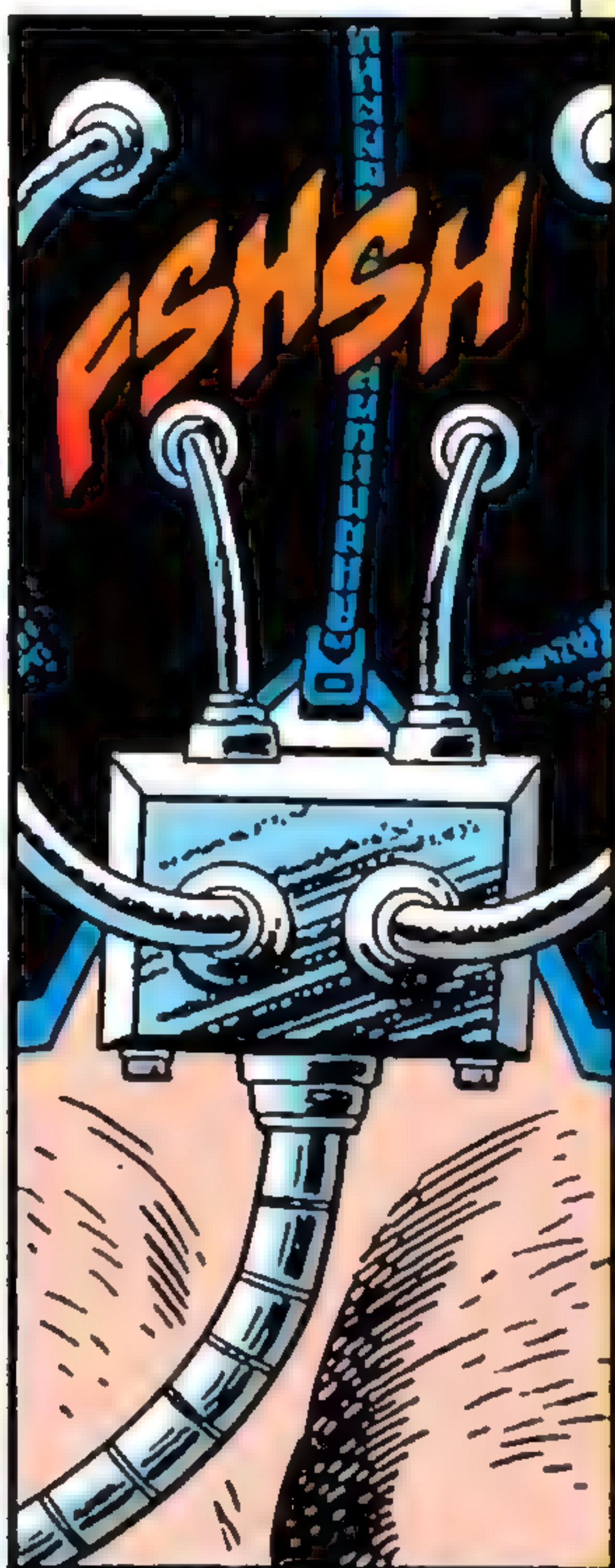
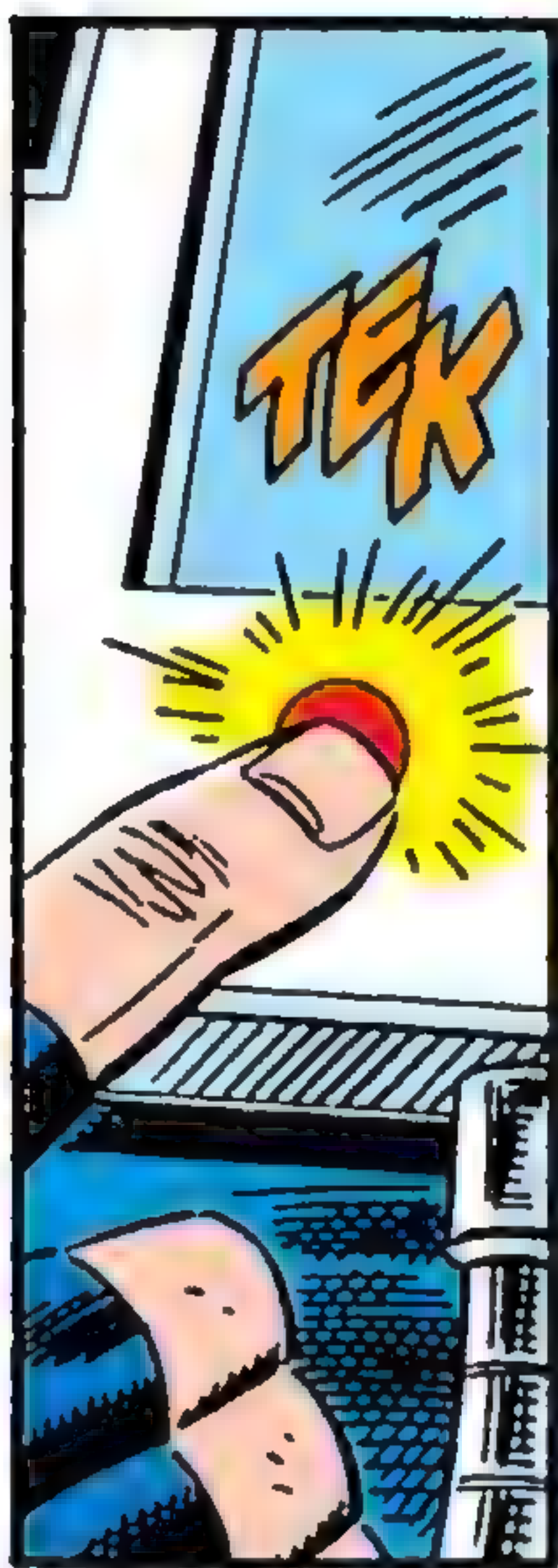
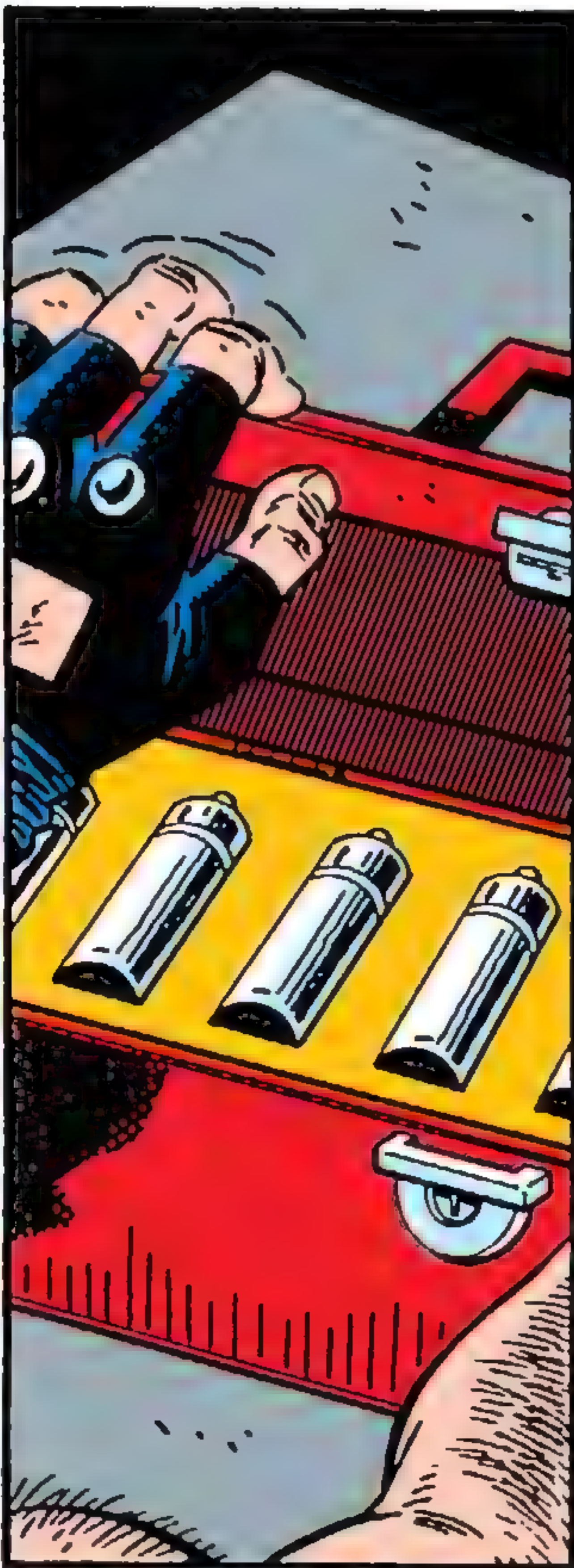
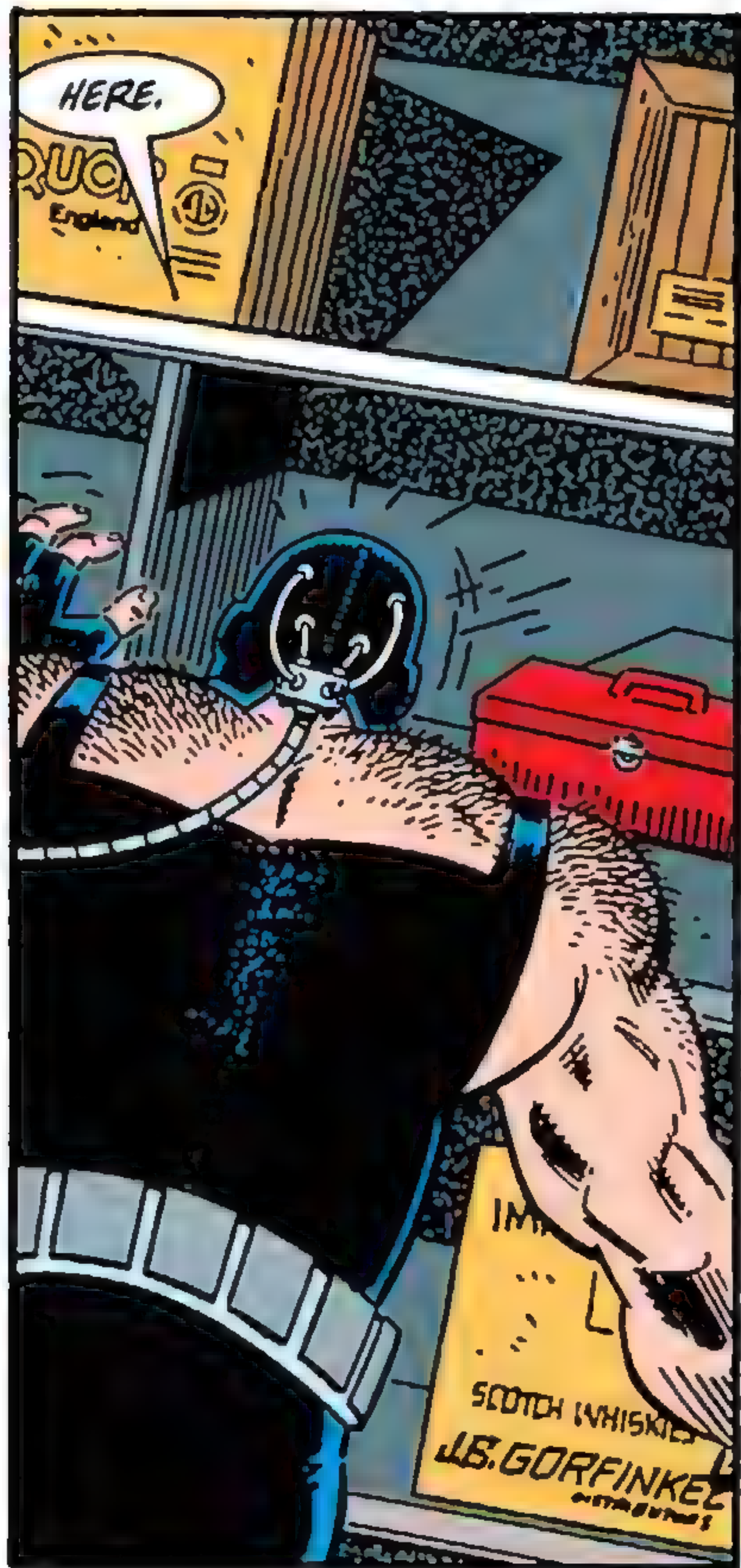
"...EVEN THOUGH IT ENABLES HIM TO DO AMAZING THINGS WITHOUT KNOWING HE CAN DO THEM."

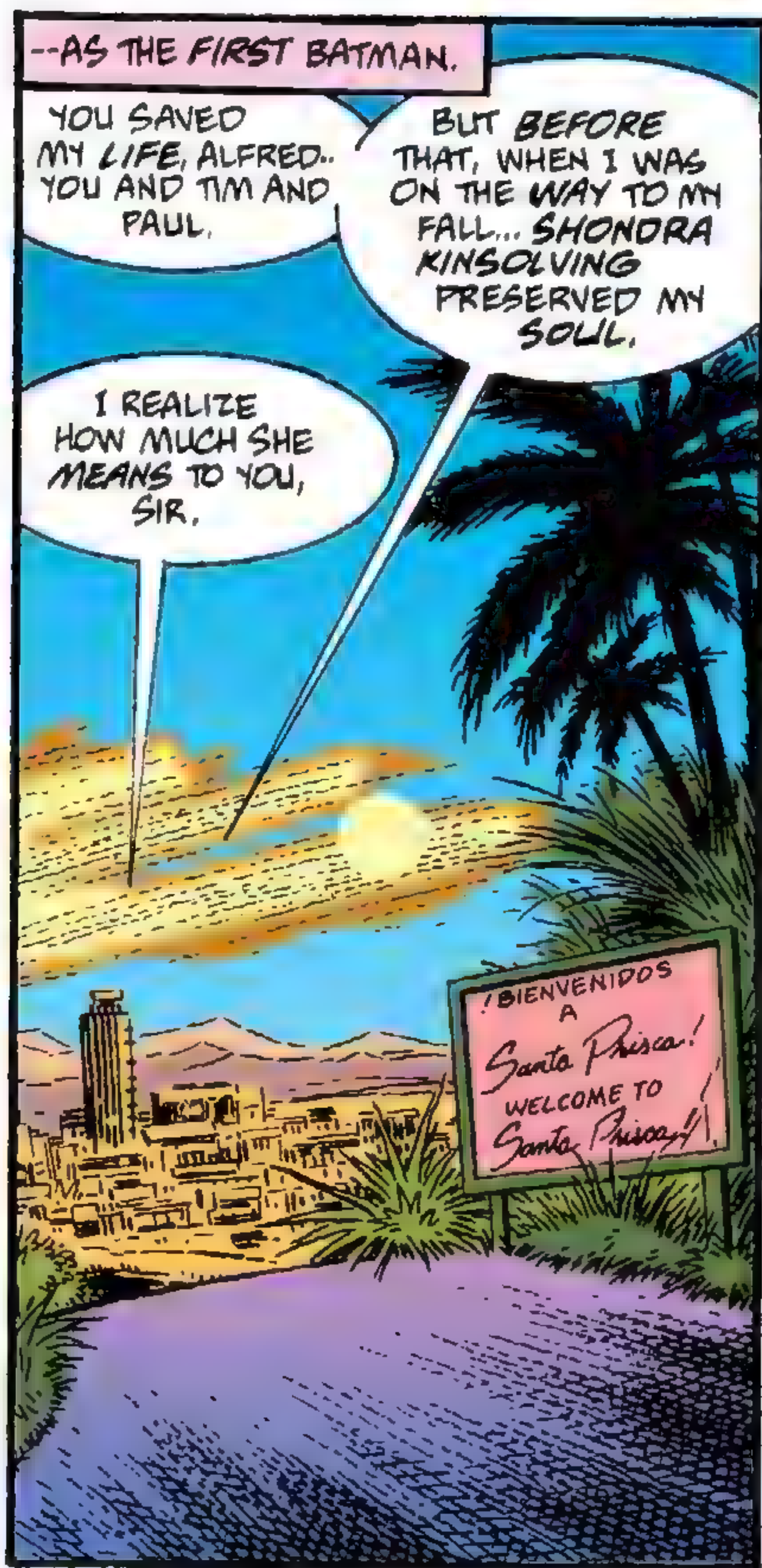


ANYWAY, THAT COSTUME HAROLD AND I PUT TOGETHER--MAYBE IT TRIGGERED SOME STUFF FROM "THE SYSTEM" AND MADE HIM--

NO-- IT'S STUPID TO BLAME YOURSELF.





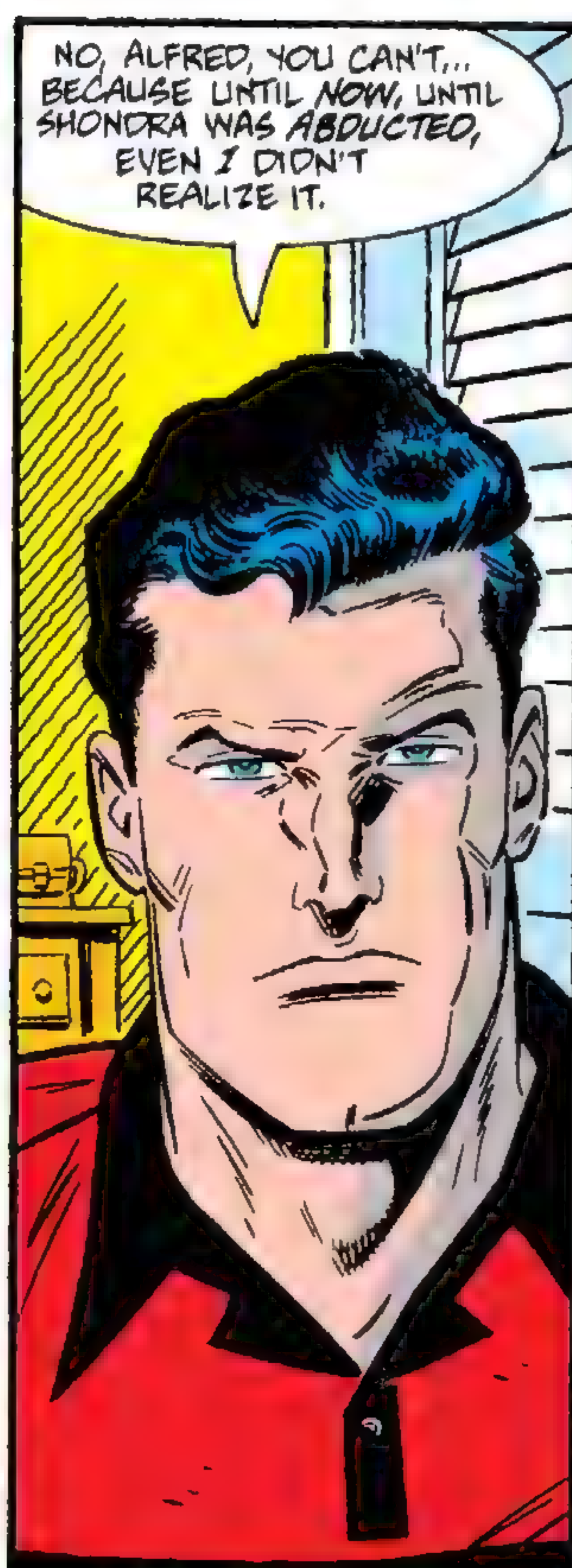


--AS THE FIRST BATMAN.

YOU SAVED MY LIFE, ALFRED... YOU AND TIM AND PAUL.

BUT BEFORE THAT, WHEN I WAS ON THE WAY TO MY FALL... SHONDRA KINSOLVING PRESERVED MY SOUL.

I REALIZE HOW MUCH SHE MEANS TO YOU, SIR.



NO, ALFRED, YOU CAN'T... BECAUSE UNTIL NOW, UNTIL SHONDRA WAS ABDUCTED, EVEN I DIDN'T REALIZE IT.



"I WAS DEAD ON MY FEET WHEN I WENT TO HER, READY TO COLLAPSE, EVEN IF I WOULDN'T ADMIT IT..."

IF ANY MAN HAS THE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME THIS, BRUCE, IT'S YOU.



"BUT SHE TOOK ME IN HER HANDS, ALFRED, AND LIFTED ME UP."



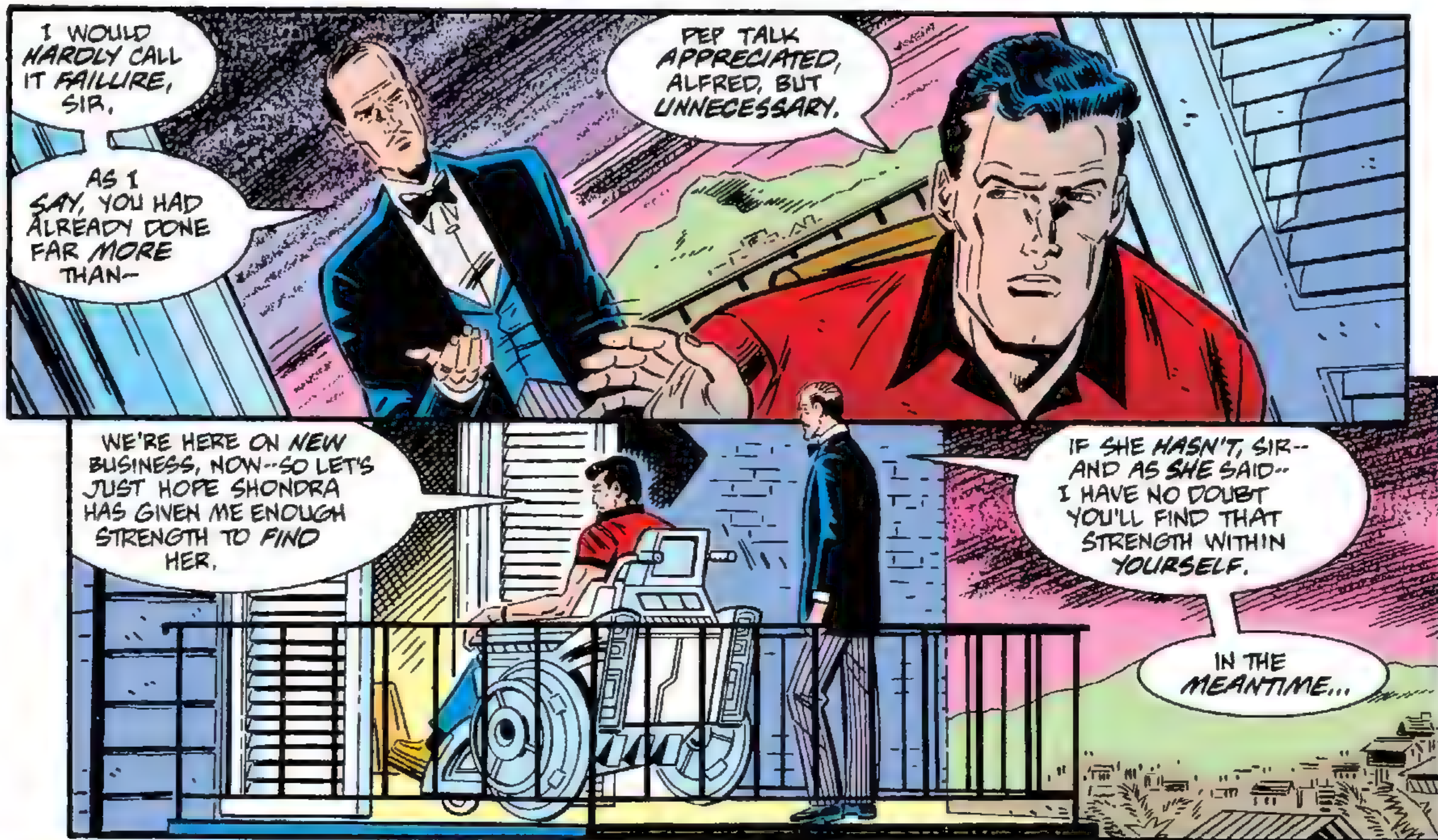
SHE'S A TRUE HEALER, ALFRED.

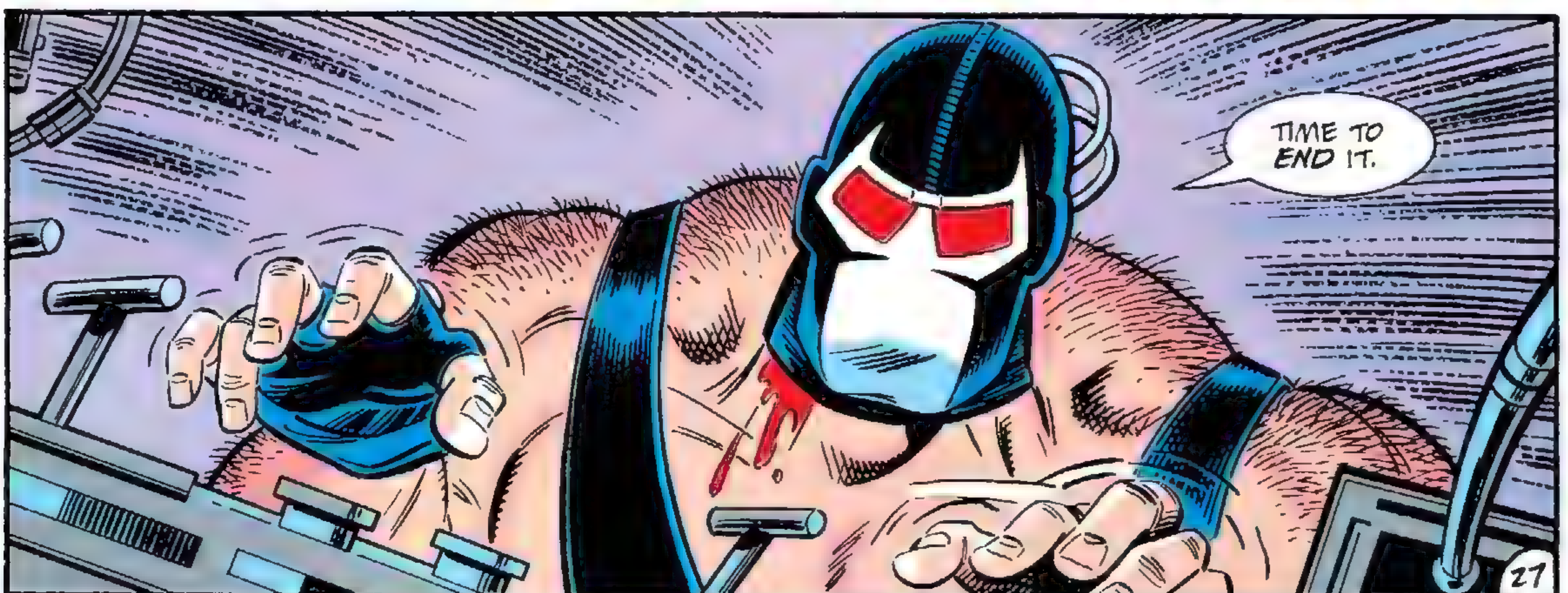
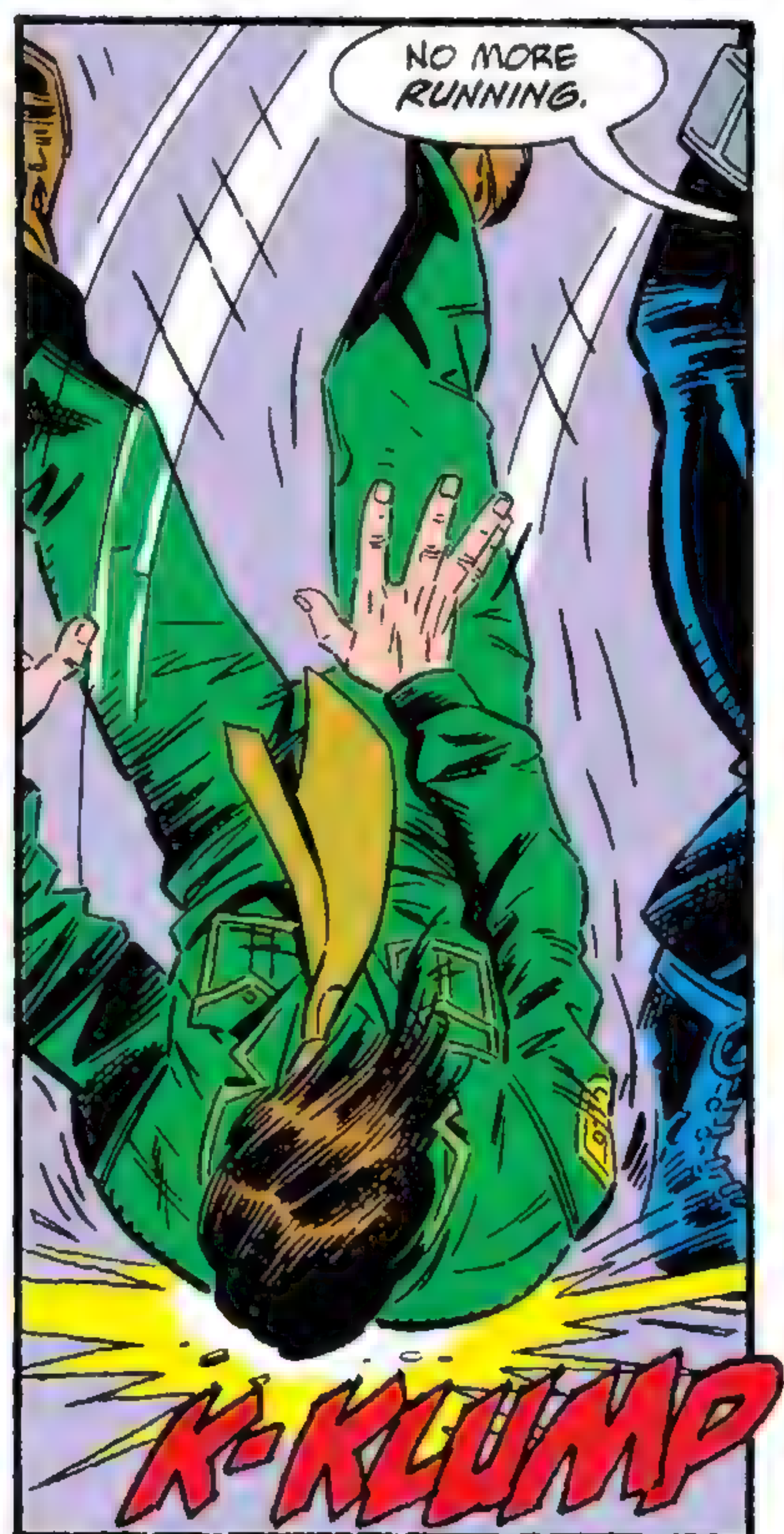
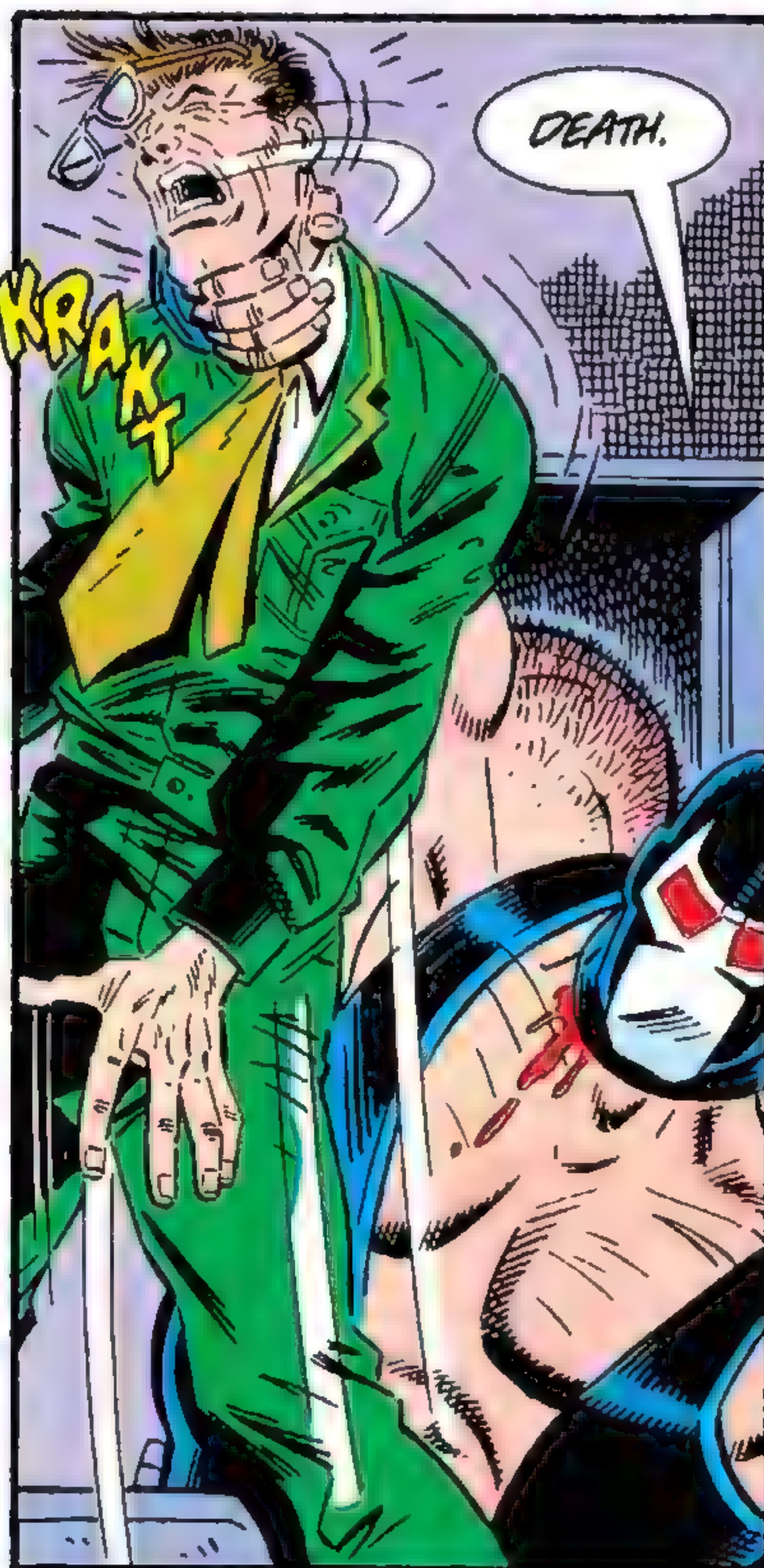
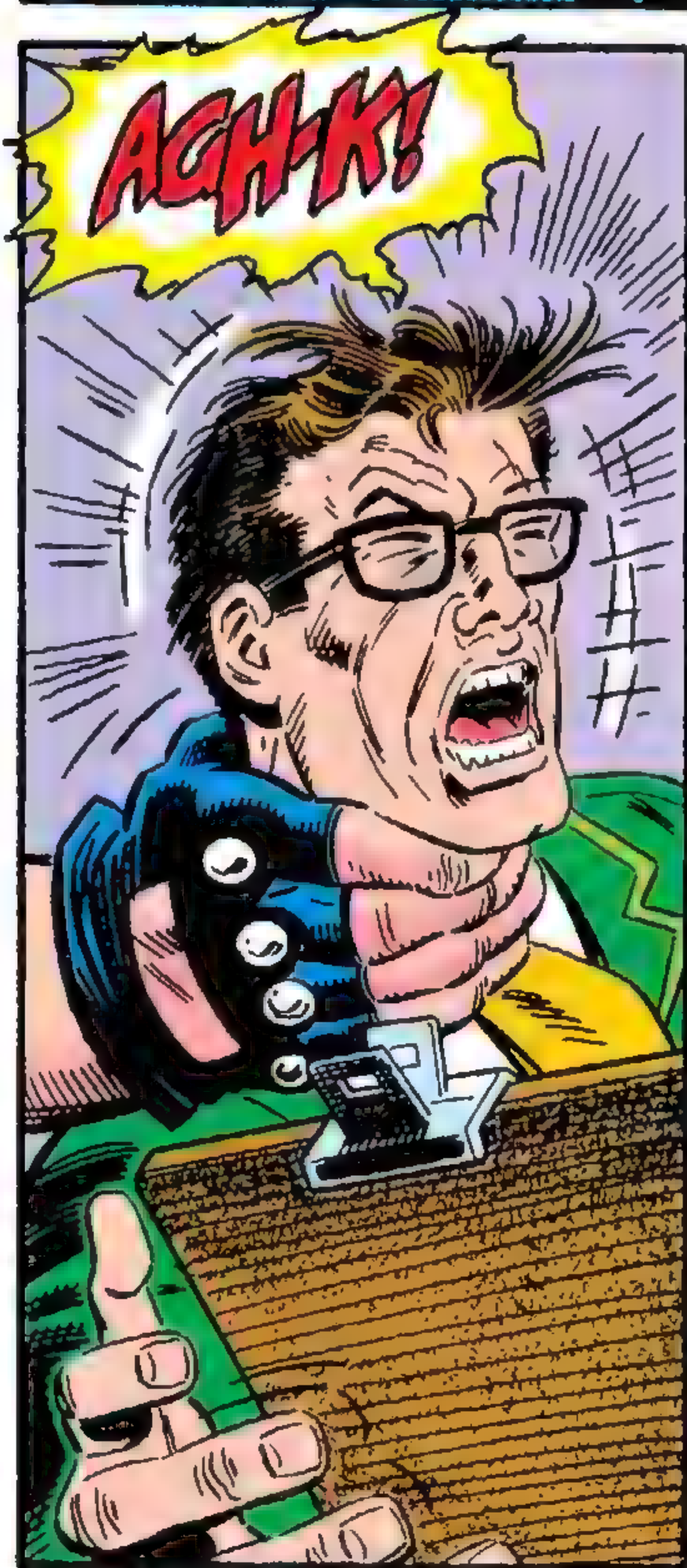
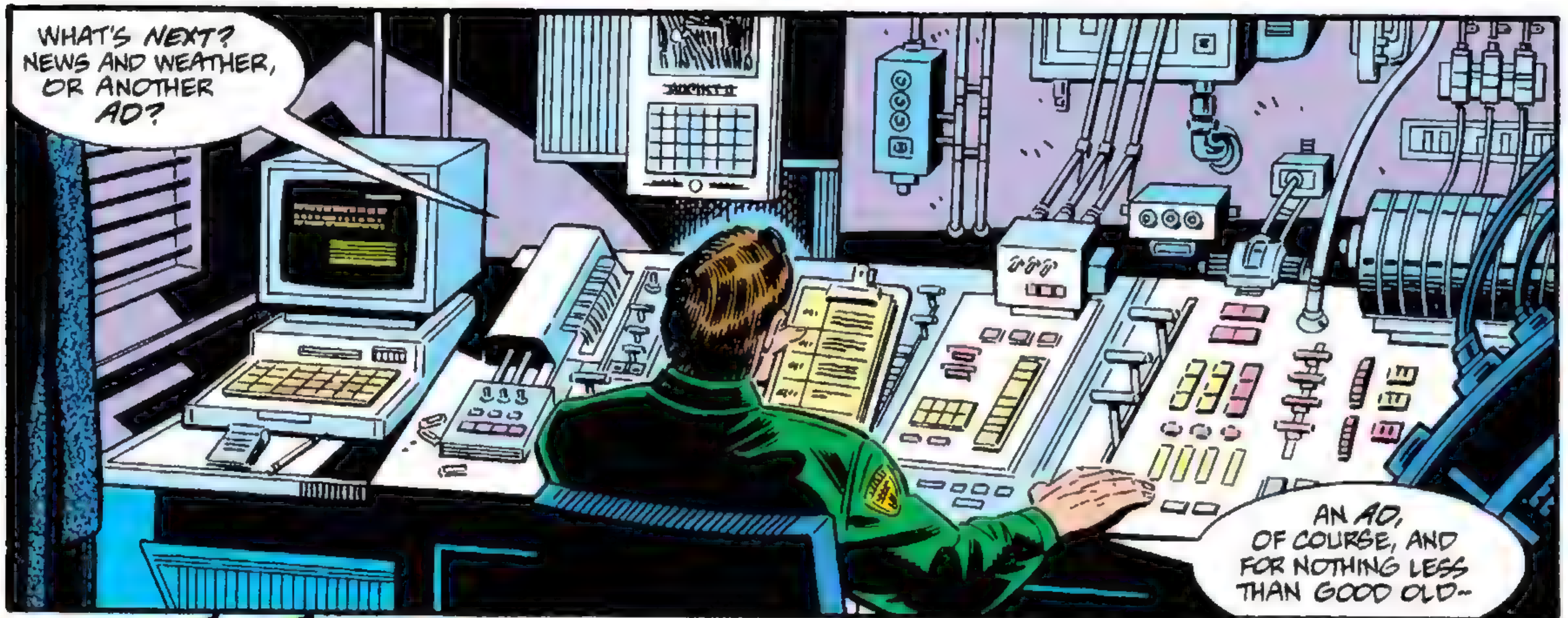
WITHOUT HER, I'M NOT SURE I COULD HAVE GONE ON... NOT SURE I COULD HAVE FACED ALL THOSE ARKHAM INMATES FREED BY BANE...

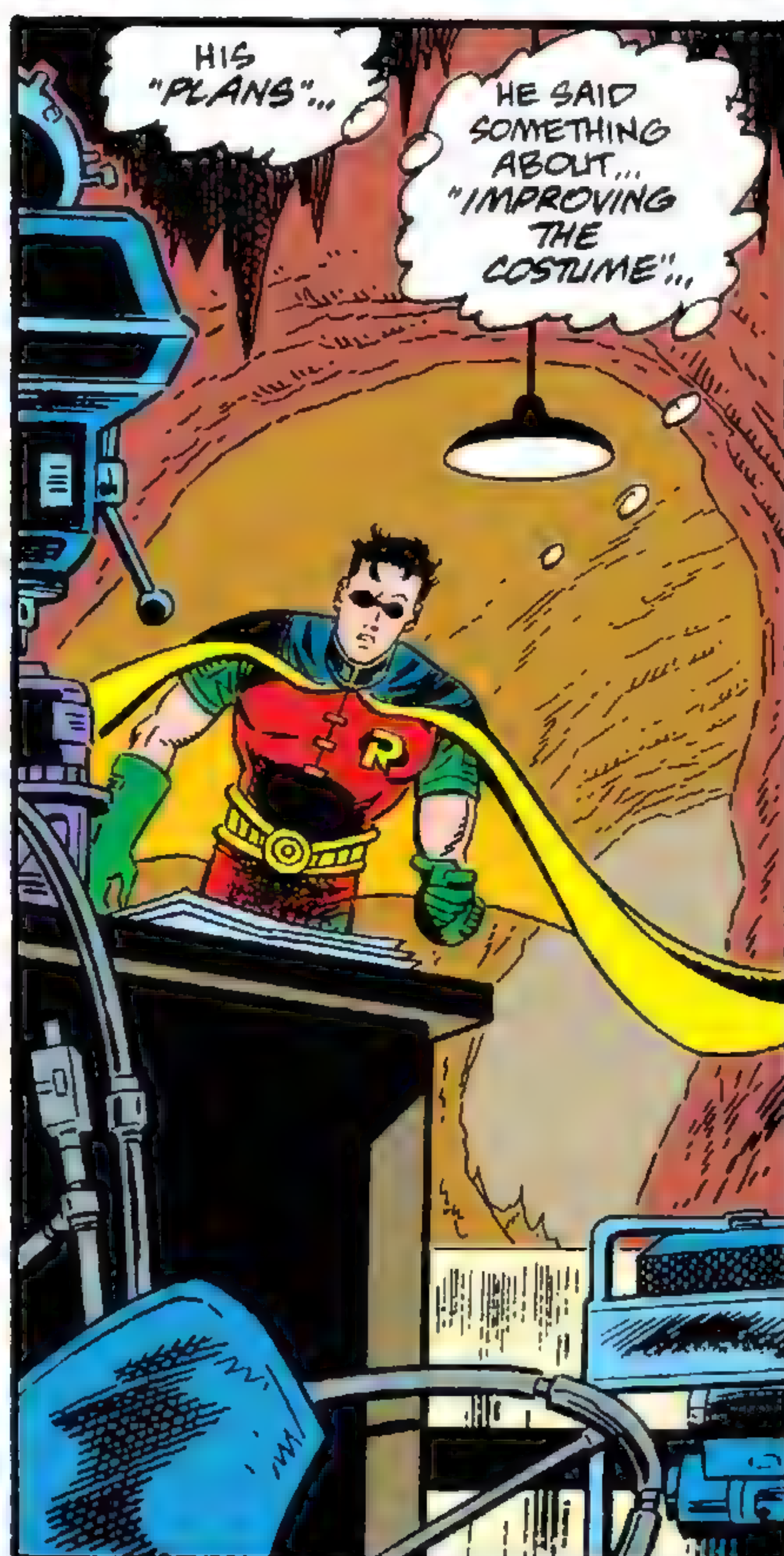
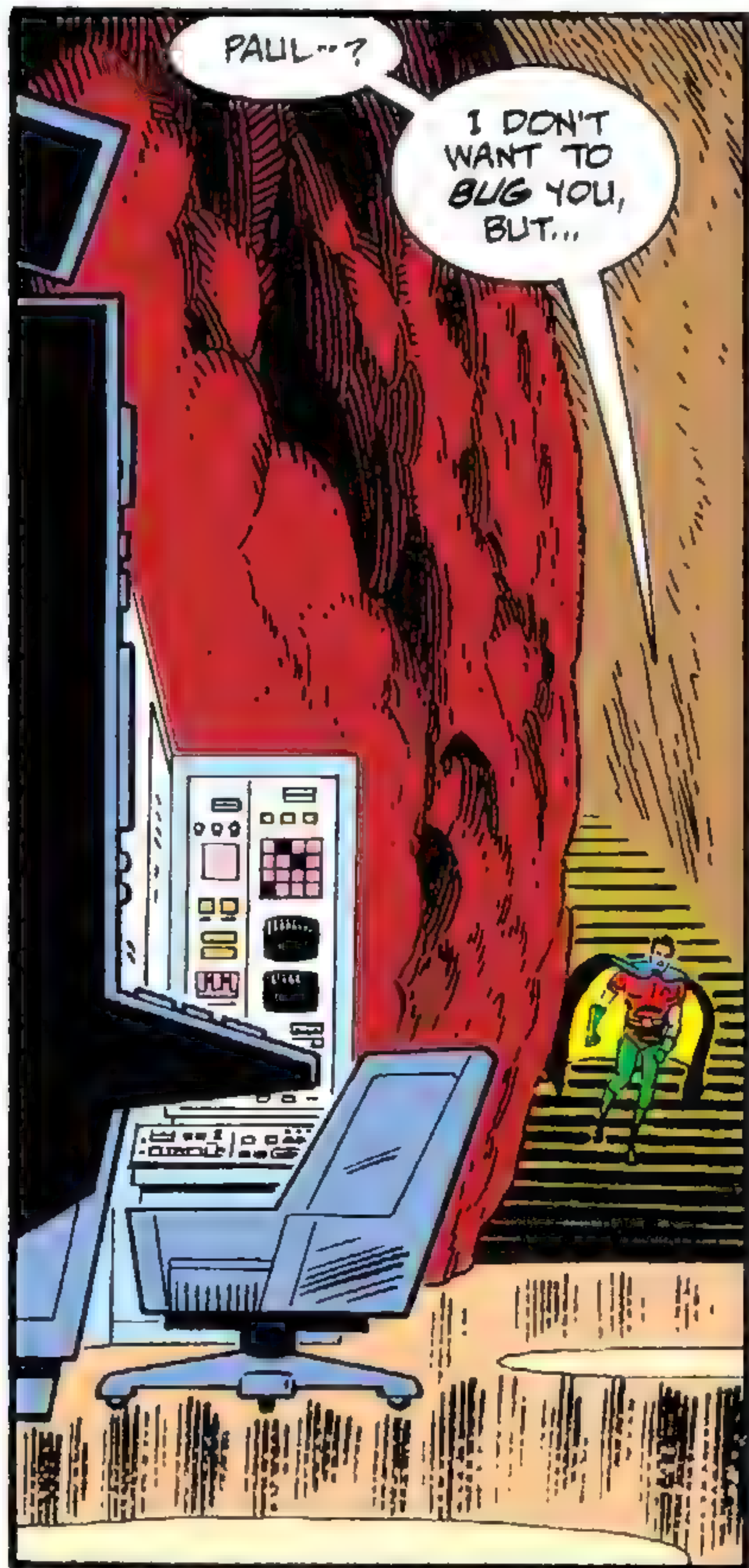
YOU DID FAR MORE, SIR, THAN COULD BE EXPECTED OF ANY MAN.



AND THEN I FAILED, LEAVING BANE STILL AT LARGE... AND SHONDRA A PRISONER SOMEWHERE HERE IN SANTA PRISCA... ALONG WITH TIM'S FATHER...





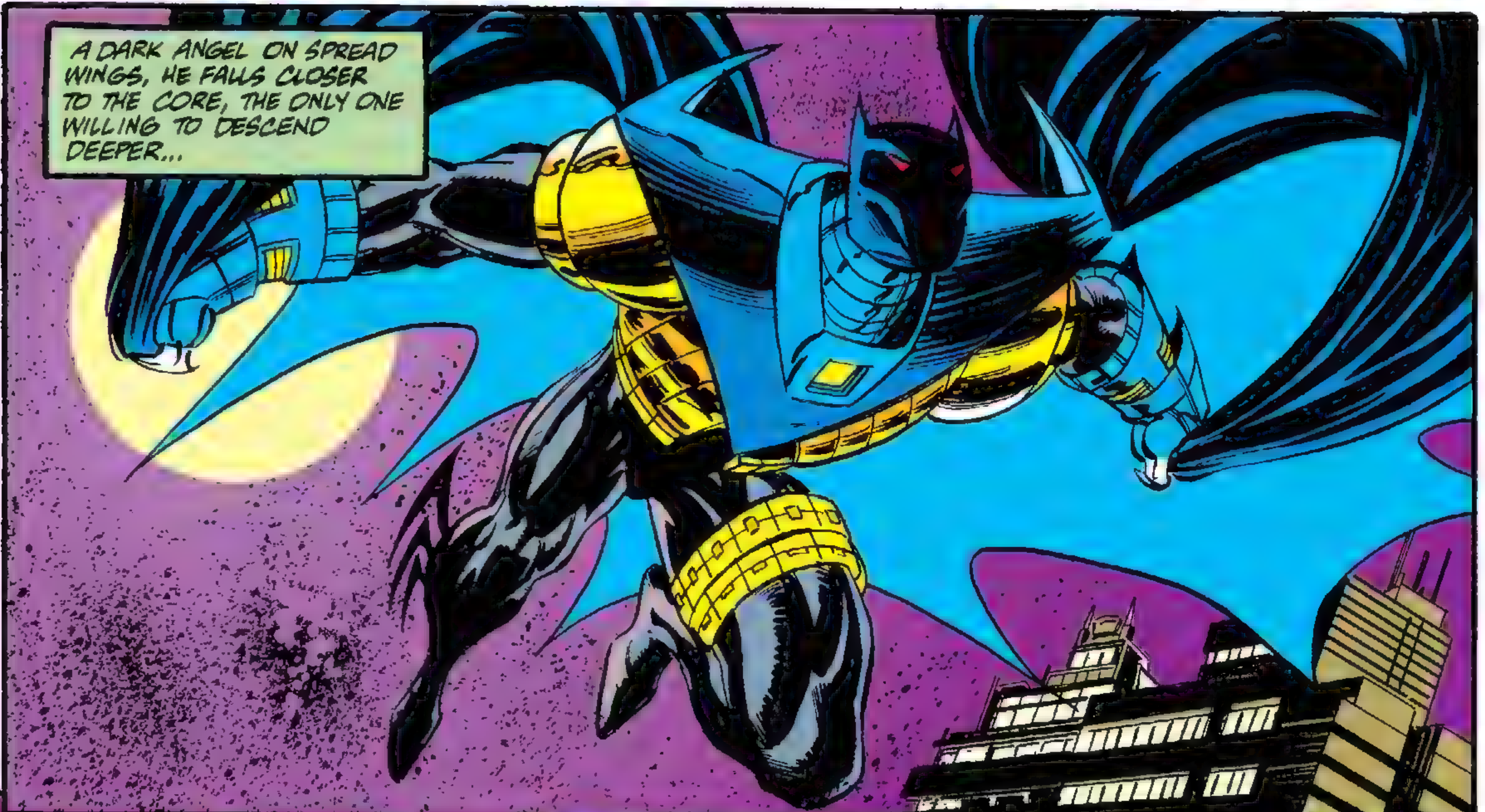


11: the descent

SOMEHOW THE NIGHT HAS BECOME
A VAST OCEAN THROUGH WHICH
HE SWIMS, BUOYED AND WEIGHTLESS
ABOVE A GOTHIC ATLANTIS DRENCHED
IN DARK WONDER AND SECRET SIN.

IT IS A PLACE LONG SINCE
CURSED BY A FLOOD FROM
HEAVEN, AND FORSAKEN
BY TRUE LIGHT.

A DARK ANGEL ON SPREAD WINGS, HE FALLS CLOSER TO THE CORE, THE ONLY ONE WILLING TO DESCEND DEEPER...



... ALL PAIN AND STIFFNESS WASHED AWAY BY THE SEA, LOST IN A PART OF HIS MIND HE NO LONGER KNOWS, AS HE SEARCHES.



FOR A SIGN.

YOUR MESSAGE HERE
FOR DETAILS
5-2323

AND MY MESSAGE IS...



"BATMAN" NOW



THE OCEAN RECEDES
NOW, DISPLACED BY
BRACING WIND.

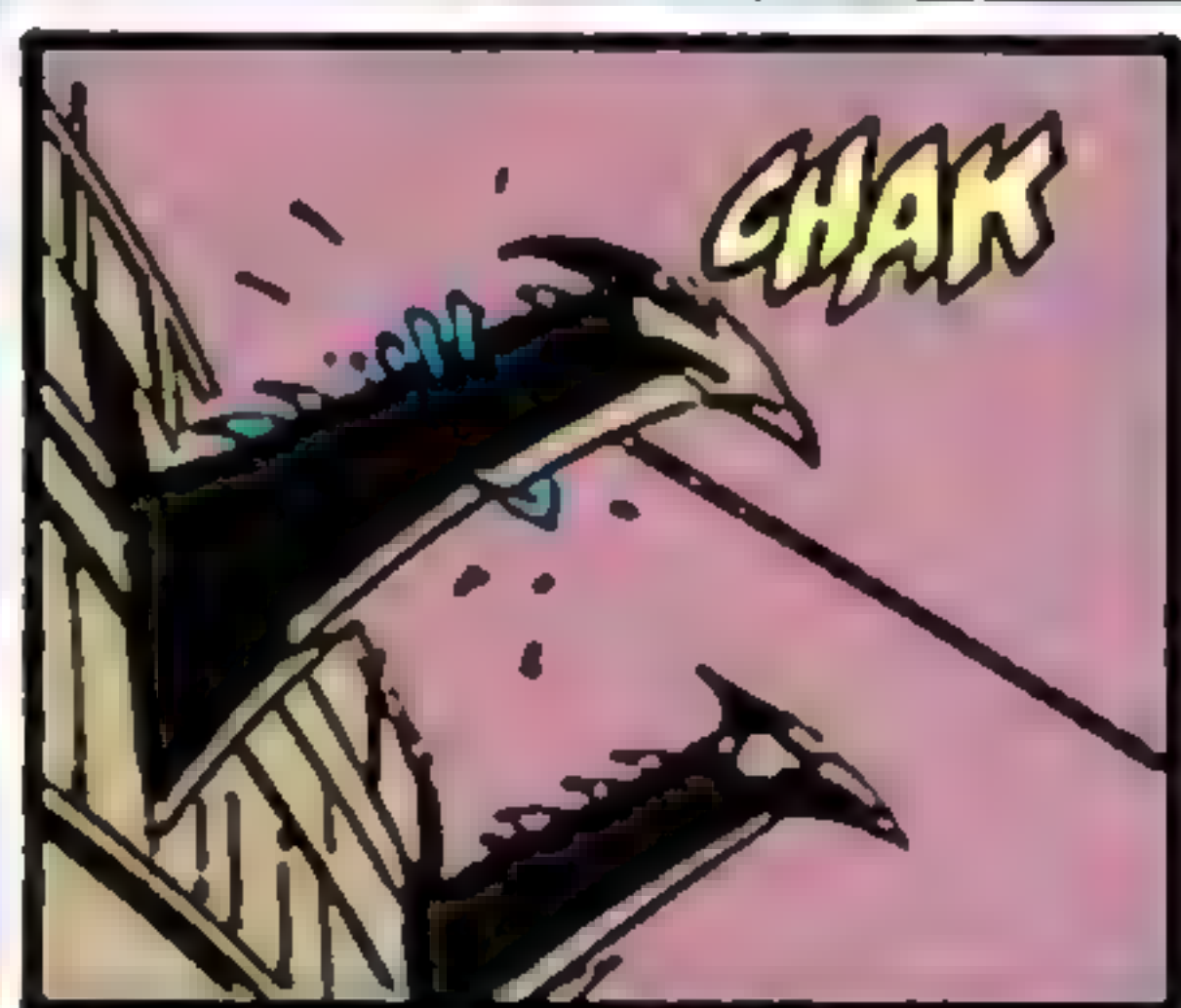
CHUP

IT CLEARS HIS
MIND OF THE
DREAMLIKE SLEEP.

HE IS ALERT NOW, OUT OF THE
OCEAN, OUT OF THE COCOON,
A NEW CREATURE DRYING IN
THE BITING AIR.

HIS NEW CAPE GRABS
THE WIND, SWELLING
ON ITS LIFT, NO
LONGER A HINDRANCE.

CHFF



HAUNTING.

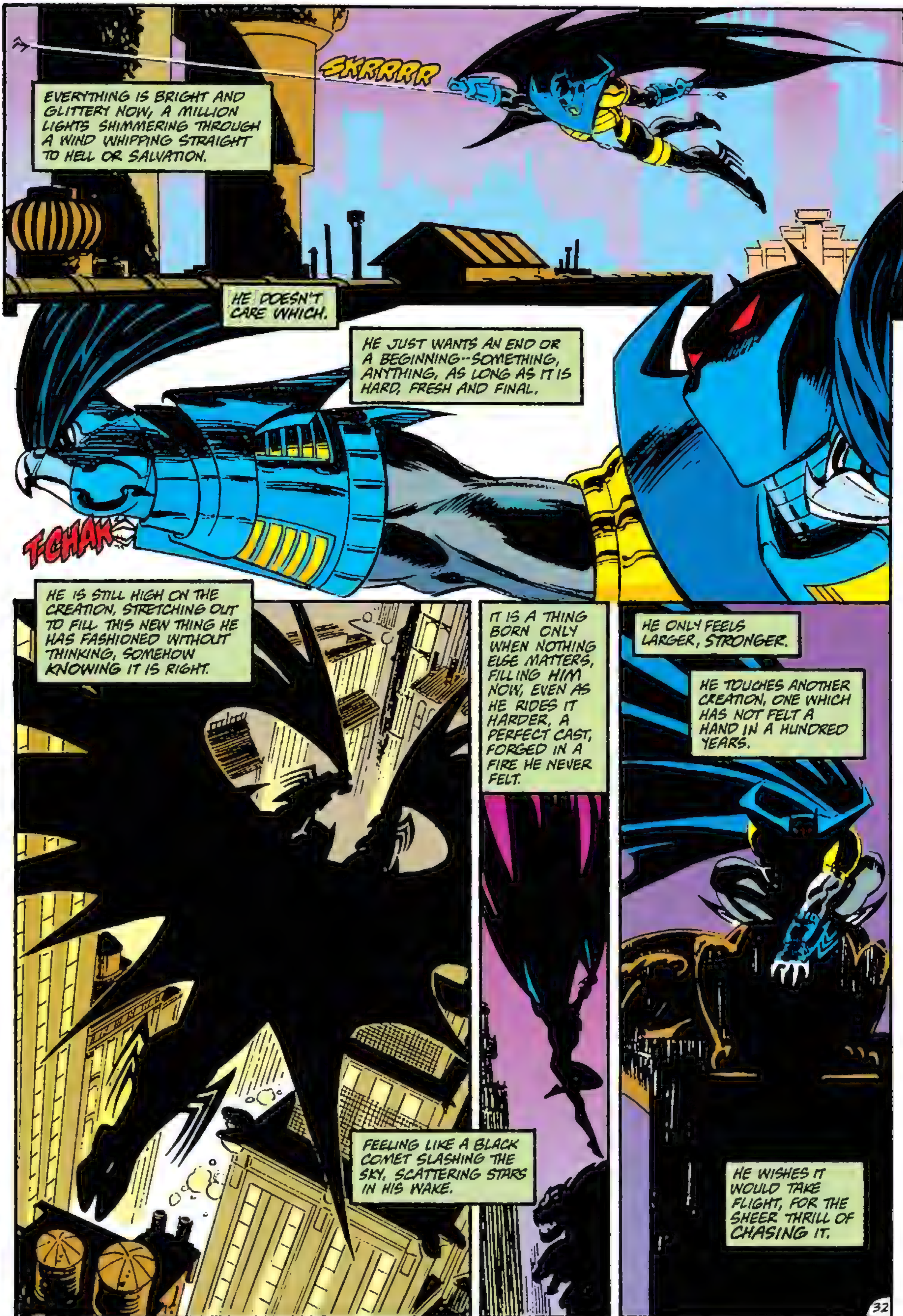
HE HEARS IT AS HE
GLIDES, SOFTLY AT
FIRST, DISTANT AND
ECHOING.

THEN IT RISES, A SOUND NOT
UNLIKE A WOMAN'S VOICE,
KEENING HIGHER AND LOUDER
AND CLOSER UNTIL IT FILLS HIS
HEART WITH ITS UNEARTHLY
THRILL.

IT IS THE WILD
NIGHT SCREAMING
FOR HIS SOUL.

HE
RIDES
IT.

CHFF



EVERYTHING IS BRIGHT AND GLITTERY NOW, A MILLION LIGHTS SHIMMERING THROUGH A WIND WHIPPING STRAIGHT TO HELL OR SALVATION.

HE DOESN'T CARE WHICH.

HE JUST WANTS AN END OR A BEGINNING--SOMETHING, ANYTHING, AS LONG AS IT IS HARD, FRESH AND FINAL.

TCHANK

HE IS STILL HIGH ON THE CREATION, STRETCHING OUT TO FILL THIS NEW THING HE HAS FASHIONED WITHOUT THINKING, SOMEHOW KNOWING IT IS RIGHT.

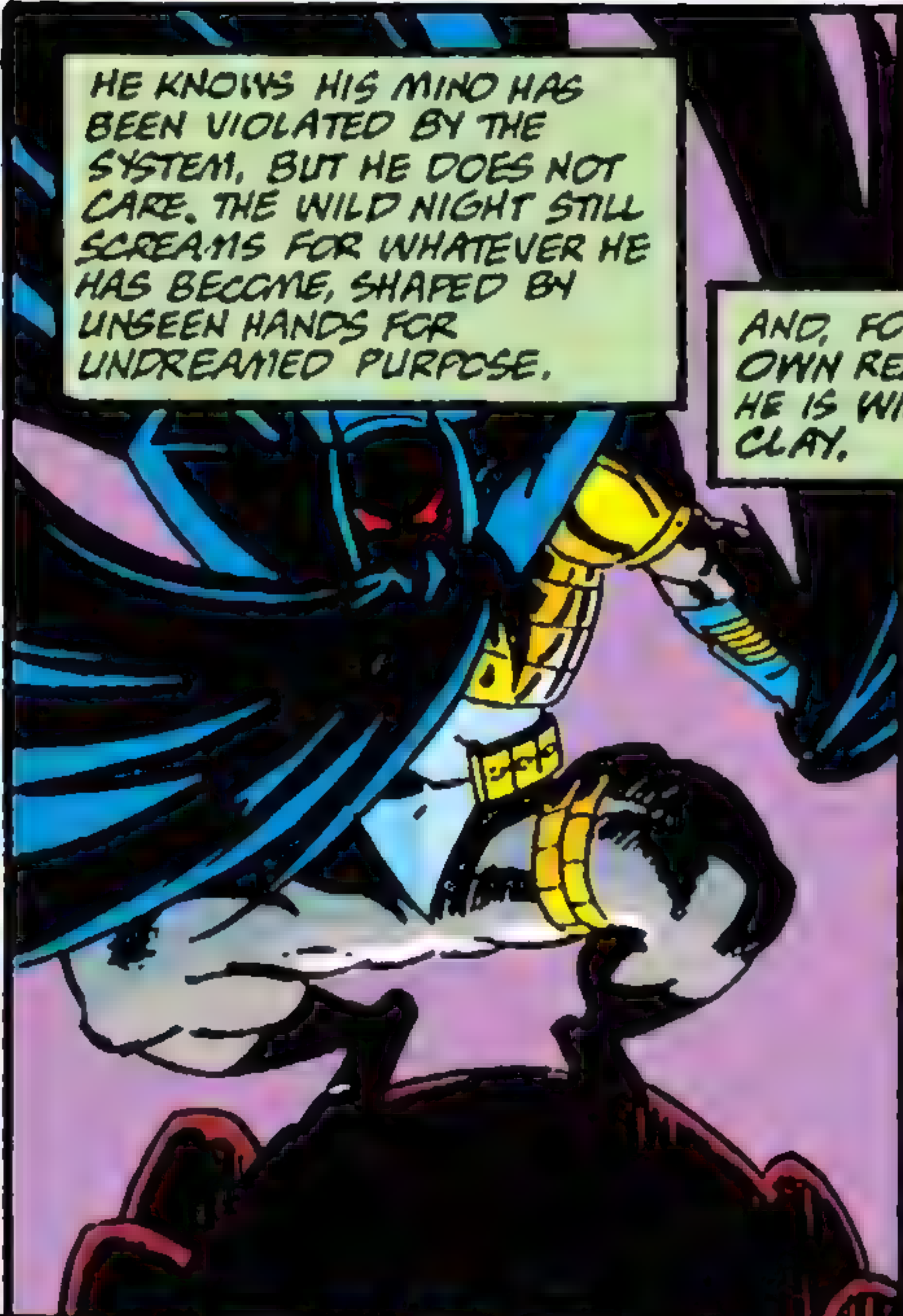
IT IS A THING BORN ONLY WHEN NOTHING ELSE MATTERS, FILLING HIM NOW, EVEN AS HE RIDES IT HARDER, A PERFECT CAST, FORGED IN A FIRE HE NEVER FELT.

HE ONLY FEELS LARGER, STRONGER.

HE TOUCHES ANOTHER CREATION, ONE WHICH HAS NOT FELT A HAND IN A HUNDRED YEARS.

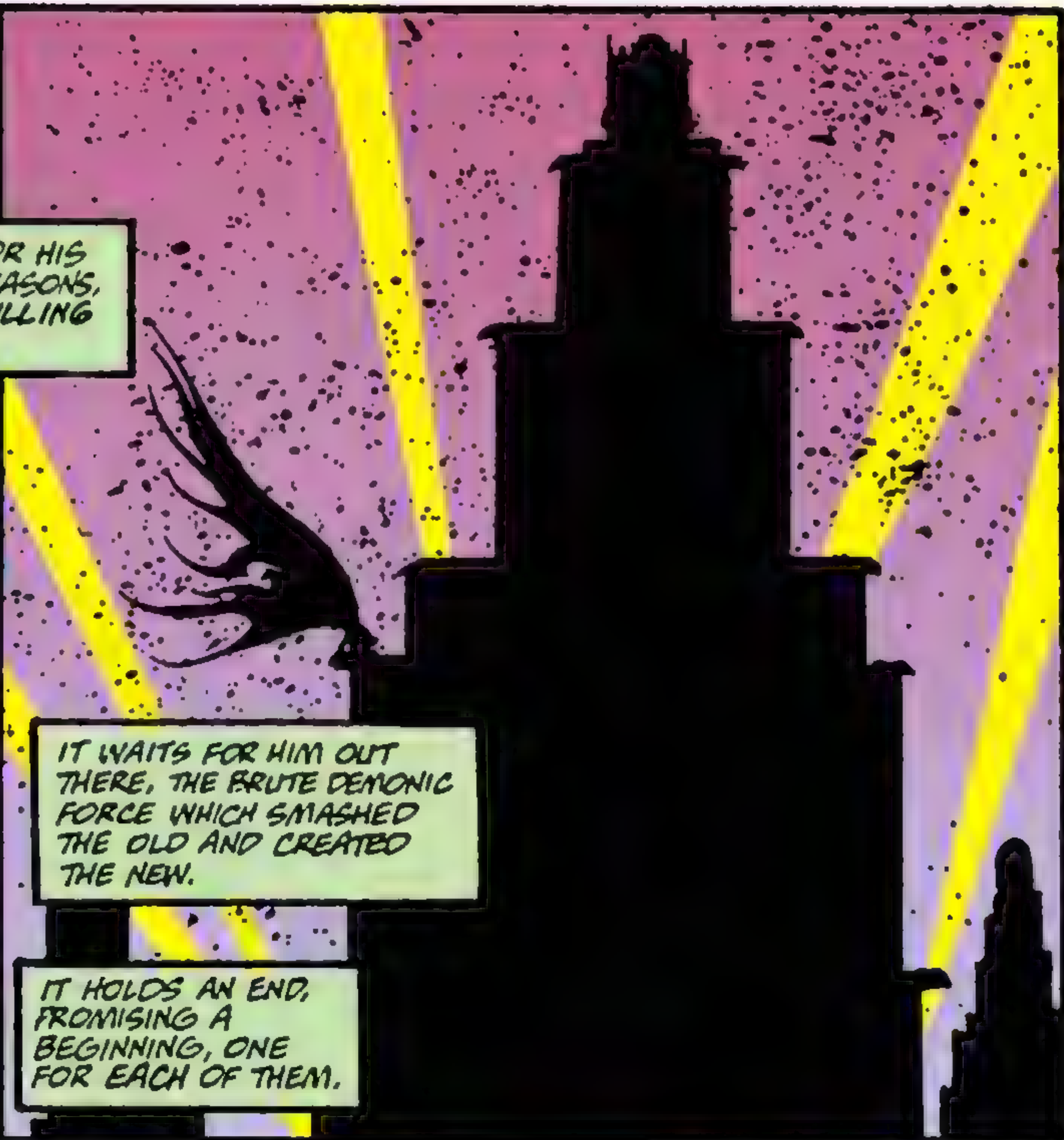
FEELING LIKE A BLACK COMET SLASHING THE SKY, SCATTERING STARS IN HIS WAKE.

HE WISHES IT WOULD TAKE FLIGHT, FOR THE SHEER THRILL OF CHASING IT.



HE KNOWS HIS MIND HAS BEEN VIOLATED BY THE SYSTEM, BUT HE DOES NOT CARE. THE WILD NIGHT STILL SCREAMS FOR WHATEVER HE HAS BECOME, SHAPED BY UNSEEN HANDS FOR UNDREAMED PURPOSE.

AND, FOR HIS OWN REASONS, HE IS WILLING CLAY.



IT WAITS FOR HIM OUT THERE, THE BRUTE DEMONIC FORCE WHICH SMASHED THE OLD AND CREATED THE NEW.

IT HOLDS AN END, PROMISING A BEGINNING, ONE FOR EACH OF THEM.



HE WONDERS WHERE, AND THE CITY BECOMES A PUZZLE, ONE PIECE THE KEY UNLOCKING THE COLLECTIVE PRIZE OF THE WHOLE.

AND EVEN THOUGH THAT PIECE IS BUT ONE OF MILLIONS, IT IS THE DARK HEART SHADING THE WHOLE.

WON'T HE TELL

FIND THAT PIECE AND THE PUZZLE IS HIS, ITS MEANING REVEALED, THE PRIZE CLAIMED.

IT IS BANE. THE KEY IS BANE.

FIND HIM.

REMOVE HIM.

TAKE HIS PLACE.

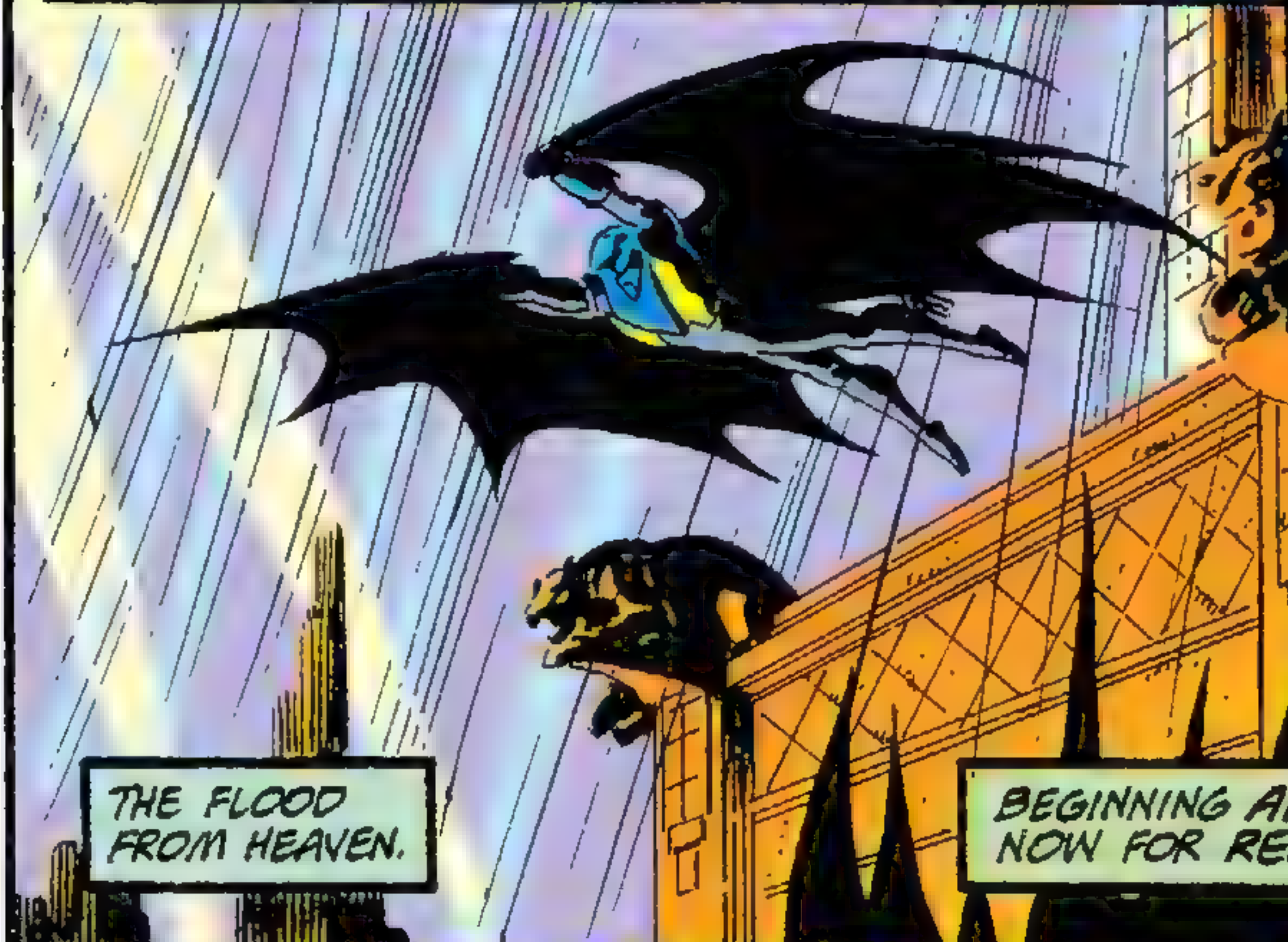


AND BECOME A DARKER HEART FEEDING THE REST, THE NEW CENTER HOLDING IT ALL.



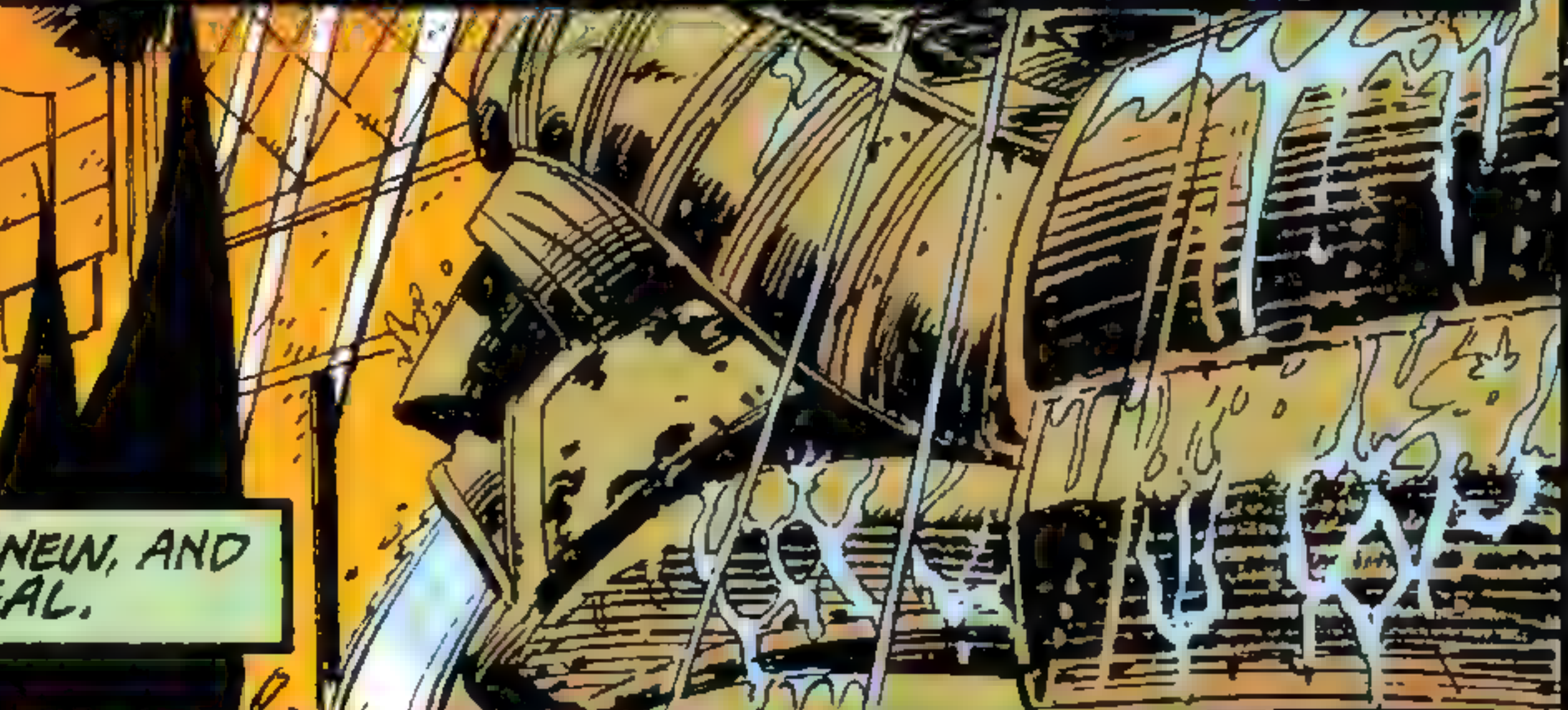
RAIN.

RAIN MAKES IT PERFECT.



THE FLOOD FROM HEAVEN.

BEGINNING ANEW, AND NOW FOR REAL.



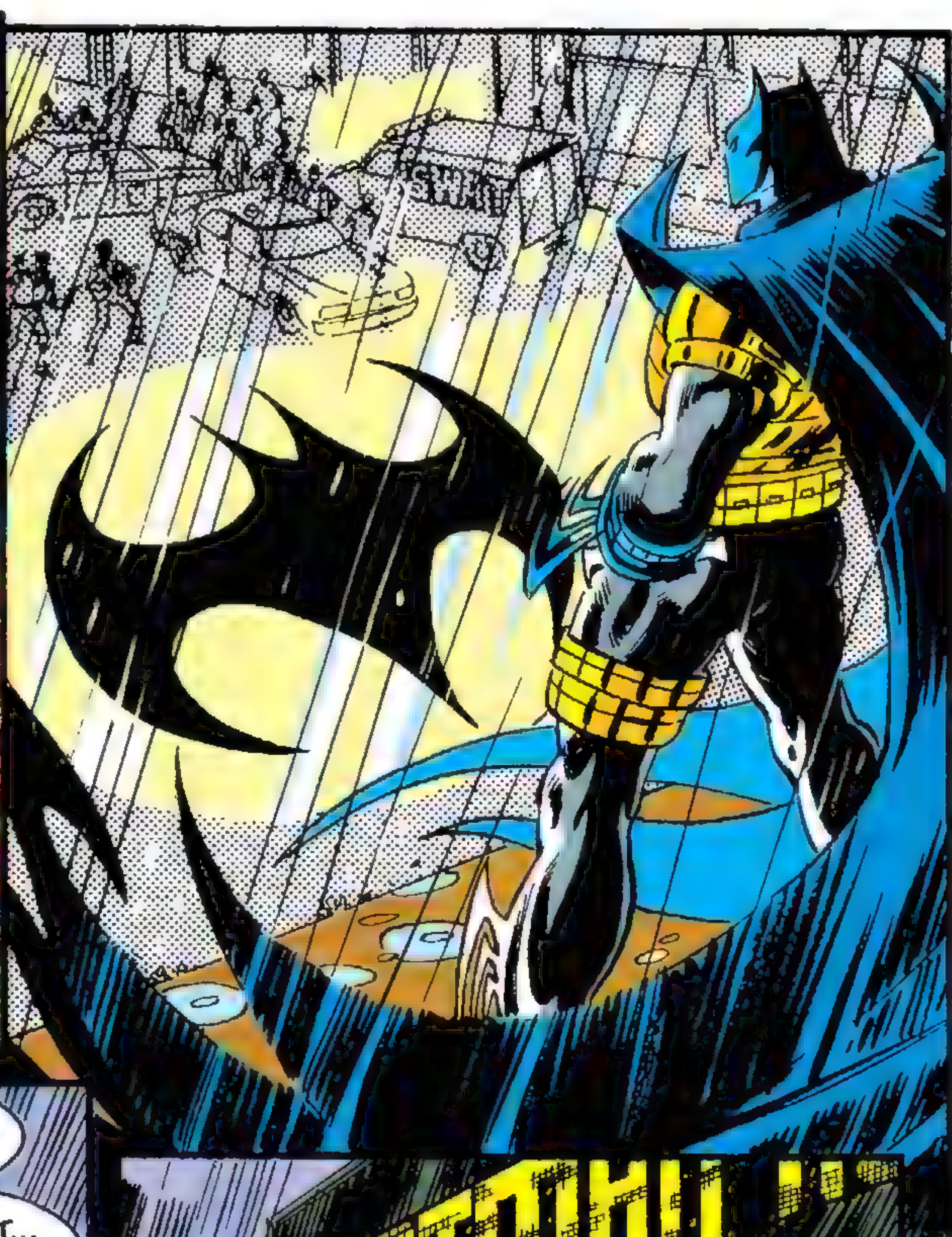
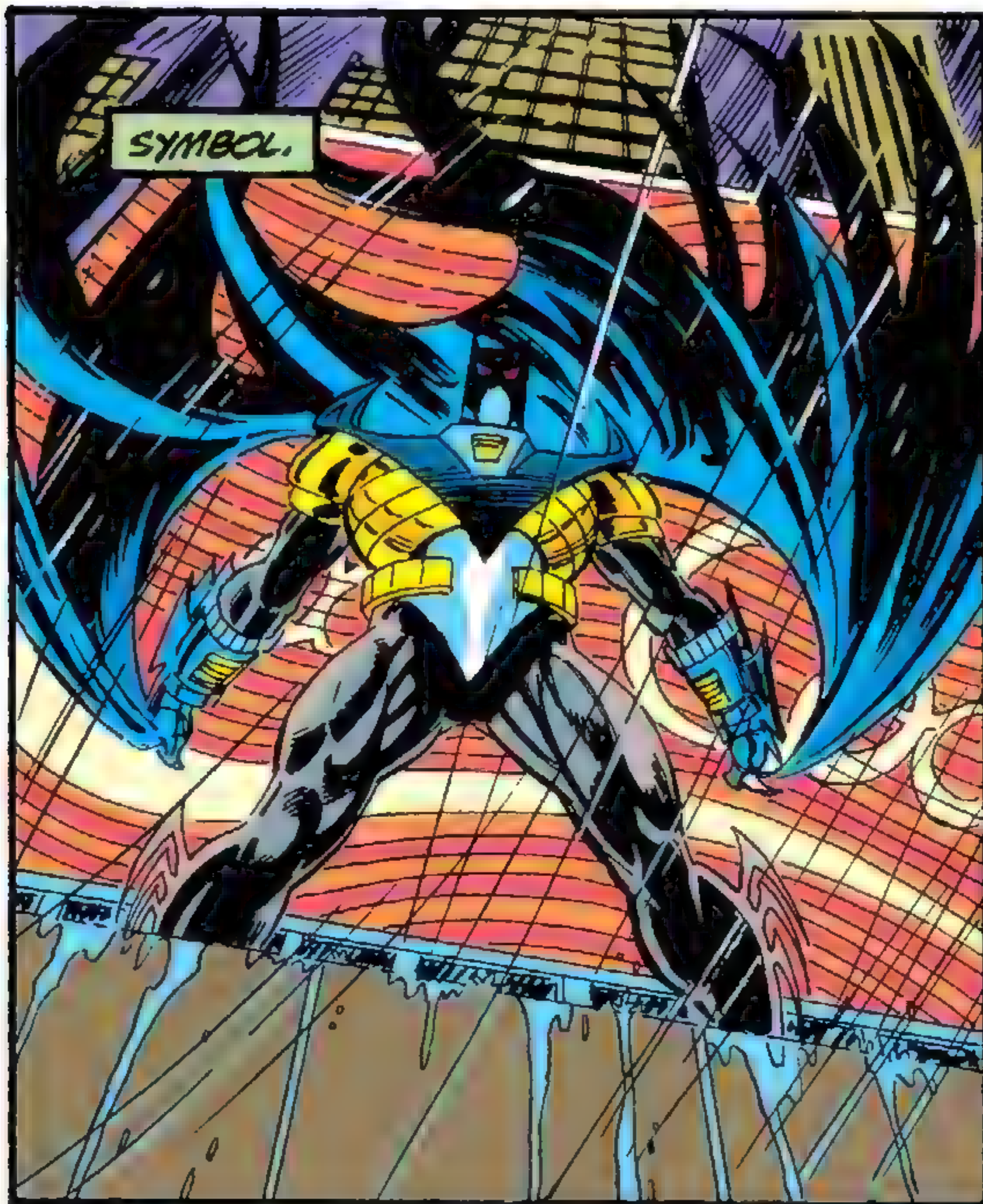
HE'S UP THERE SOMEWHERE!

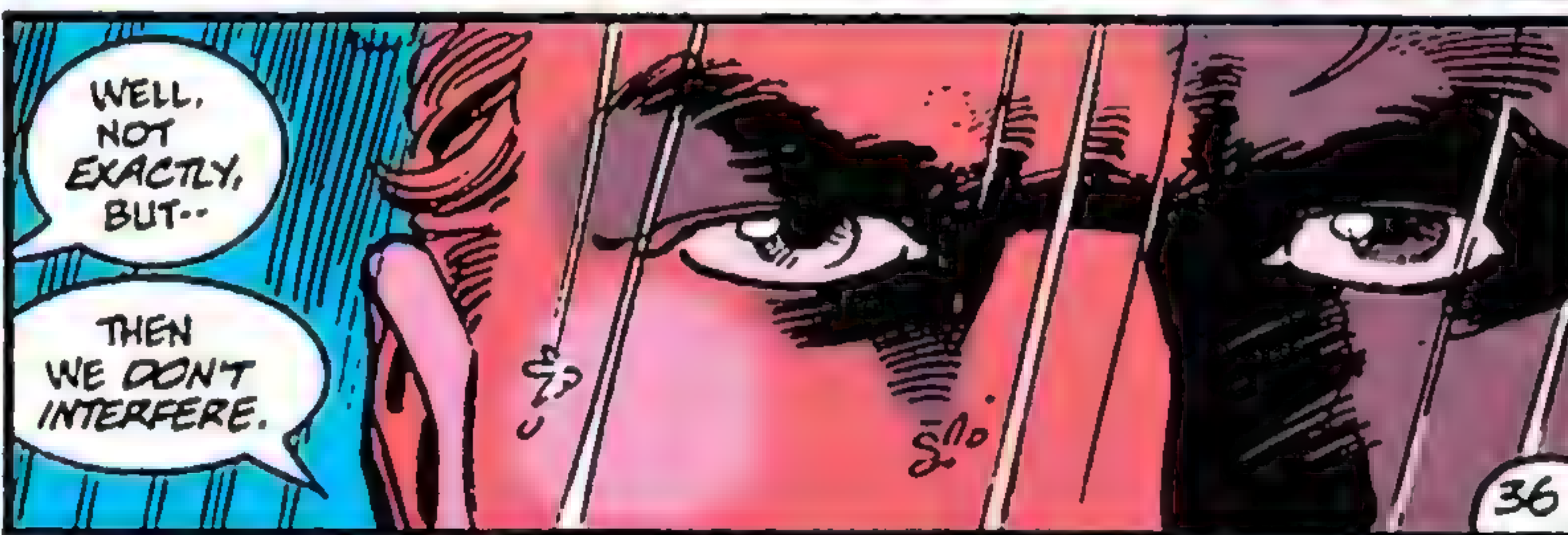
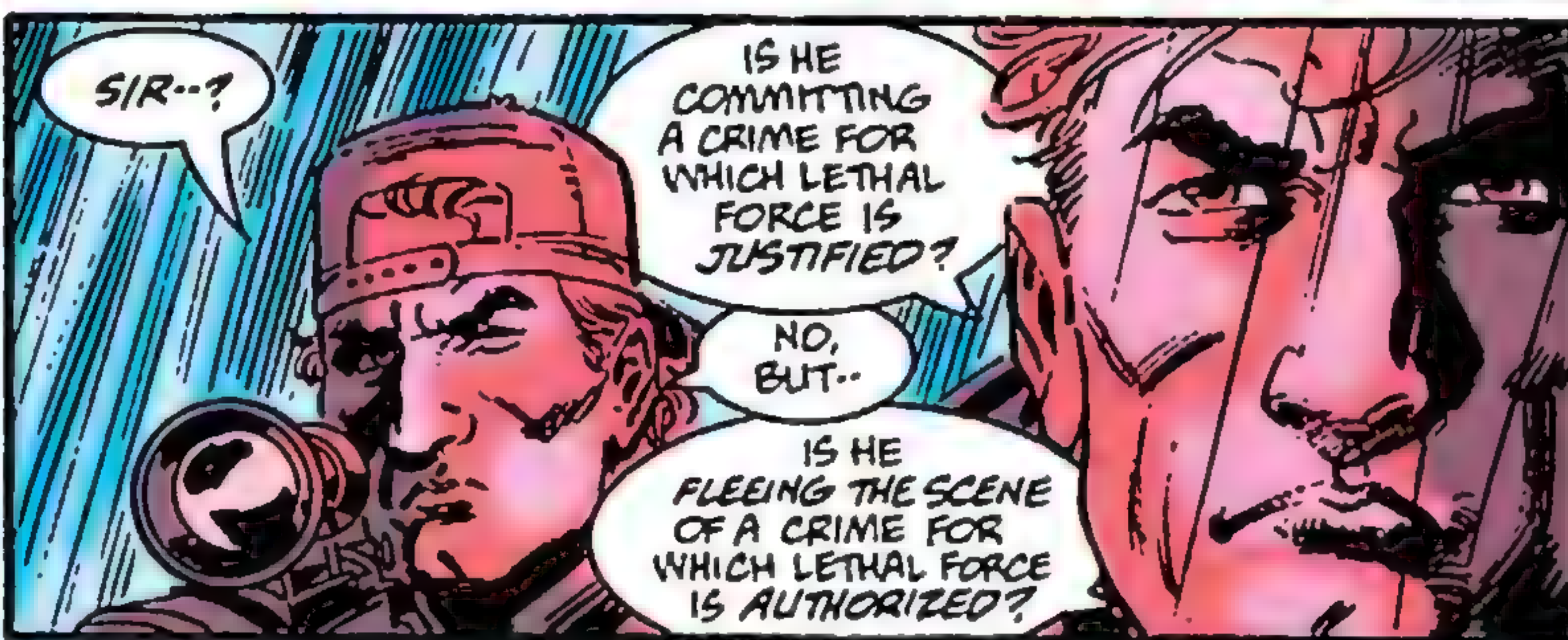
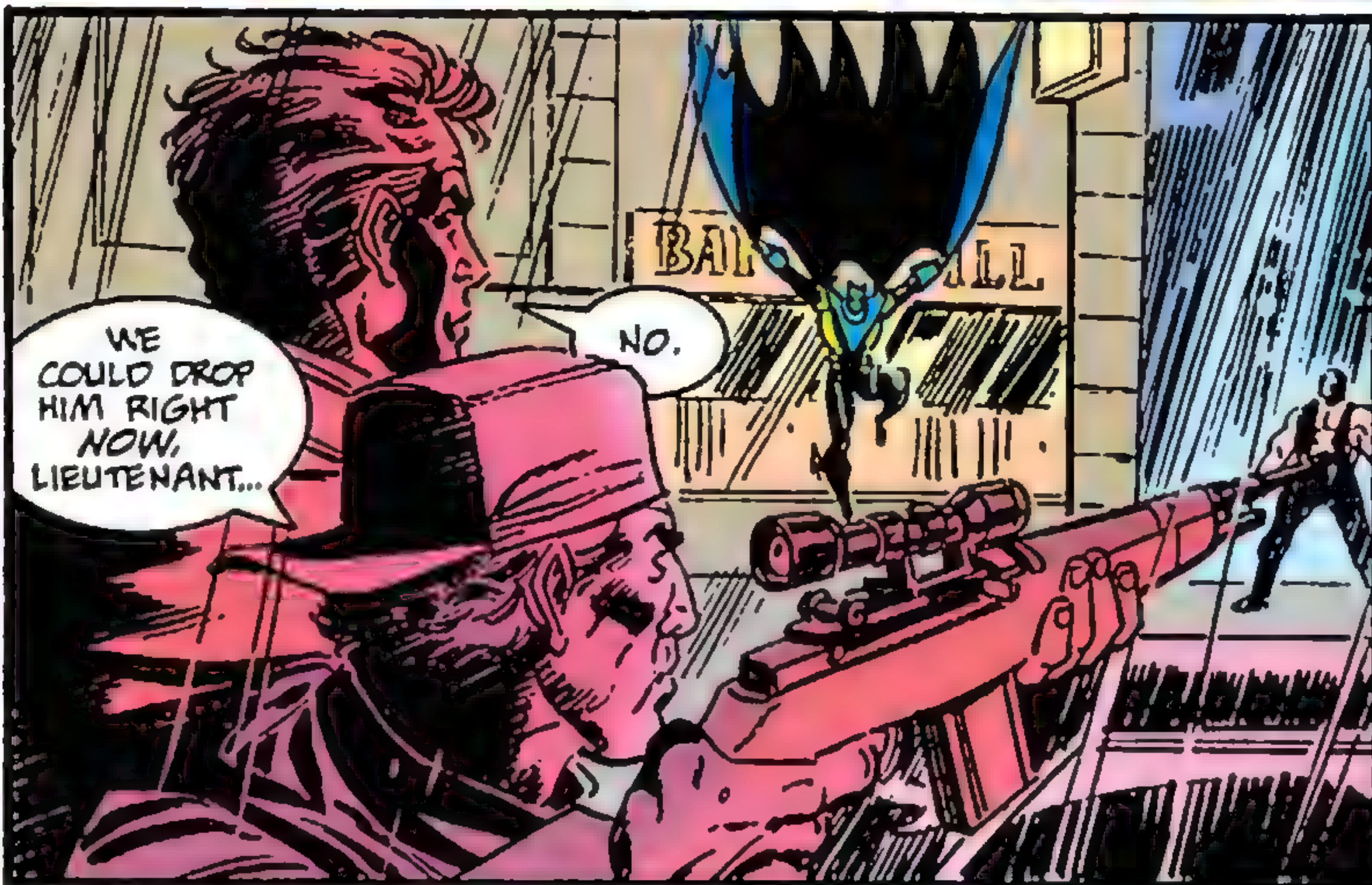
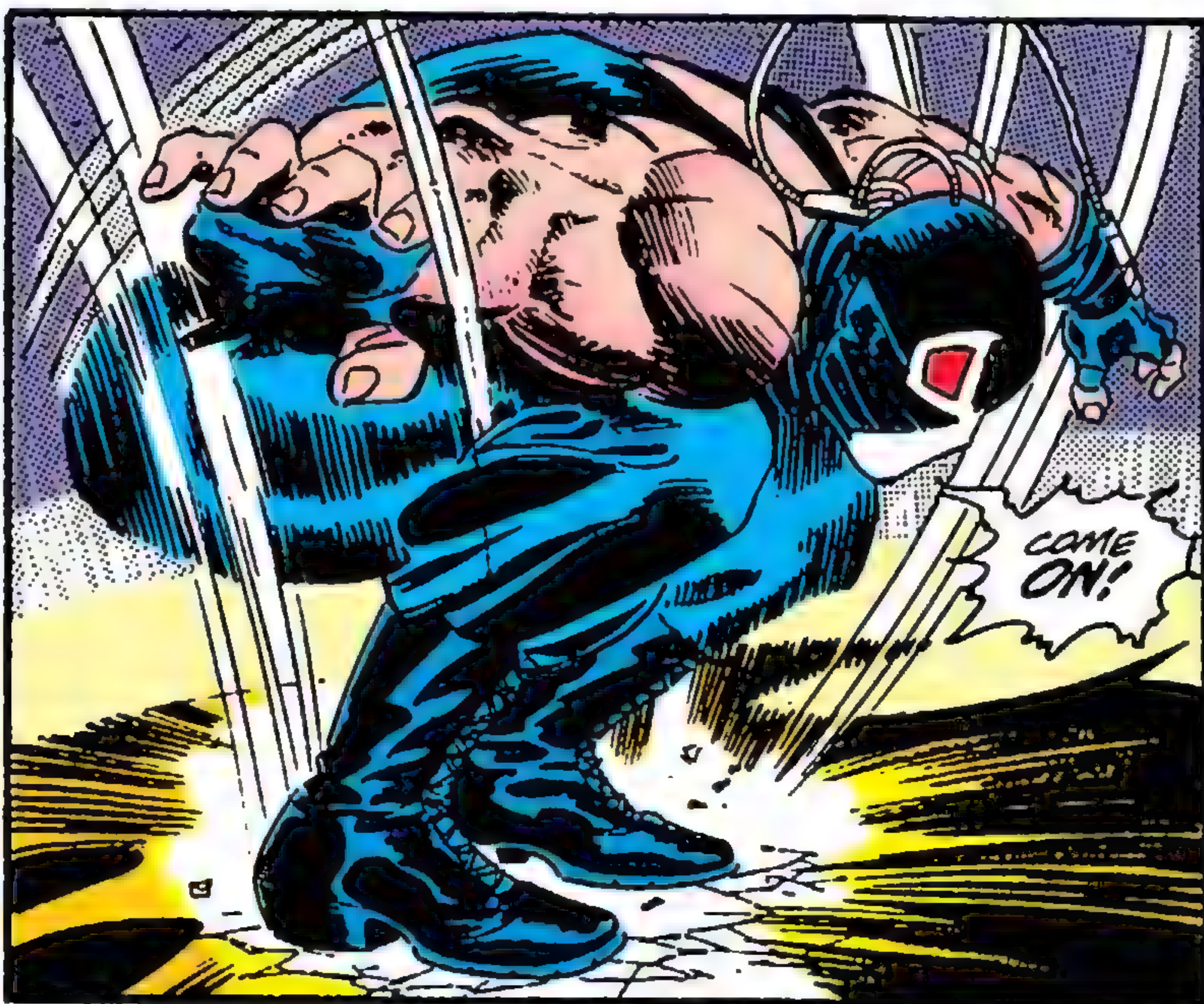
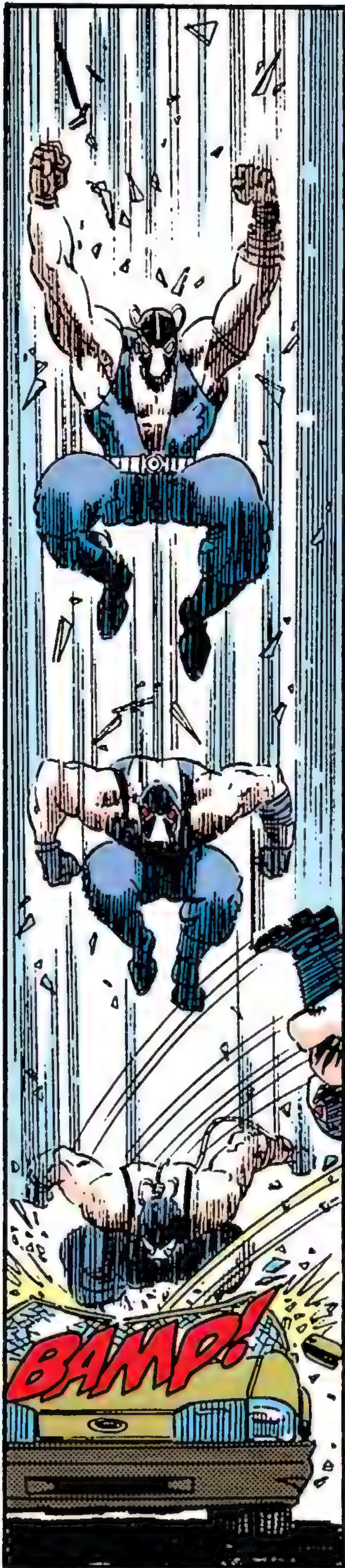
CLEAR THE AREA!

CORDON OFF THE ENTIRE SQUARE!



LIEUTENANT KITCH-- OVER THERE! IS THAT THE BATMAN--?







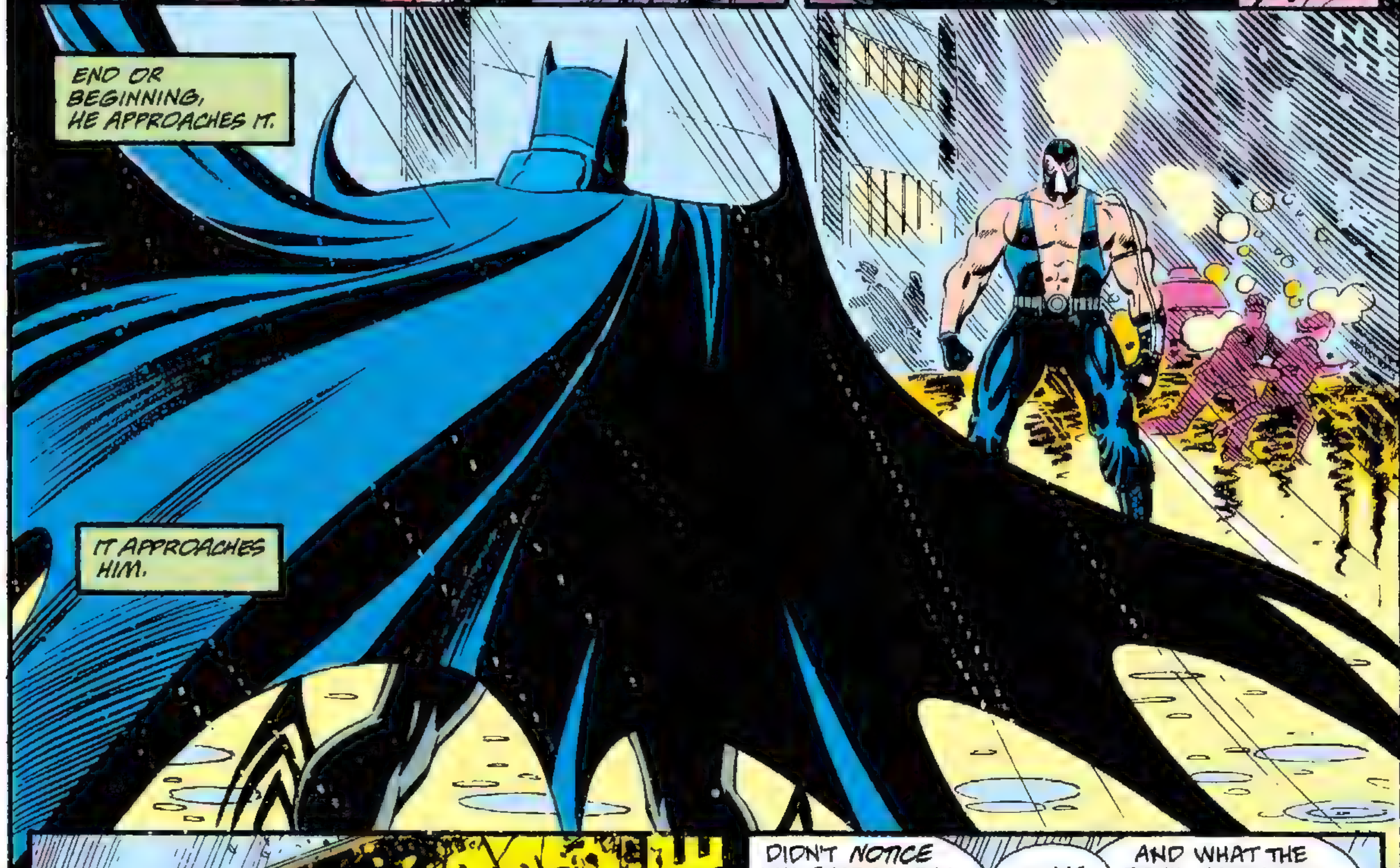
BUT THAT'S BANE...THE ONE WHO BROKE THE BATMAN.

AND MAYBE HE'LL DO IT AGAIN.

THEN WE ACT-- WHEN THE VIGILANTE HAS FAILED.



AND THEN WE'LL SEE HOW MAYOR KROL FEELS ABOUT THE BOOK.



END OR BEGINNING, HE APPROACHES IT.

IT APPROACHES HIM.



BEFORE BANE SMASHED THROUGH IT, COMMISH, IT SAID: BATMAN-- NOW.

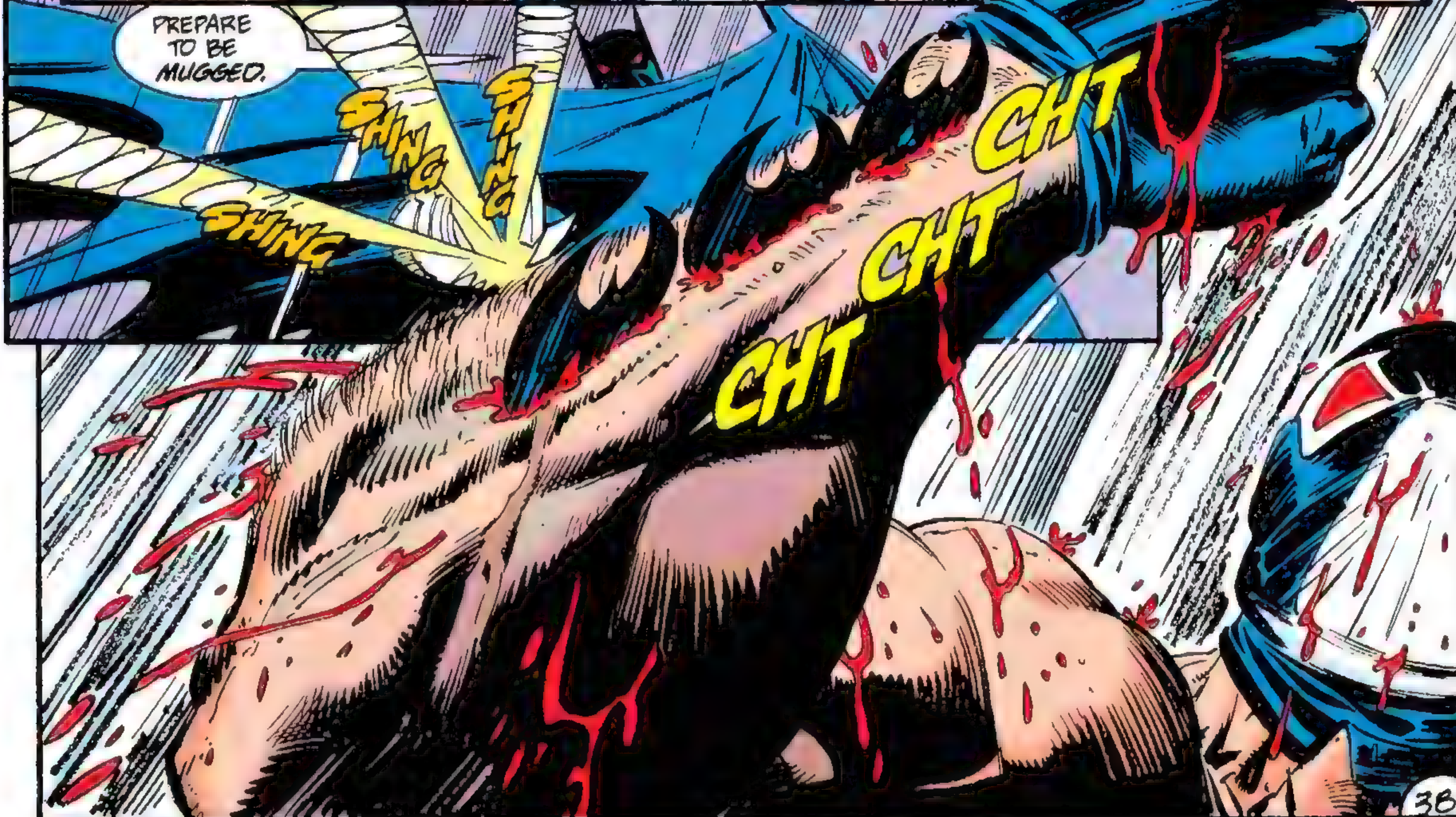
ARE THOSE QUOTE MARKS, BULLOCK?

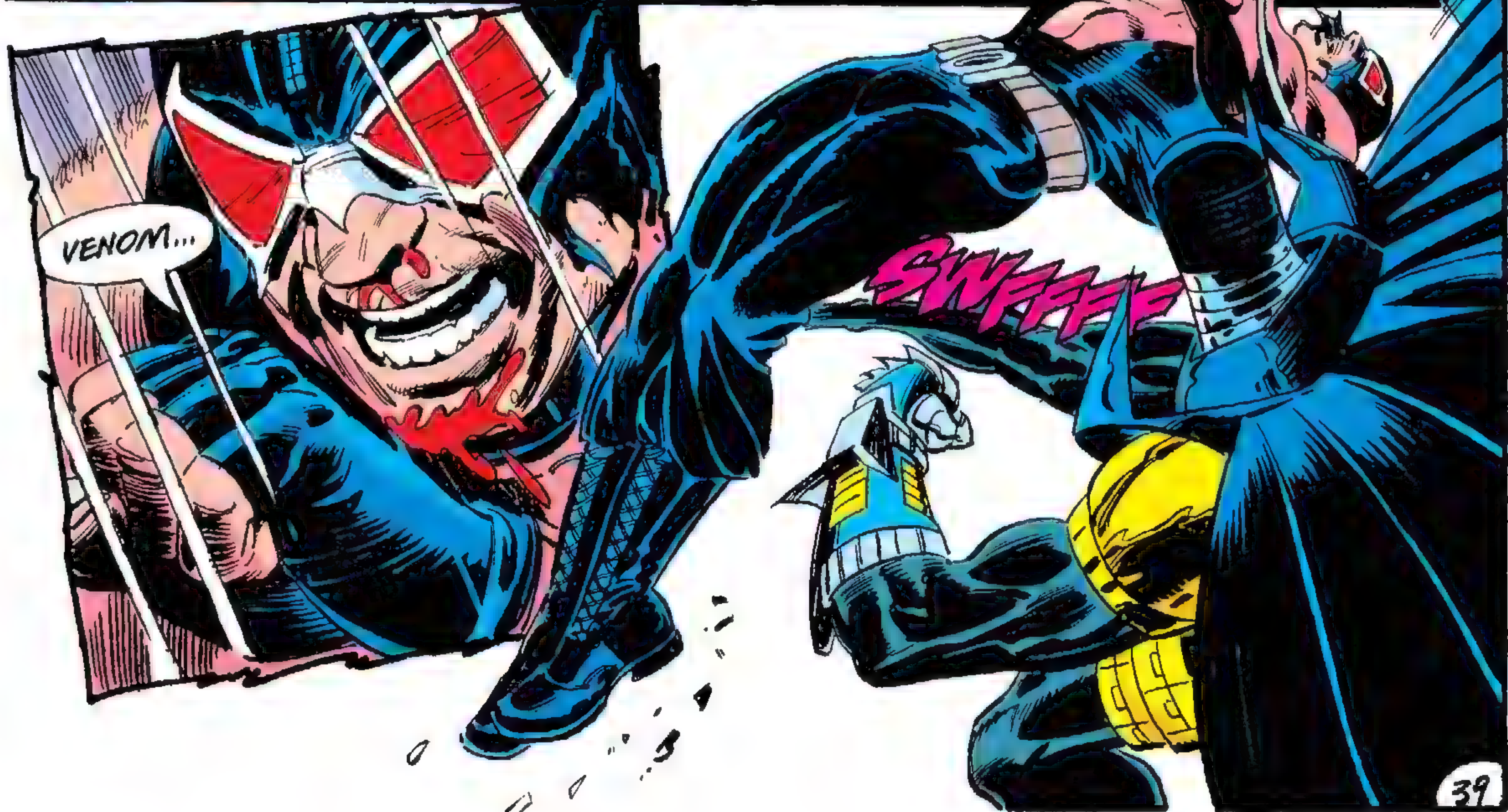
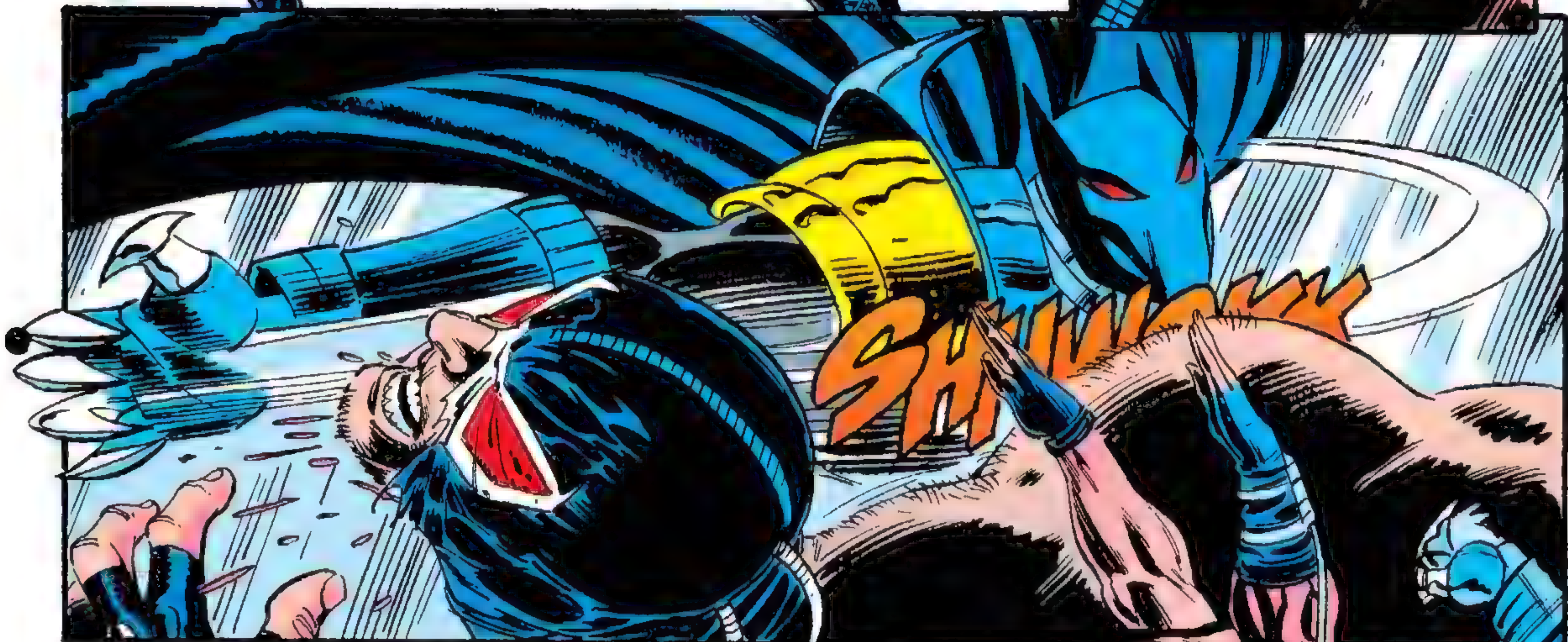
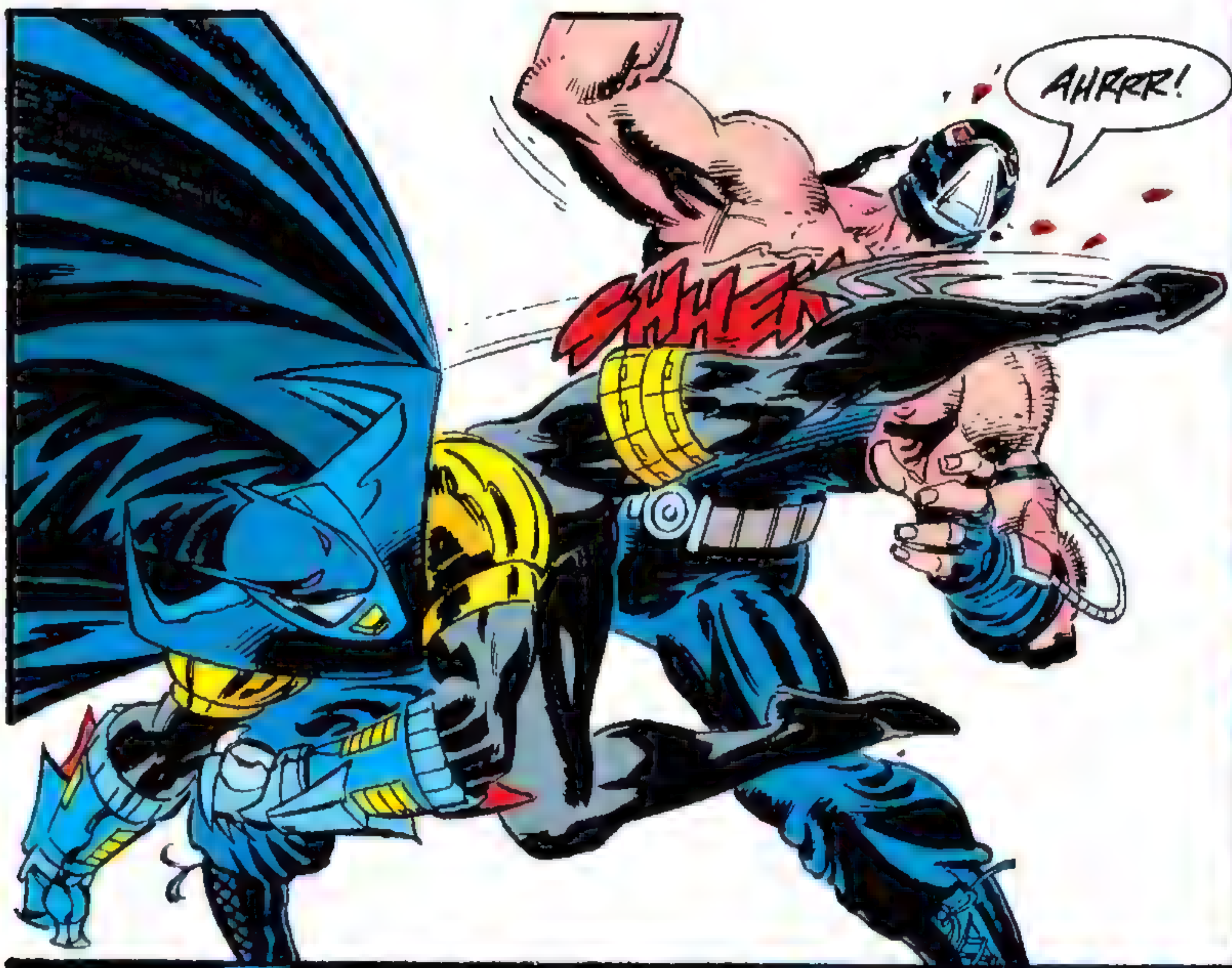


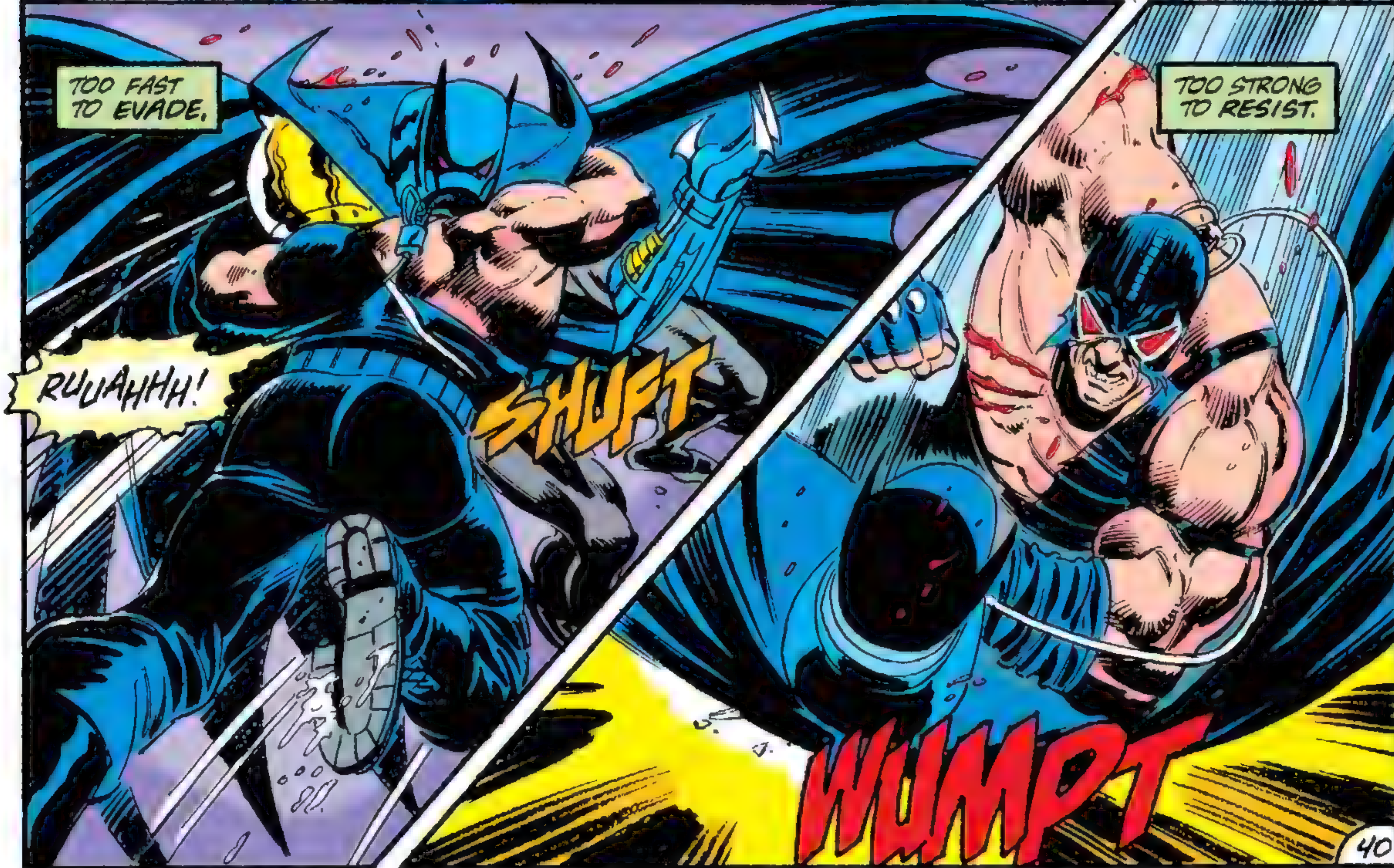
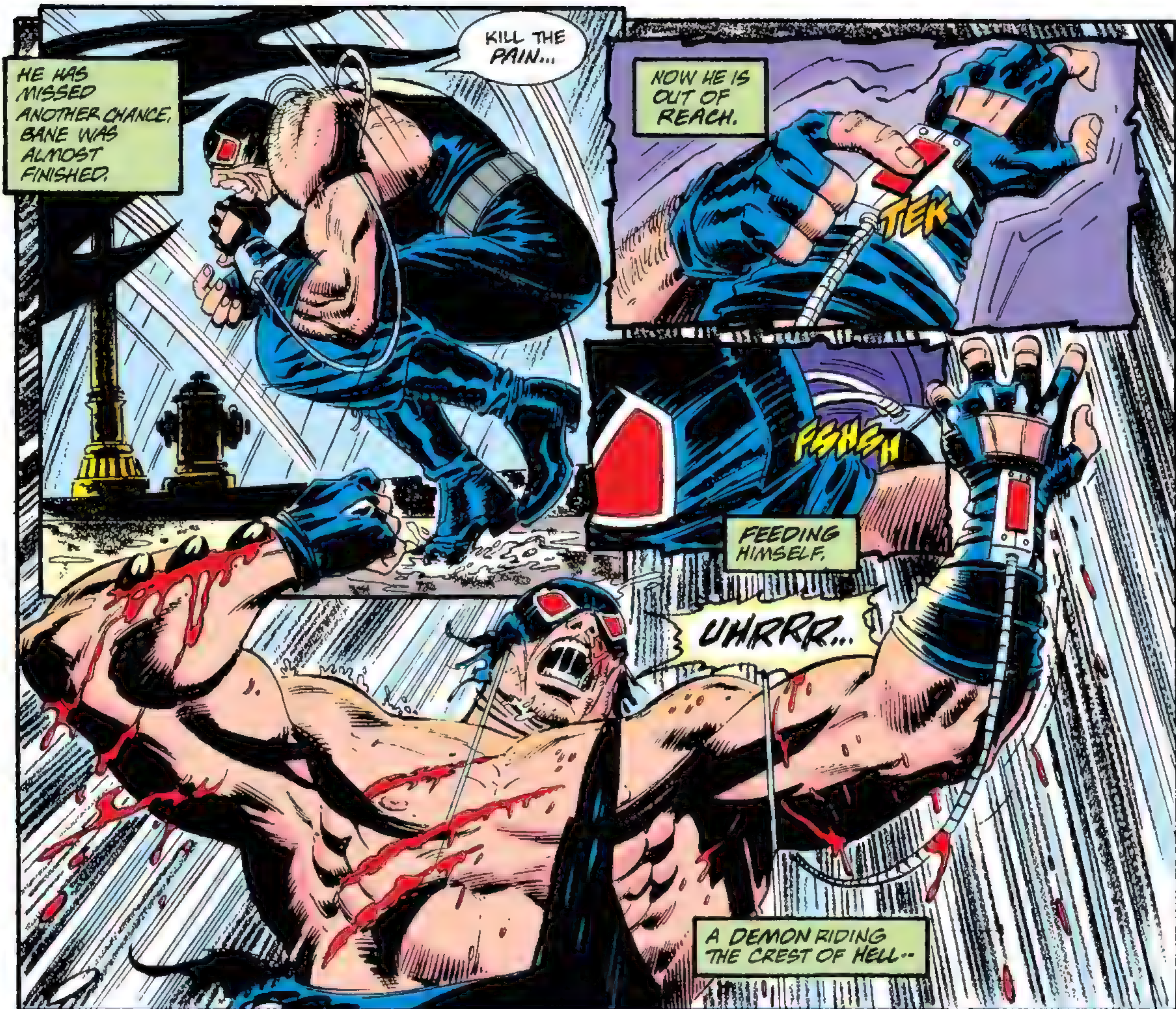
DIDN'T NOTICE 'EM BEFORE, BUT YEAH...GUESS THEY ARE, COMMISH.

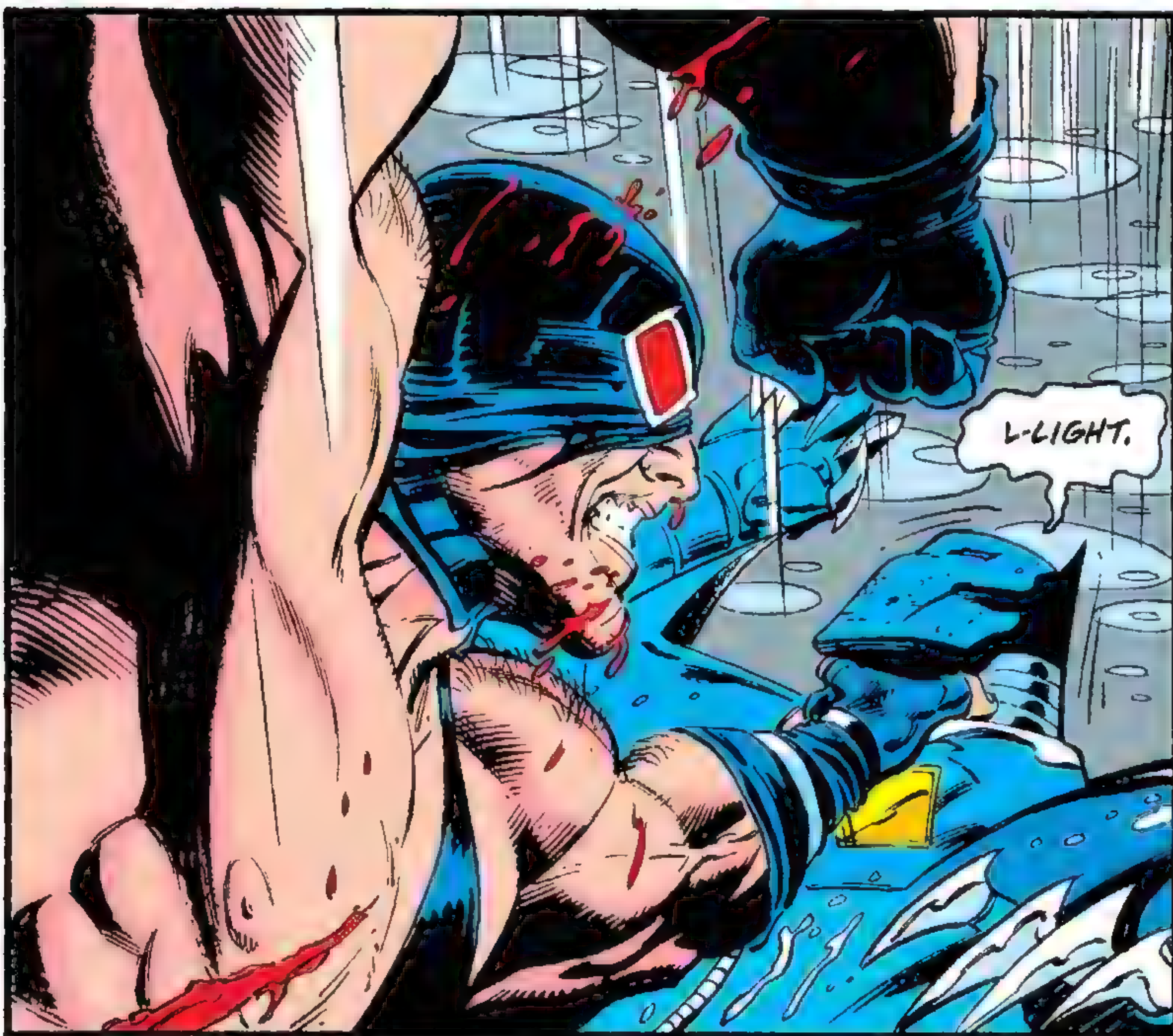
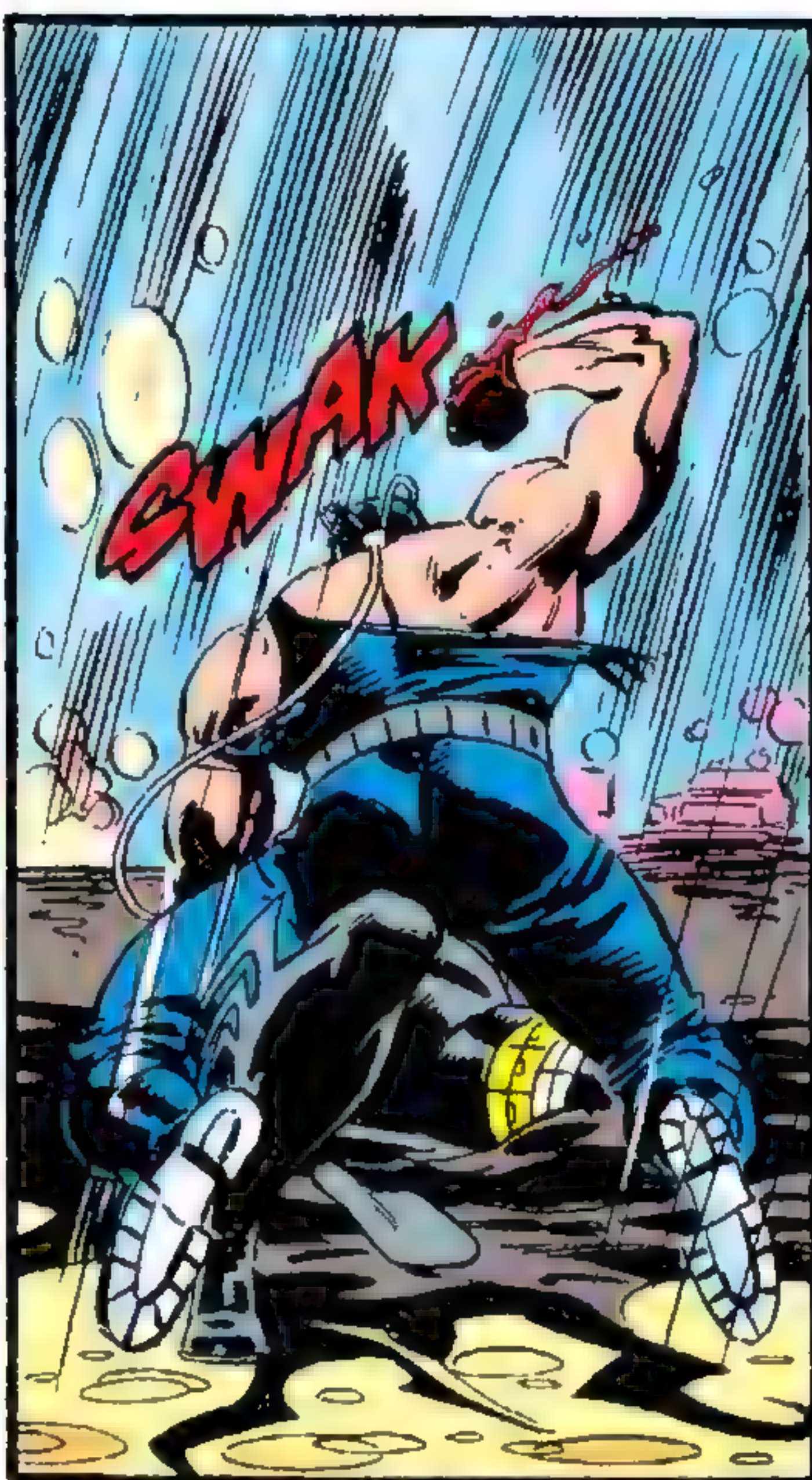
WHY?

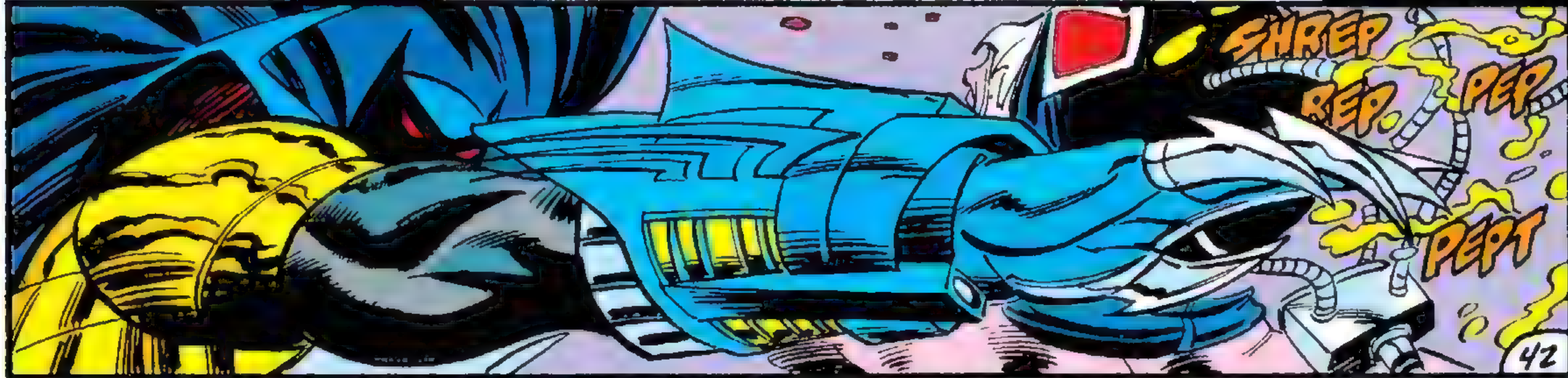
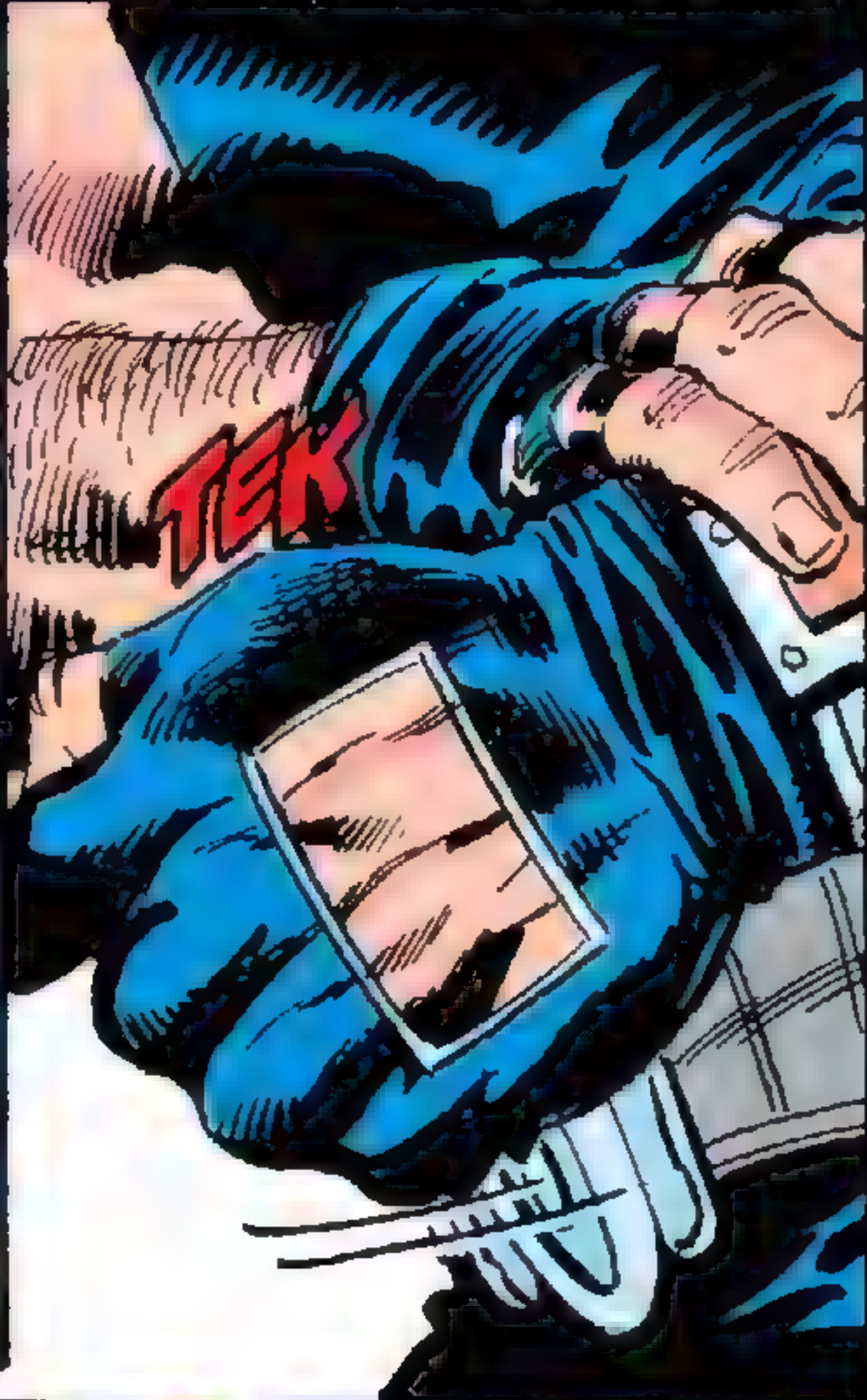
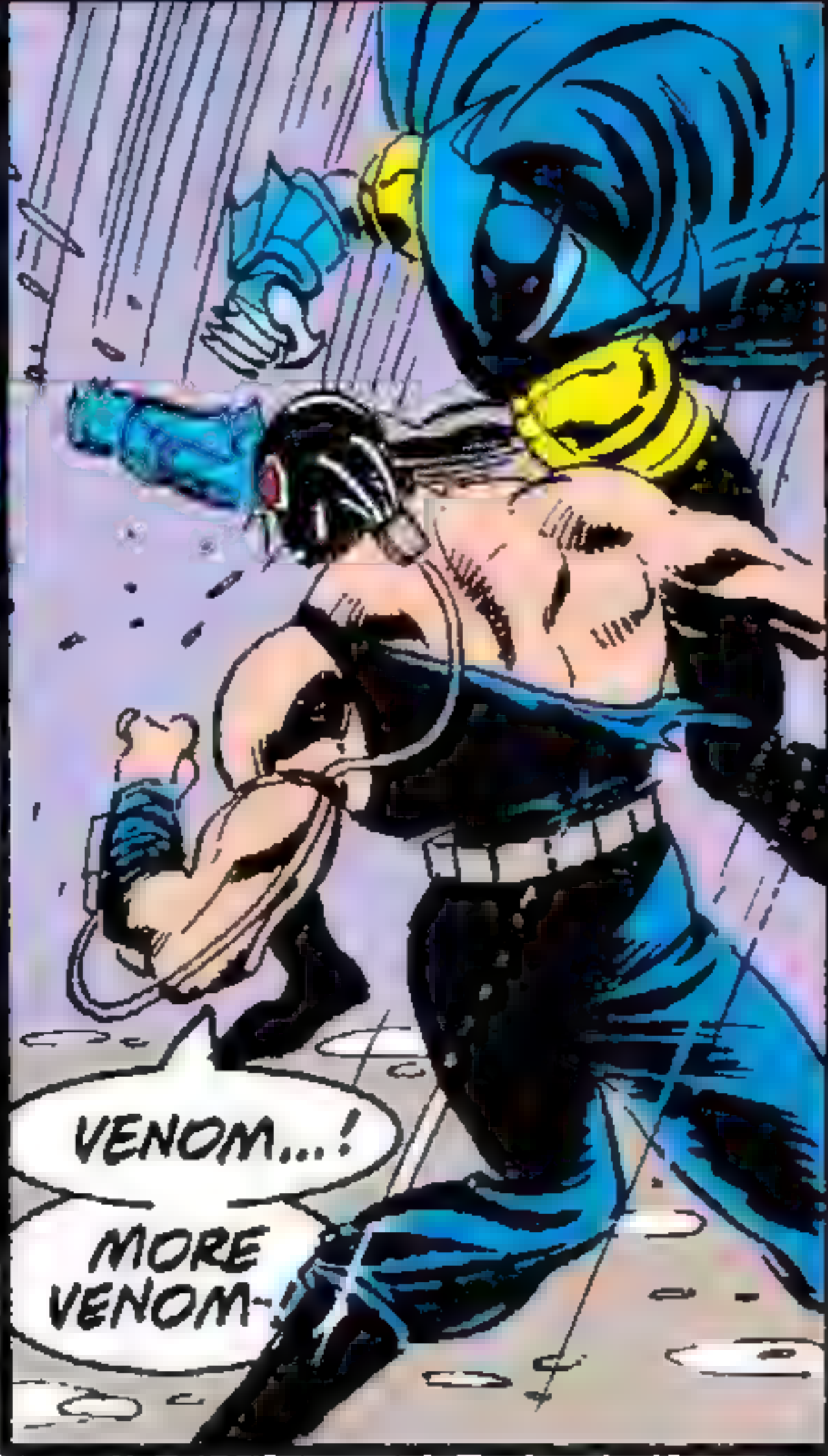
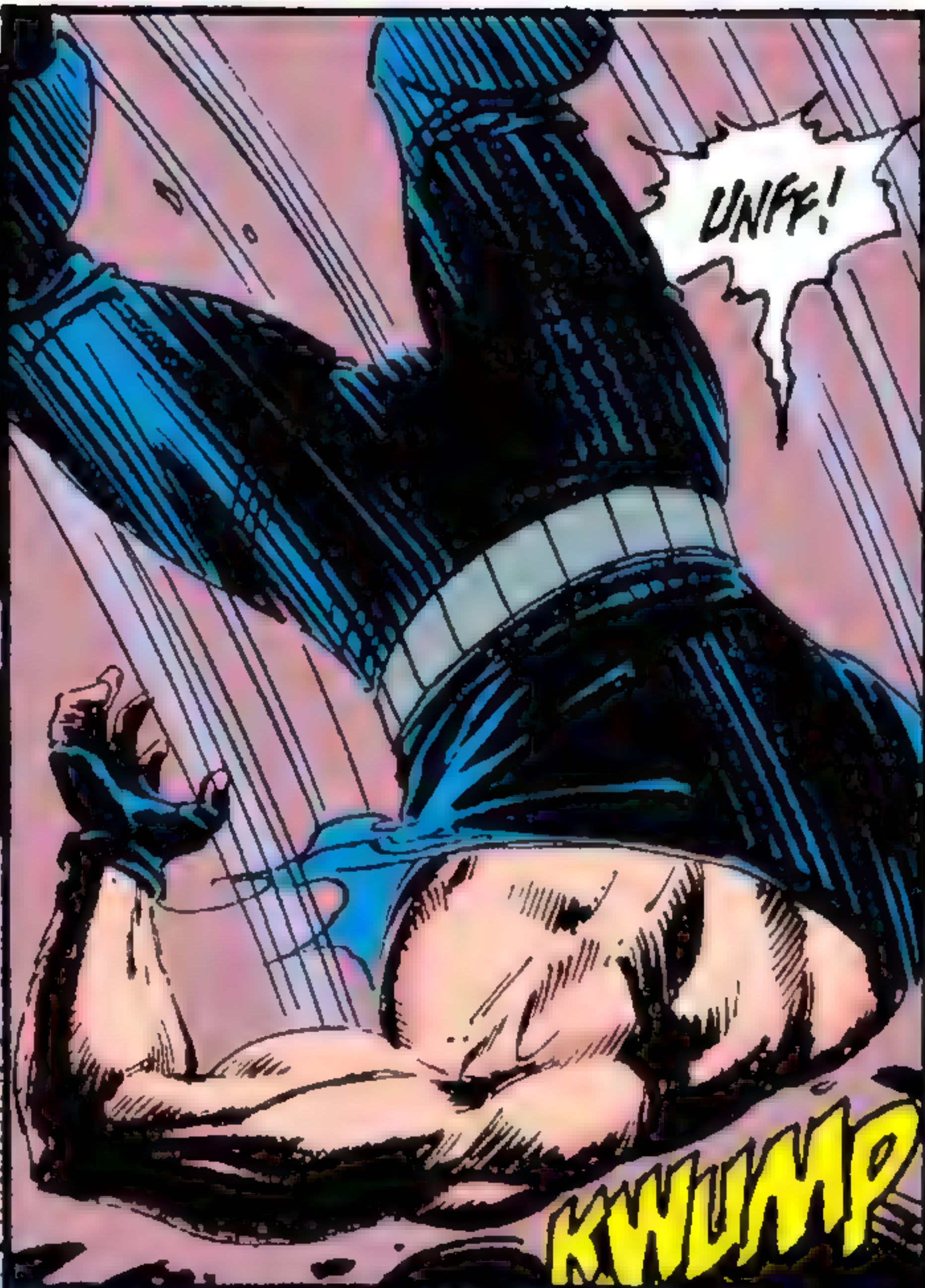
AND WHAT THE DEVIL HAPPENED TO HIS COSTUME?

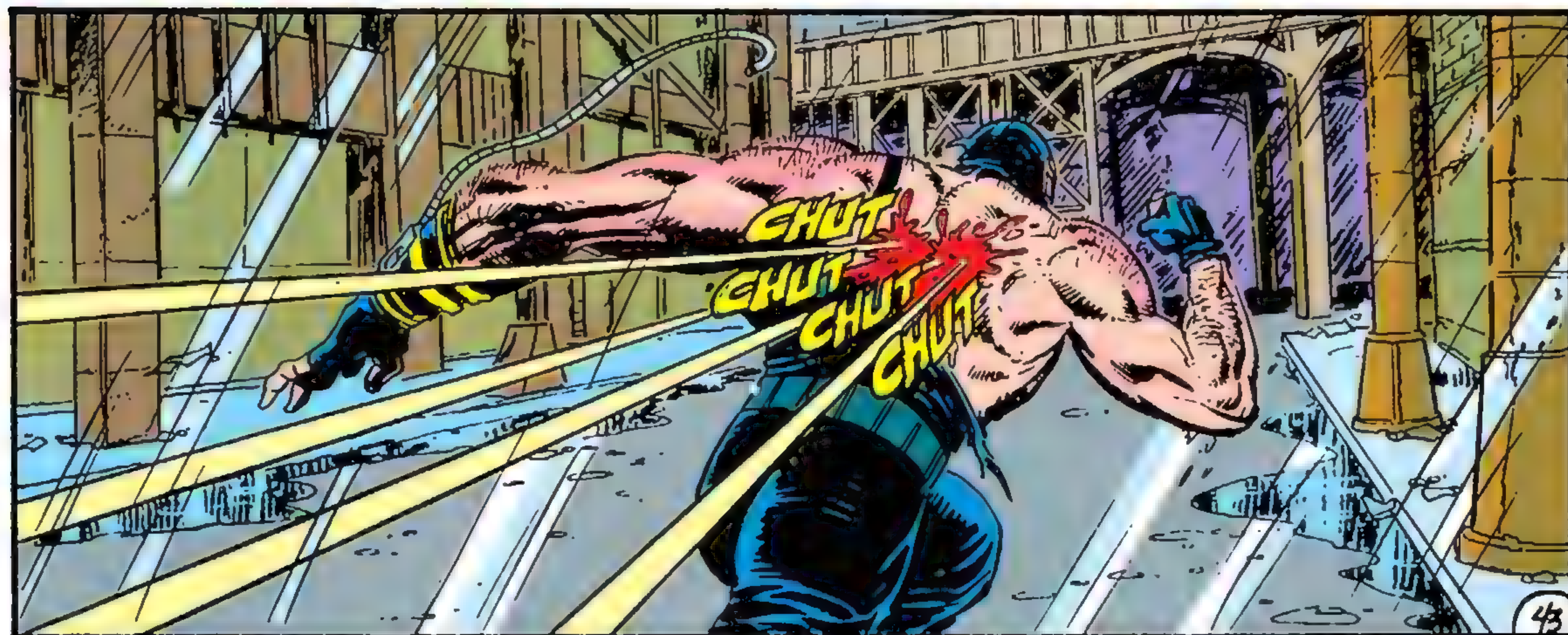
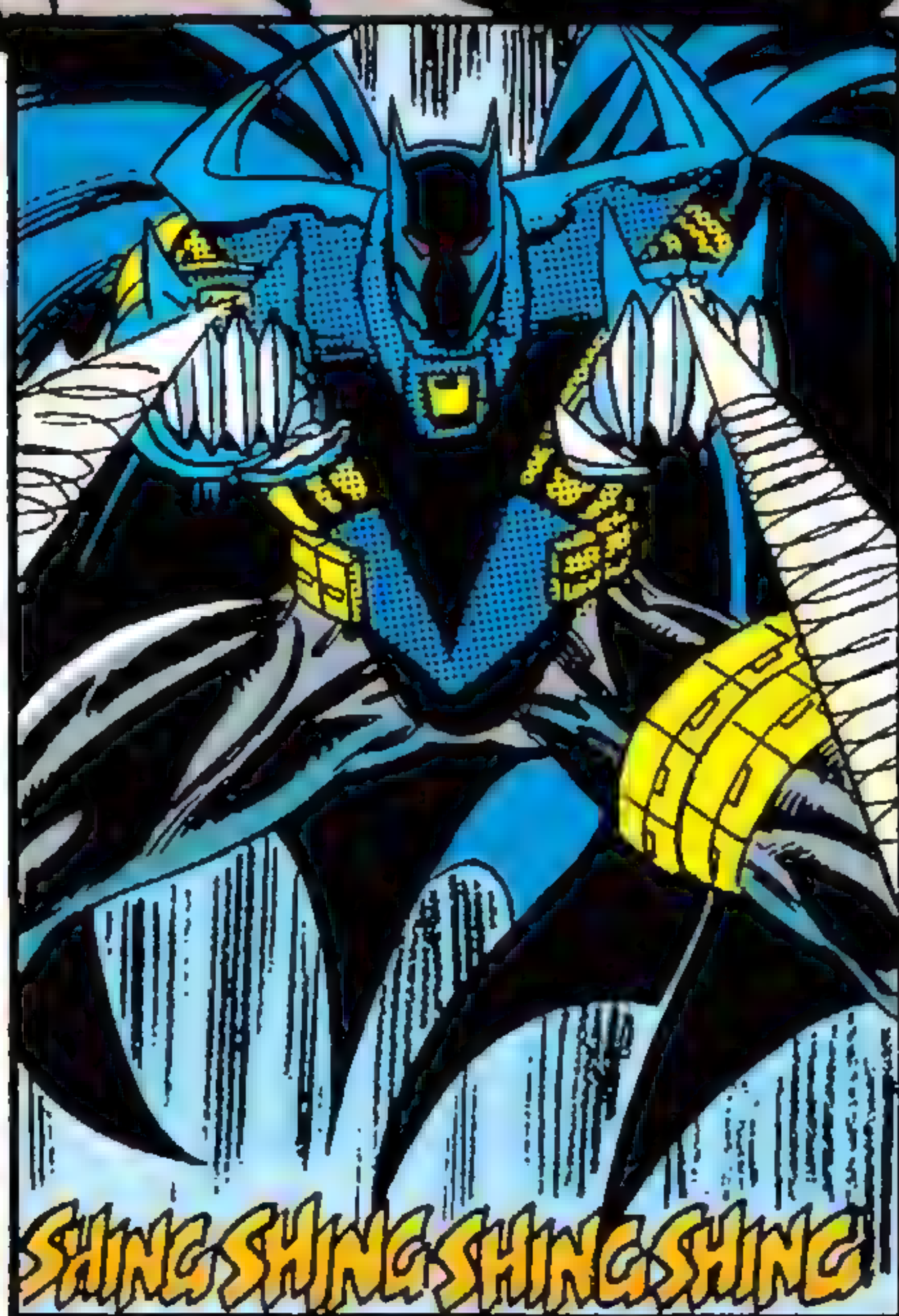
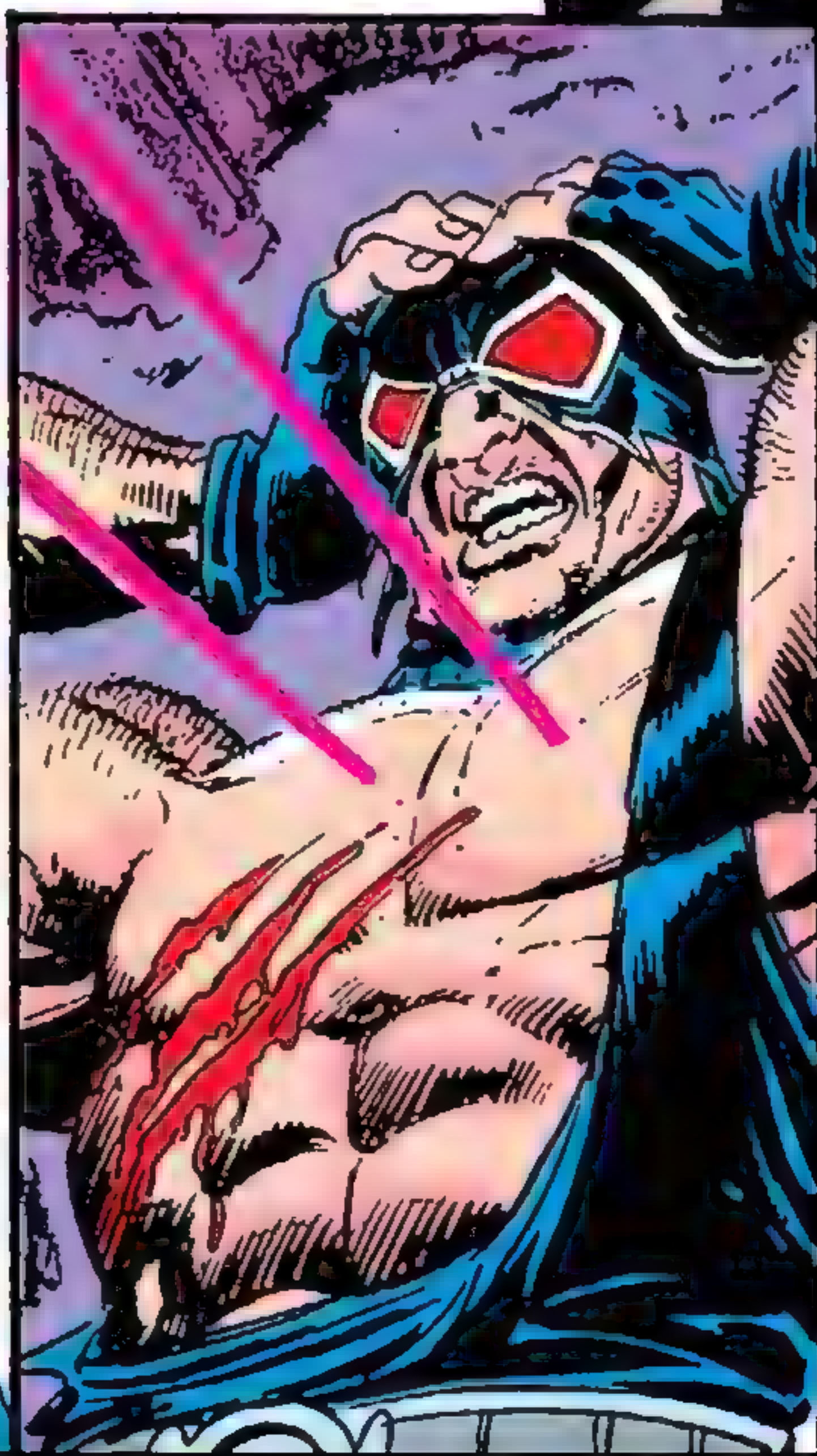


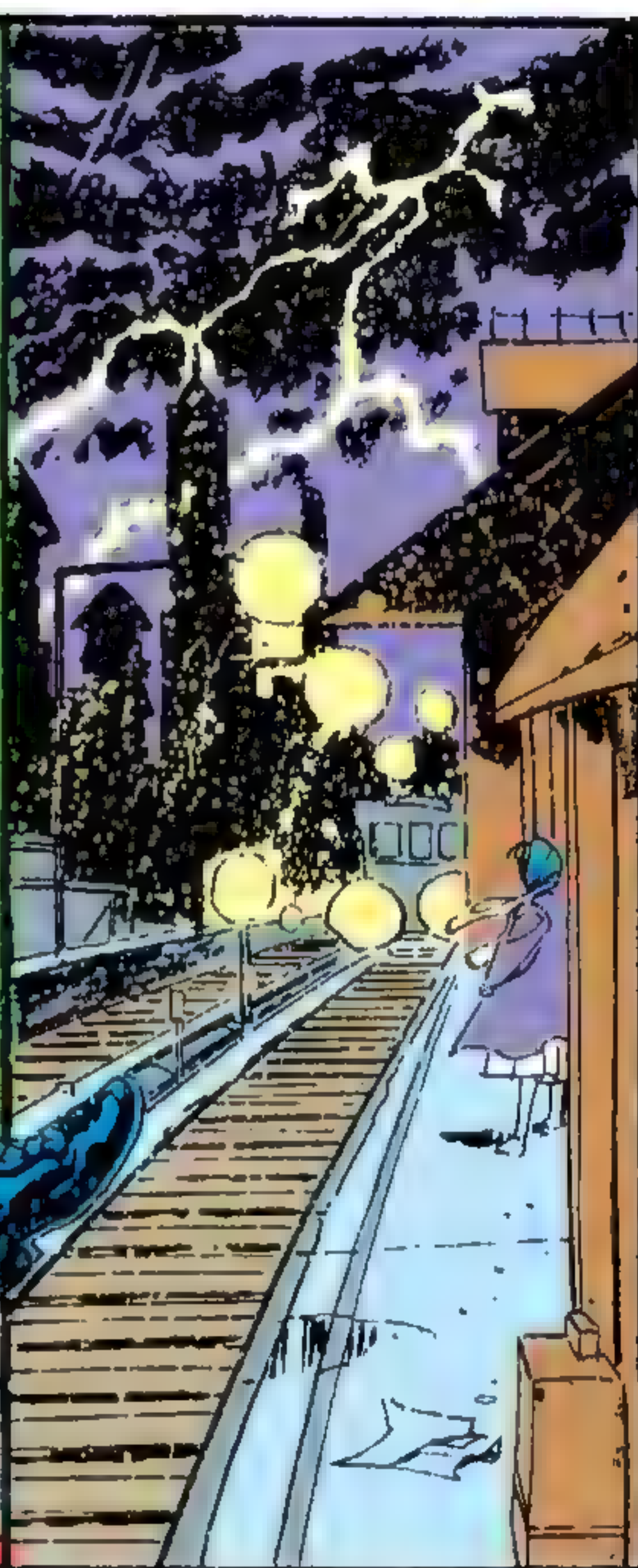
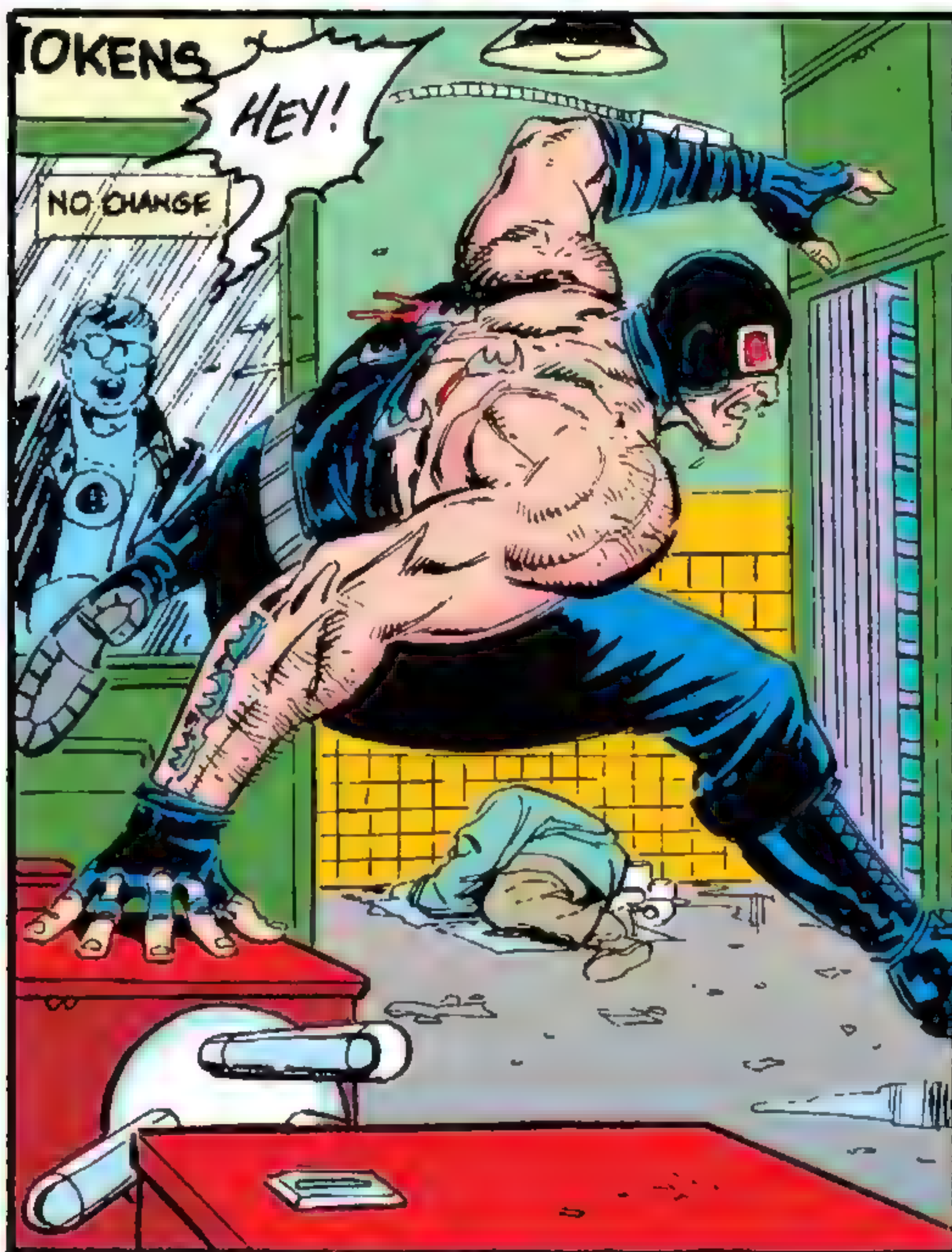
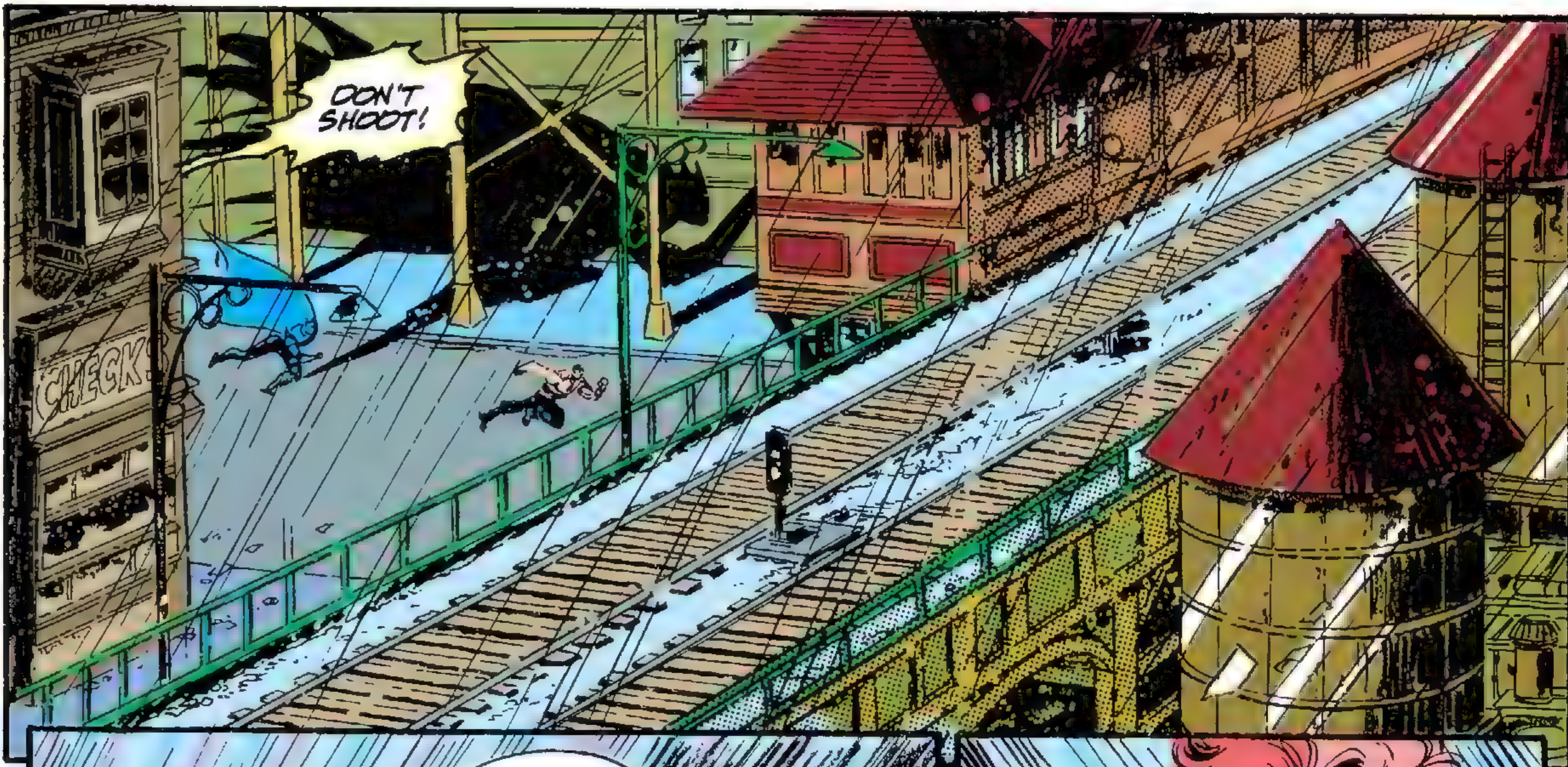


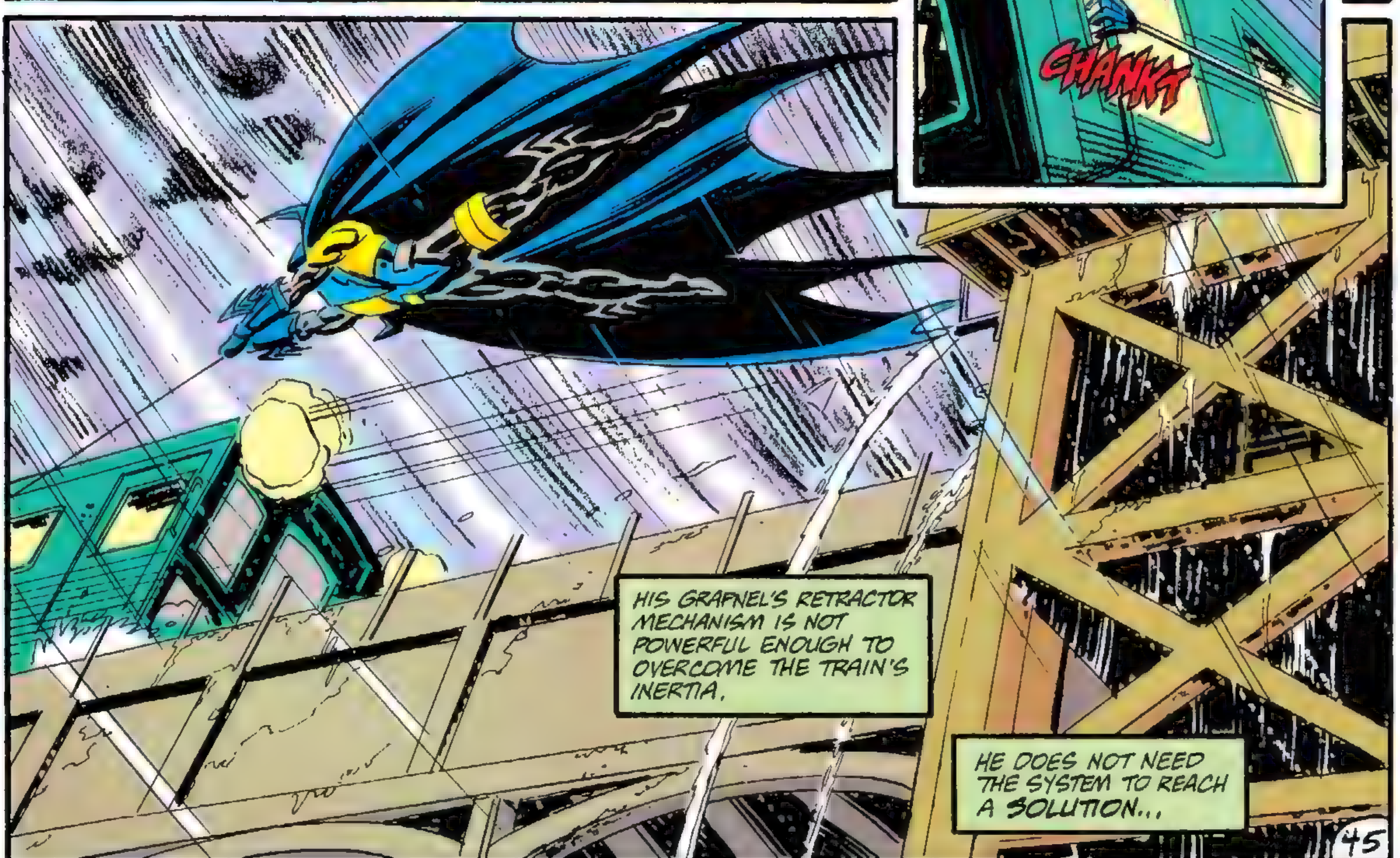


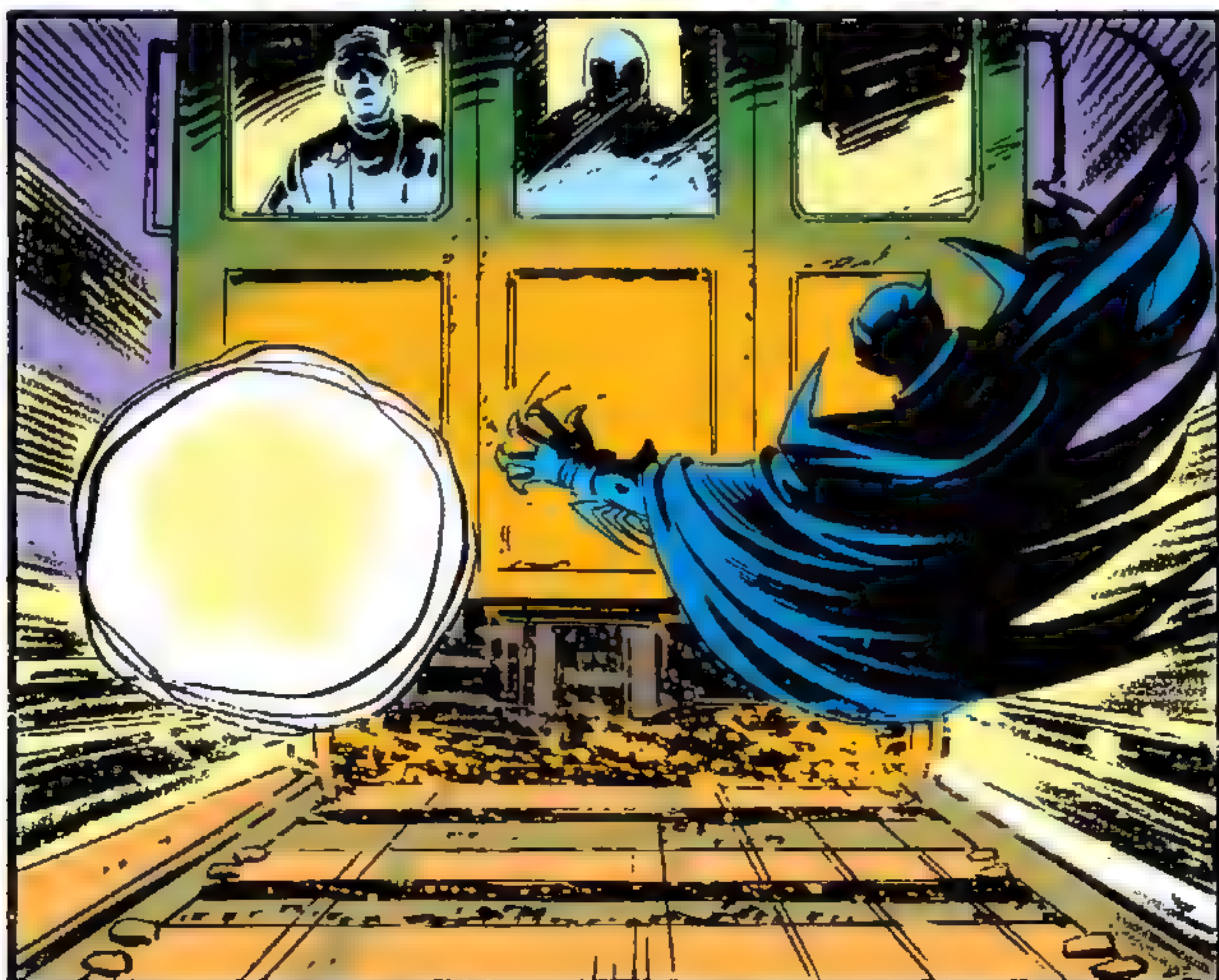
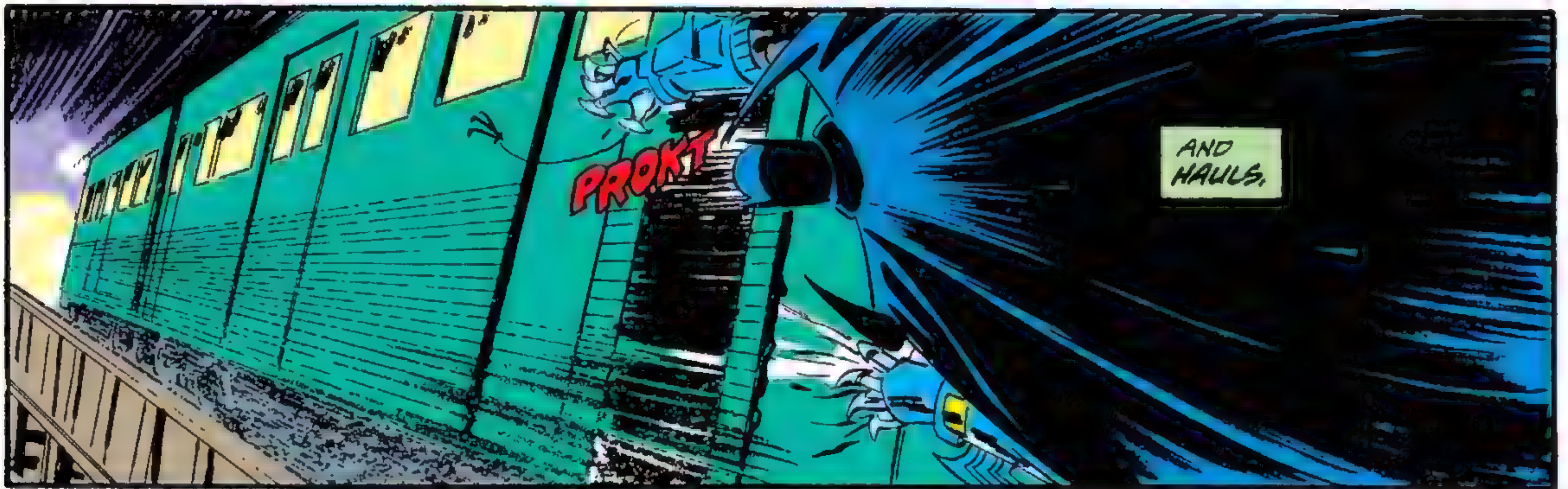
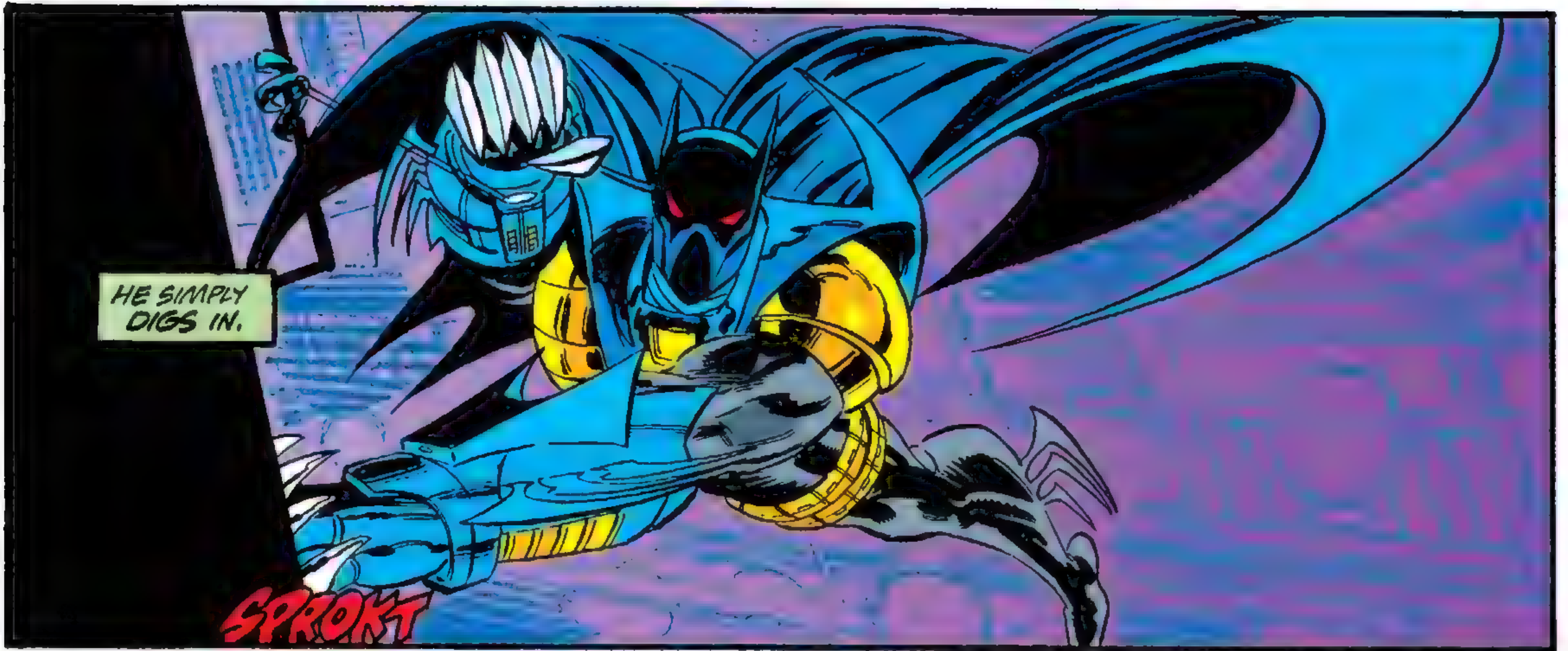


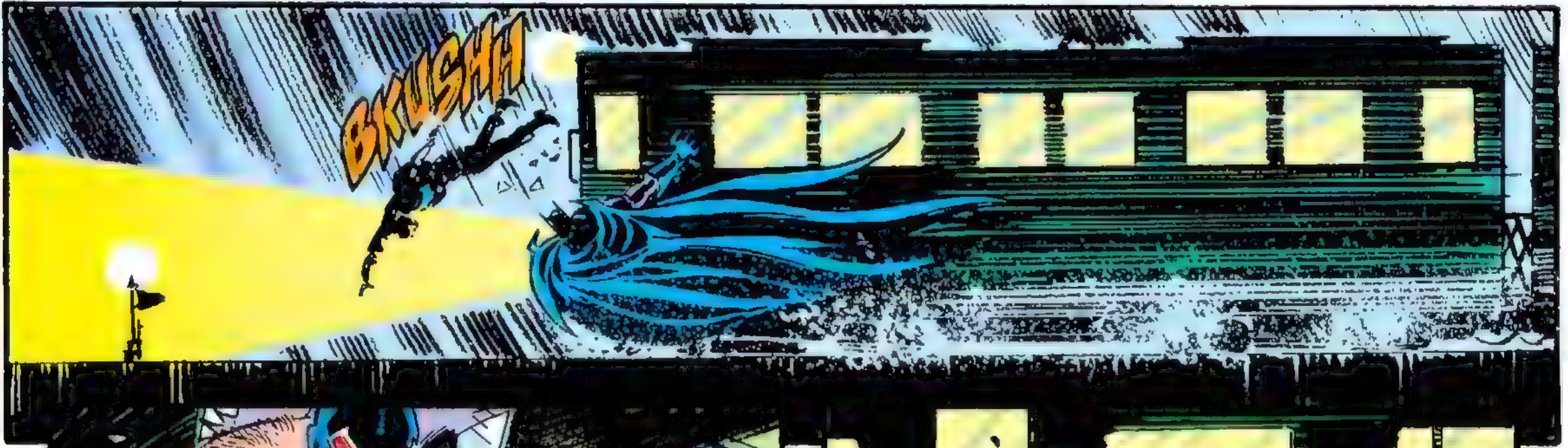
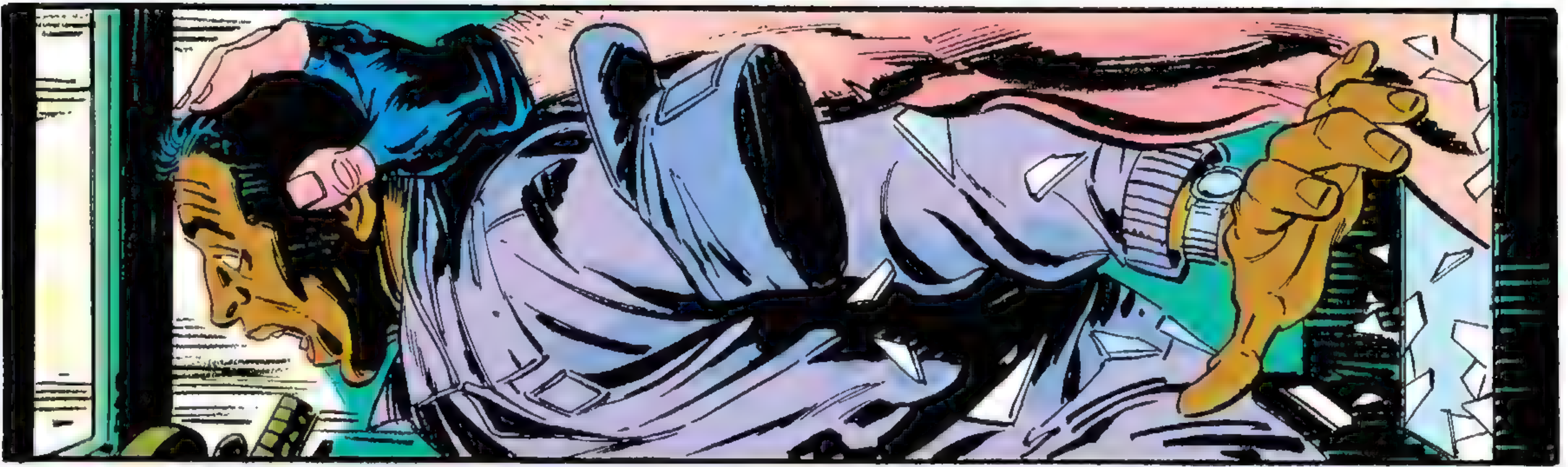


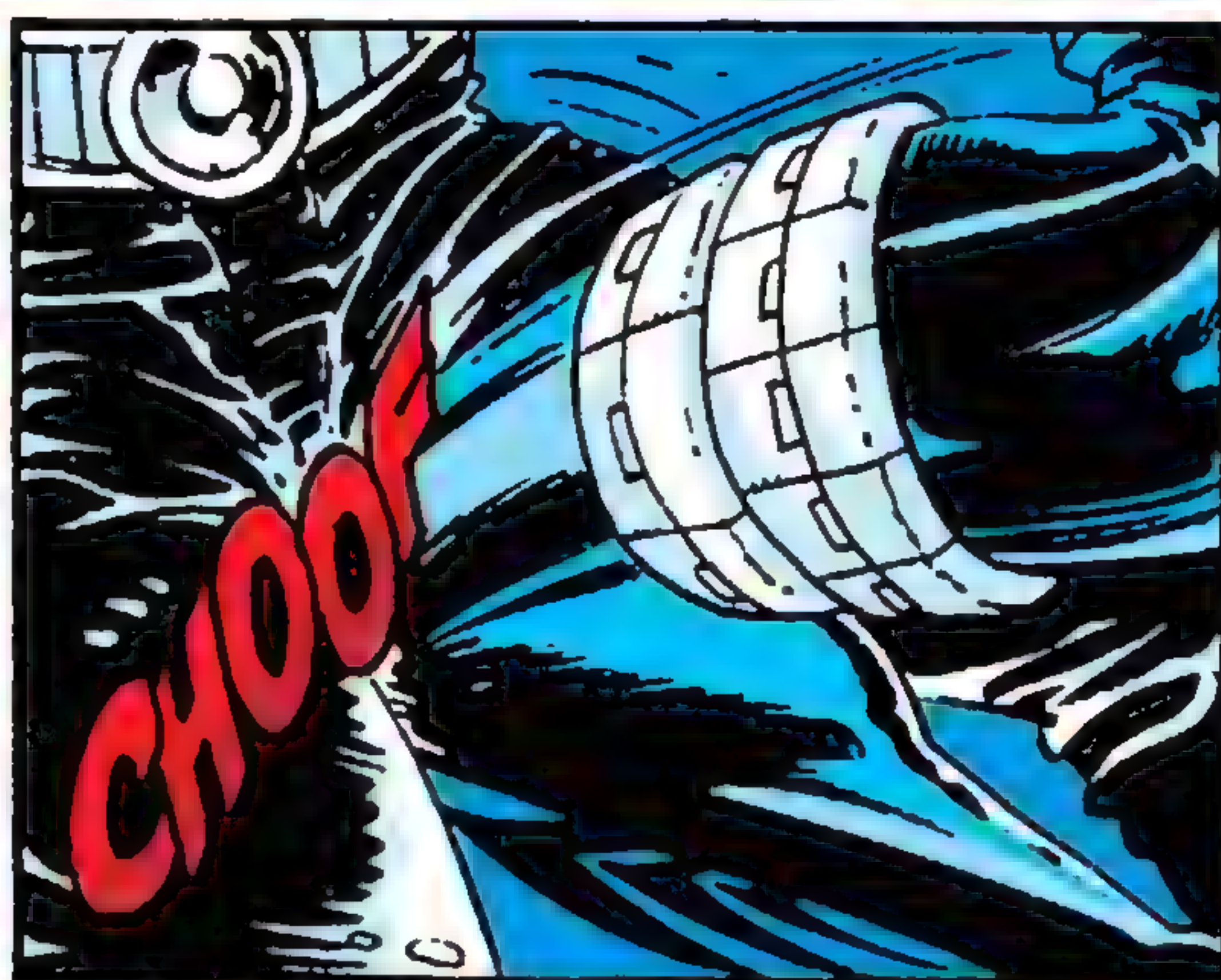
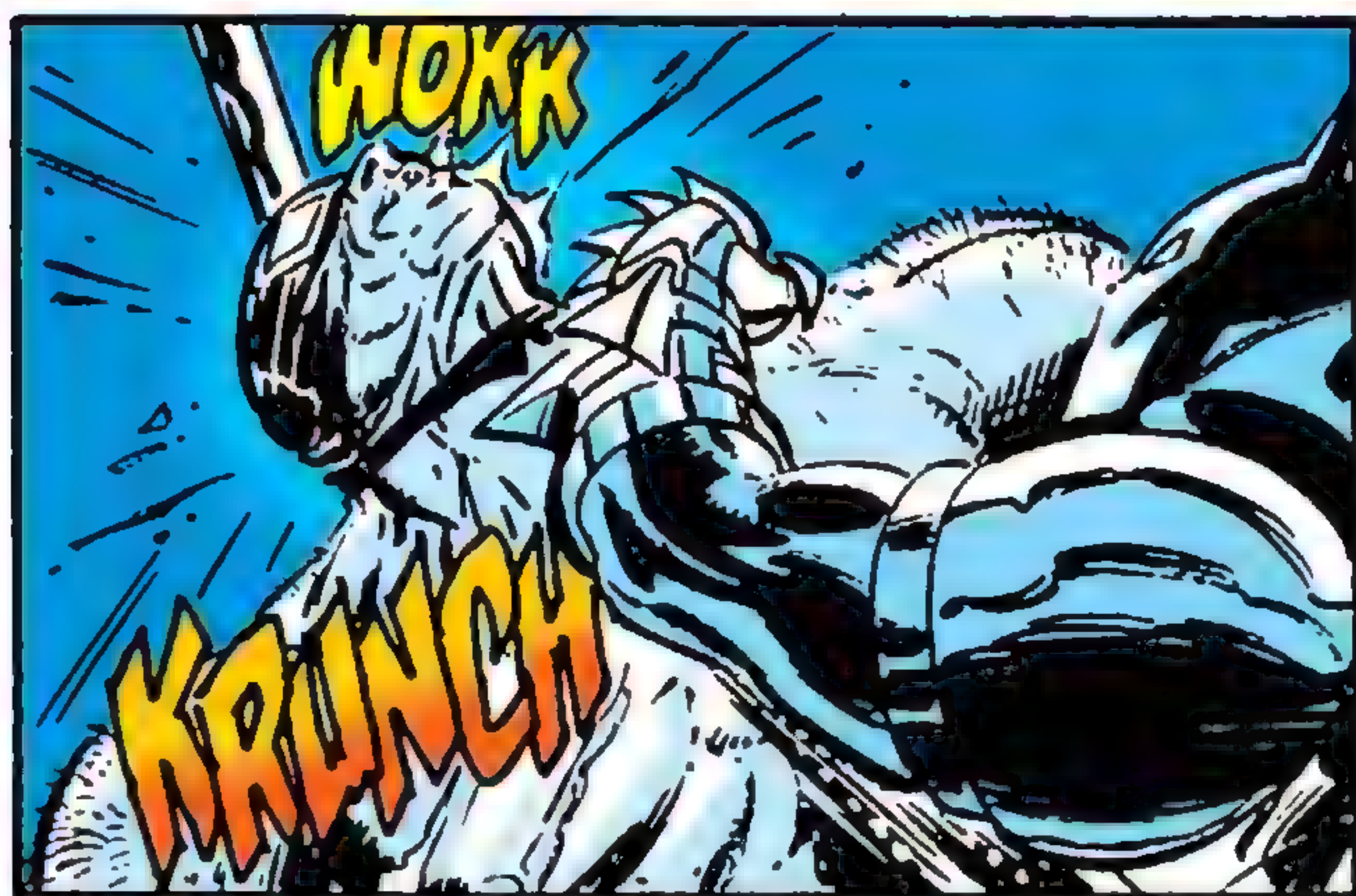
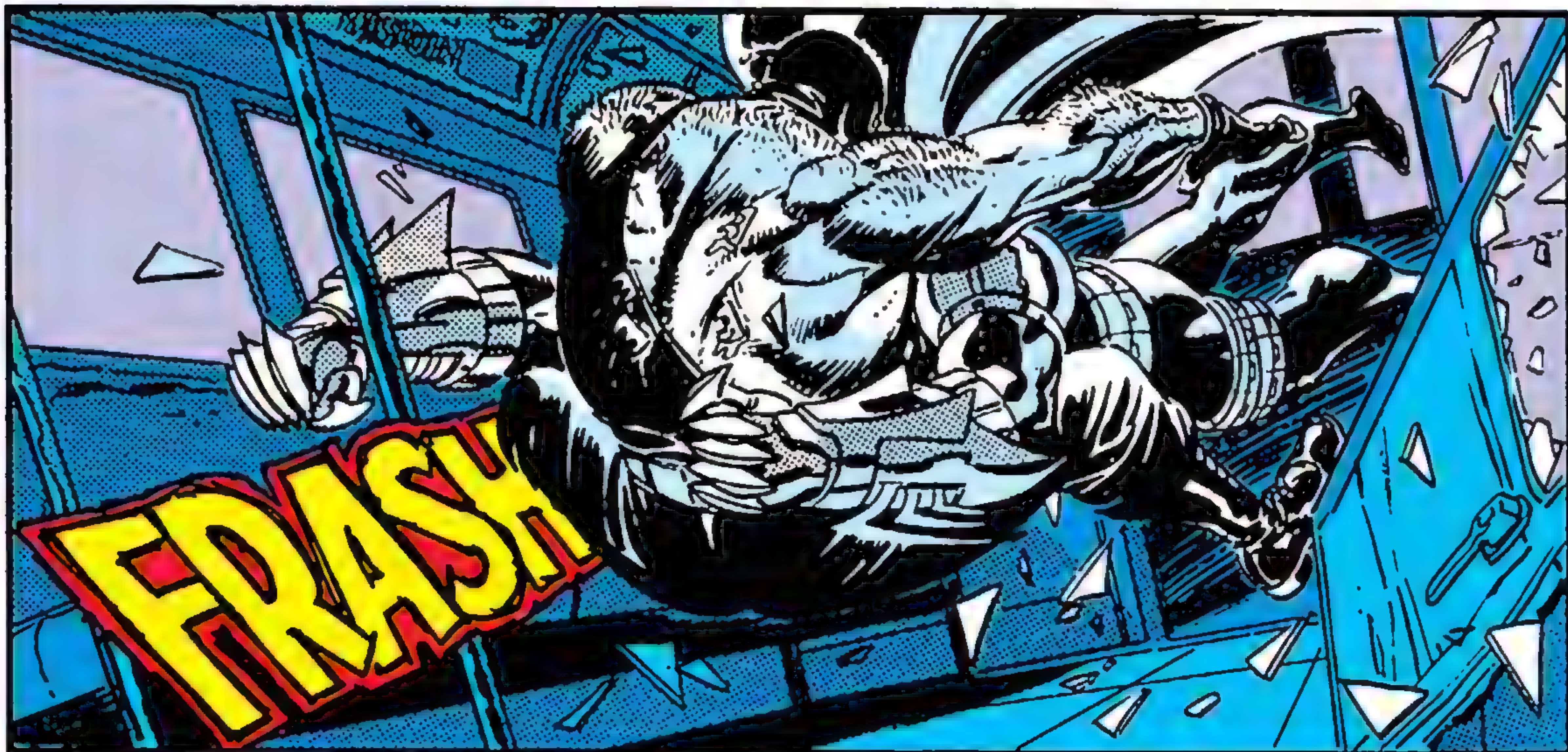


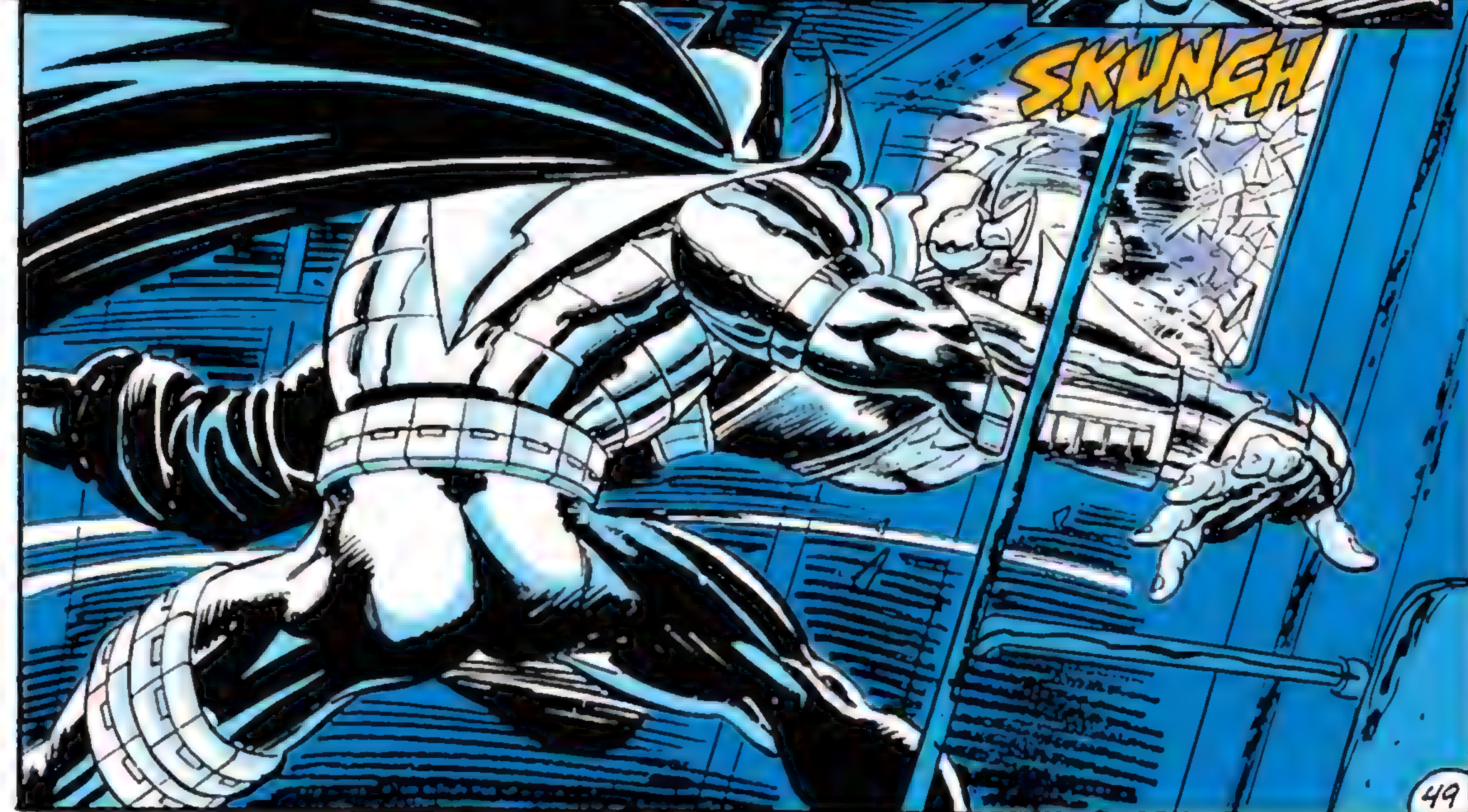
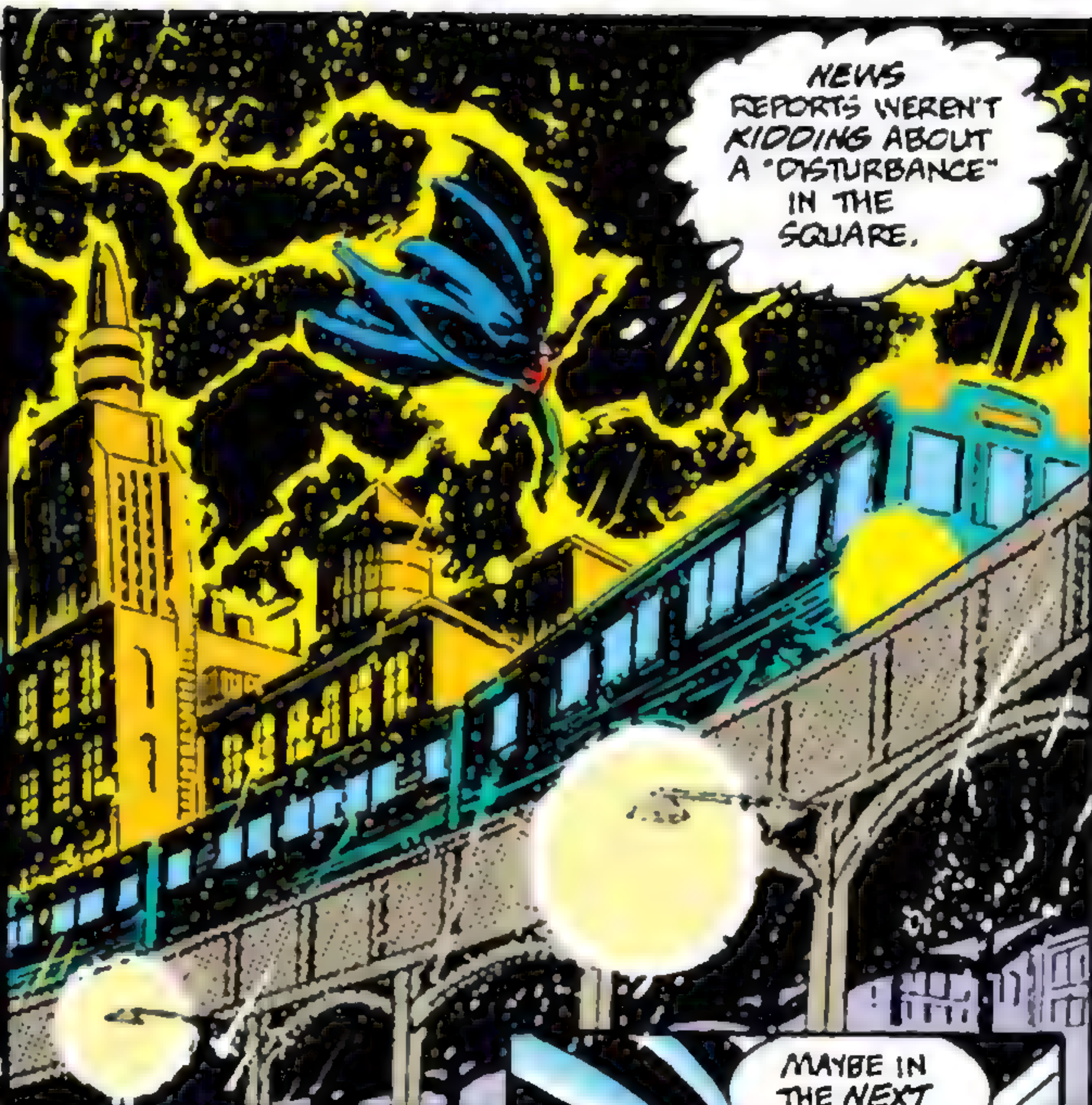




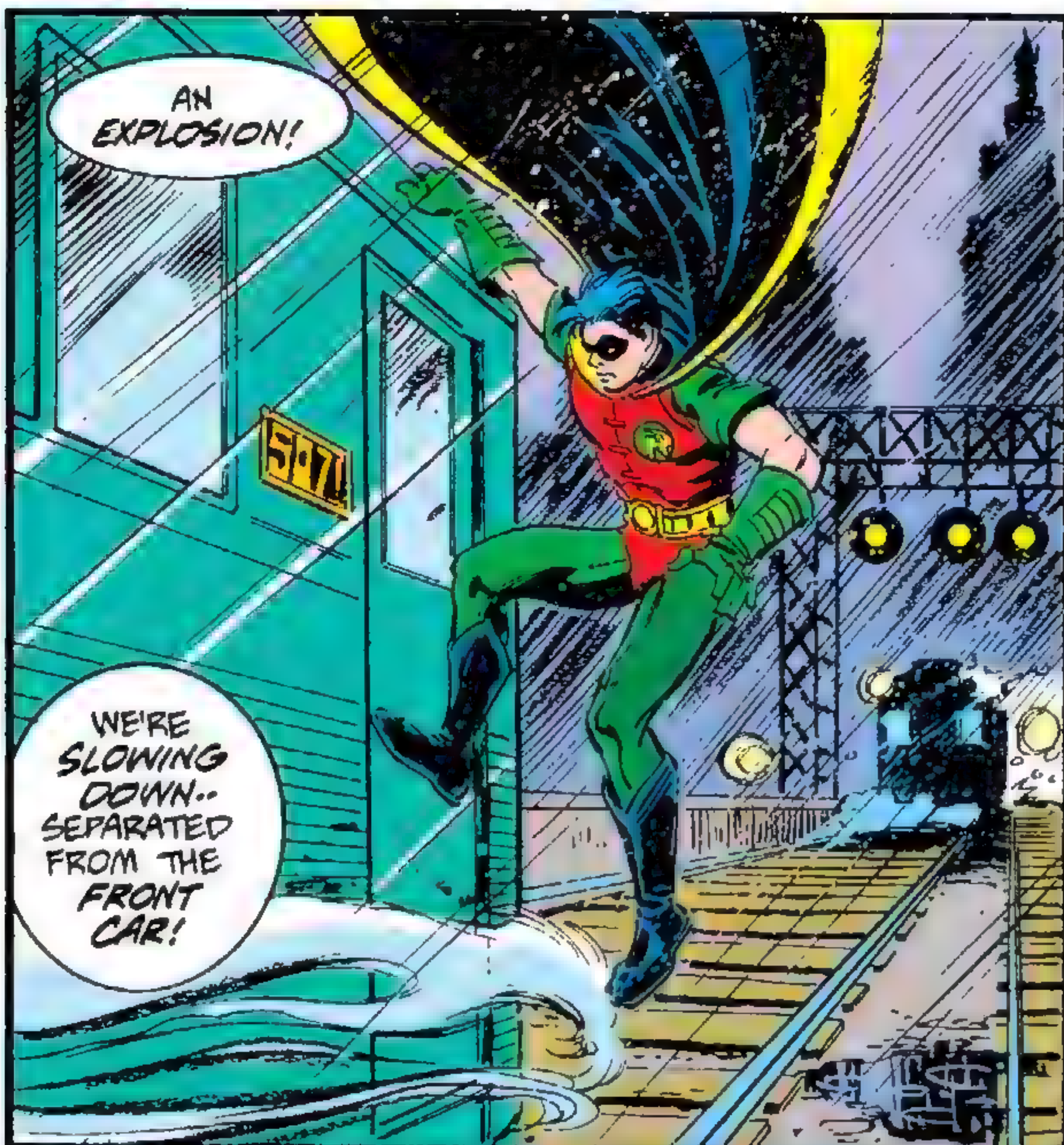












AN EXPLOSION!

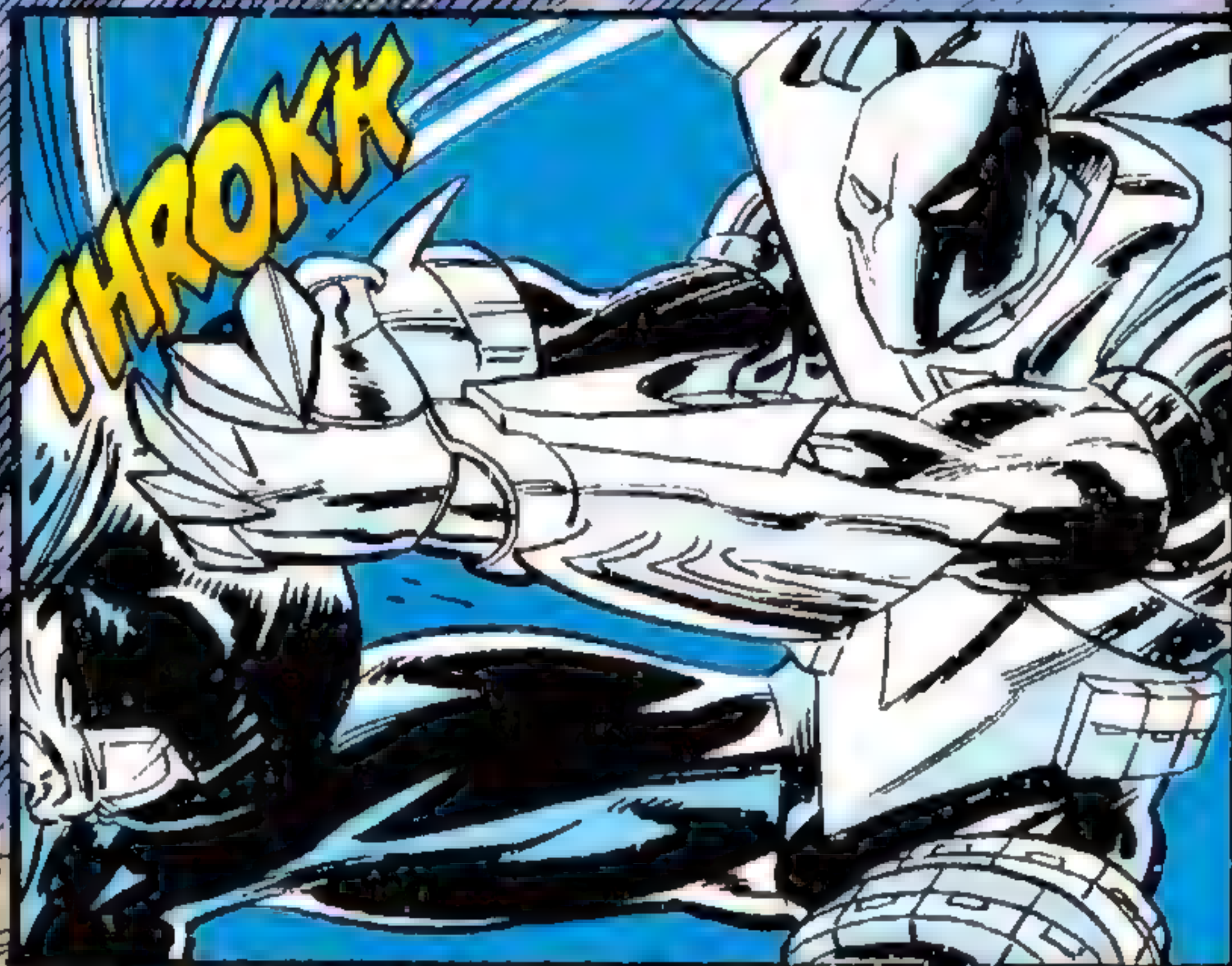
WE'RE SLOWING DOWN.. SEPARATED FROM THE FRONT CAR!



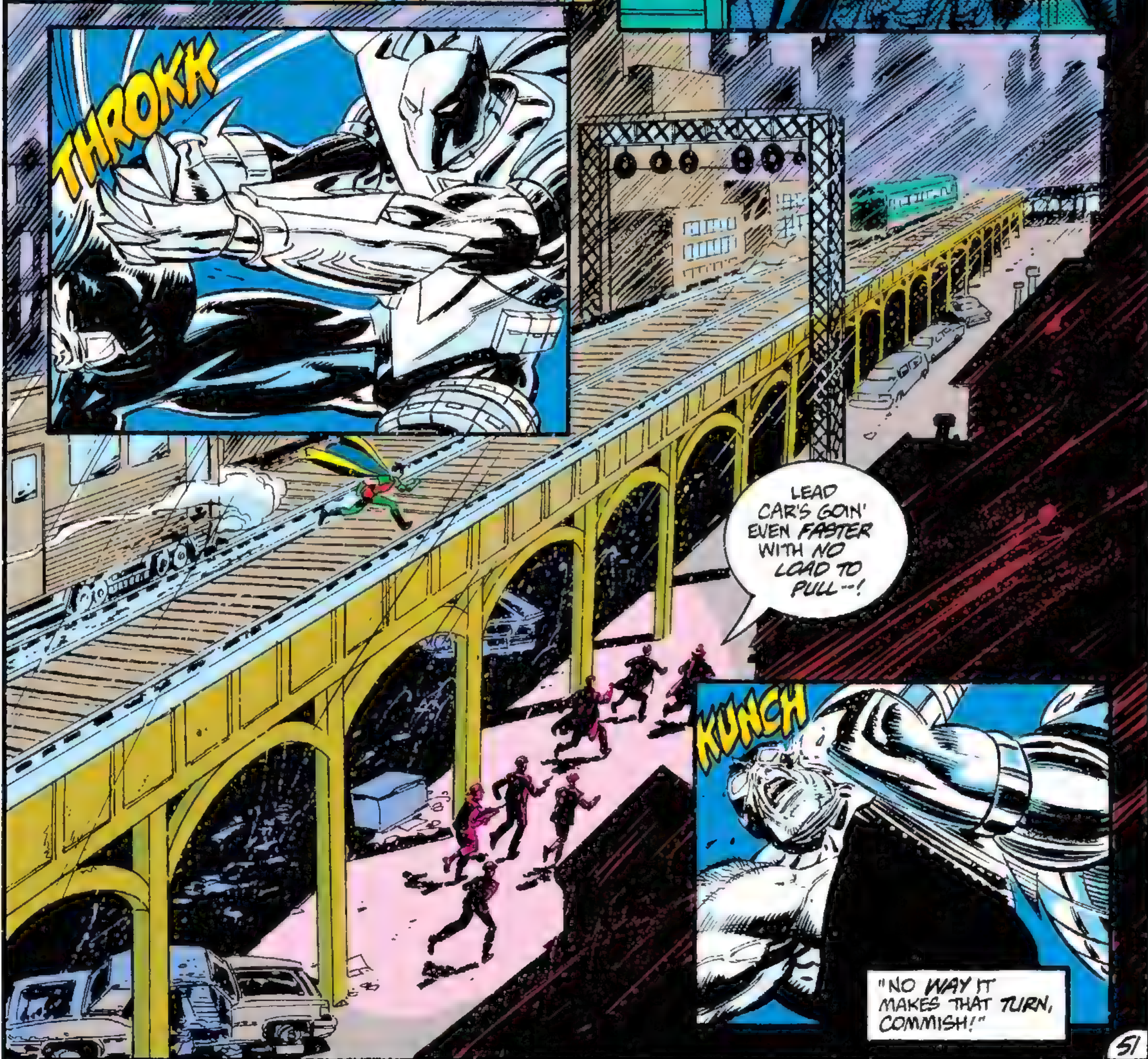
BUT HOW COULD--?

EVERYONE JUST STAY ABOARD AND STAY COOL.

RESCUERS ARE ALREADY ON THE WAY.



THROKK

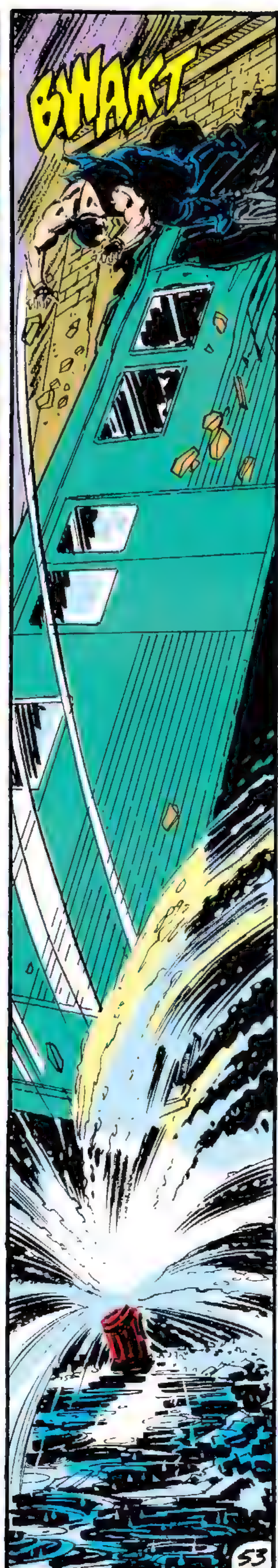
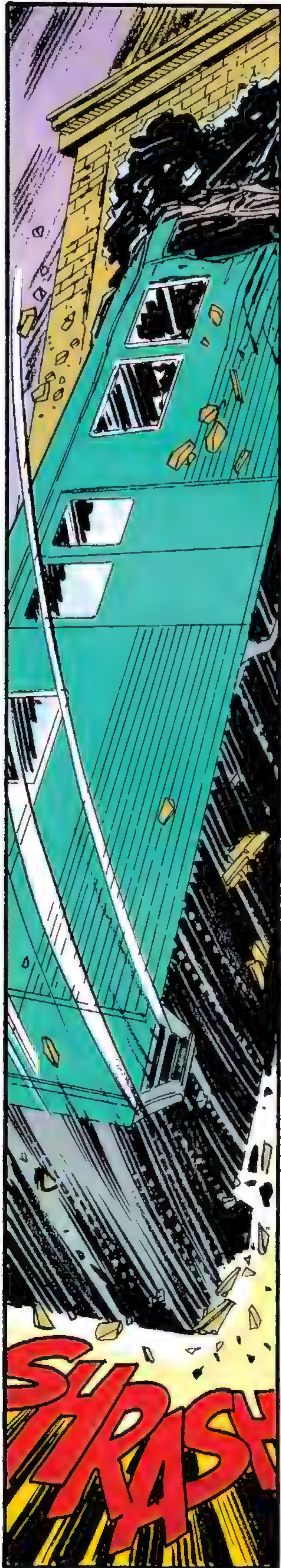


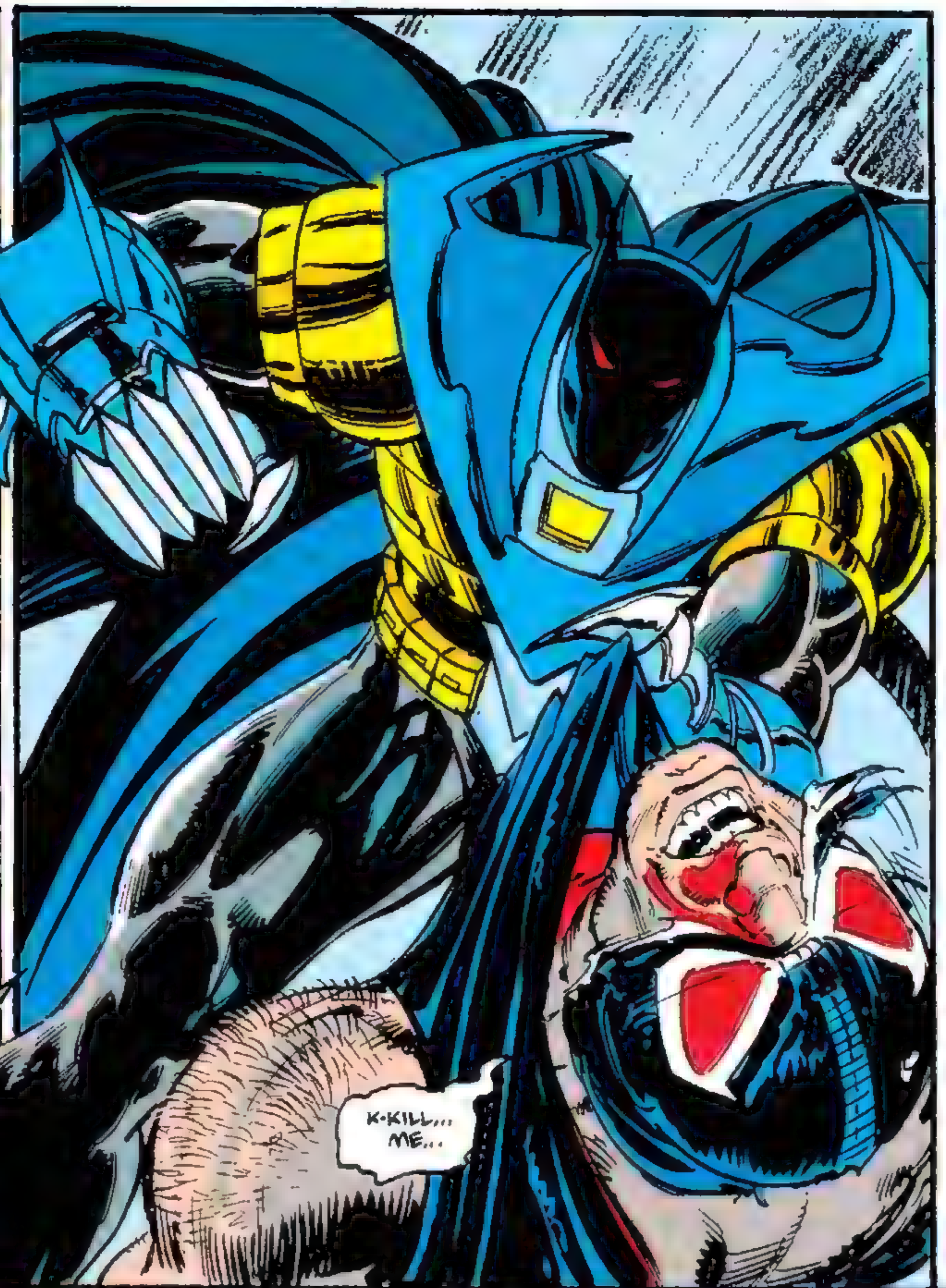
LEAD CAR'S GOIN' EVEN FASTER WITH NO LOAD TO PULL--!

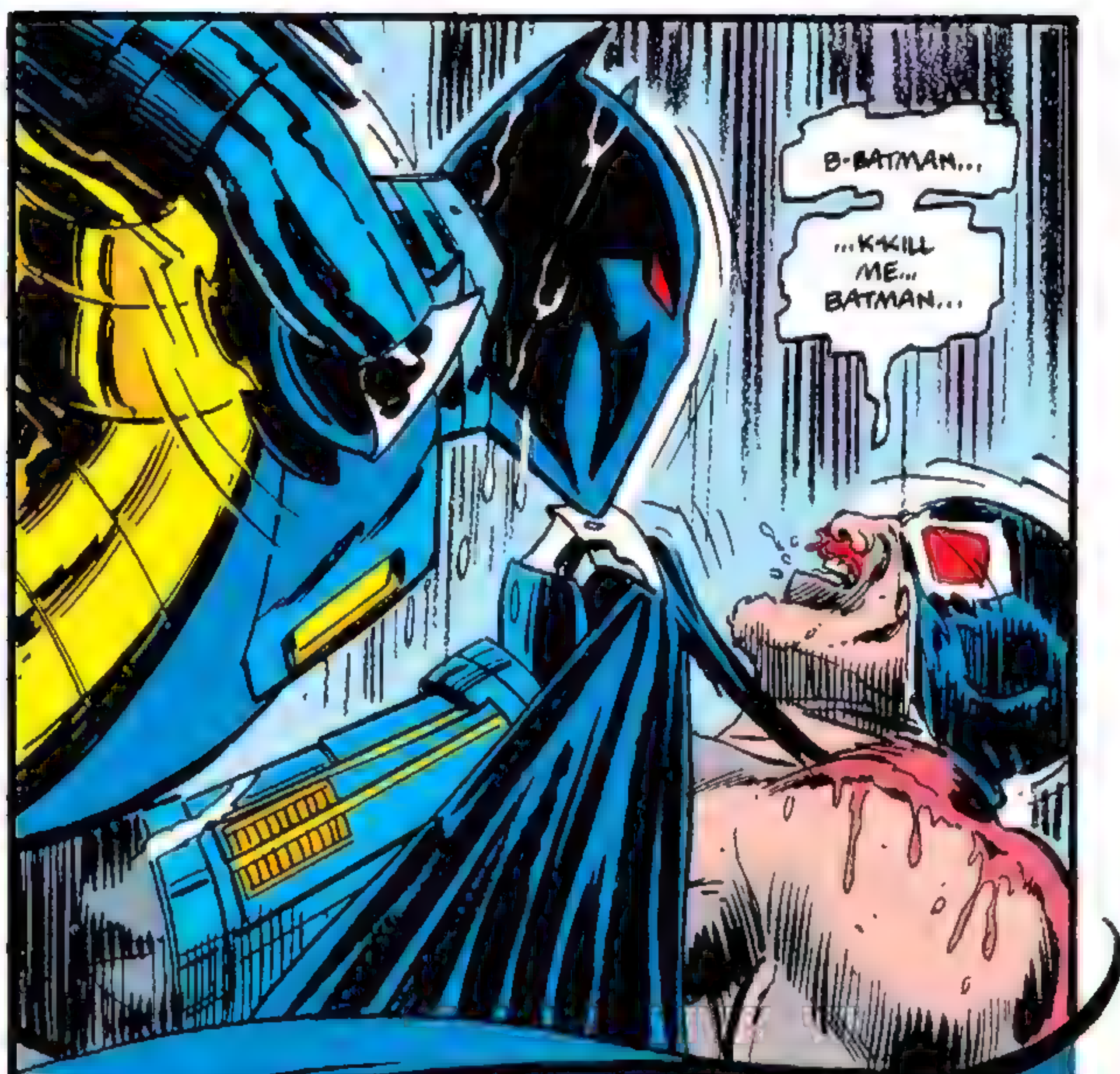


"NO WAY IT MAKES THAT TURN, COMMISH!"

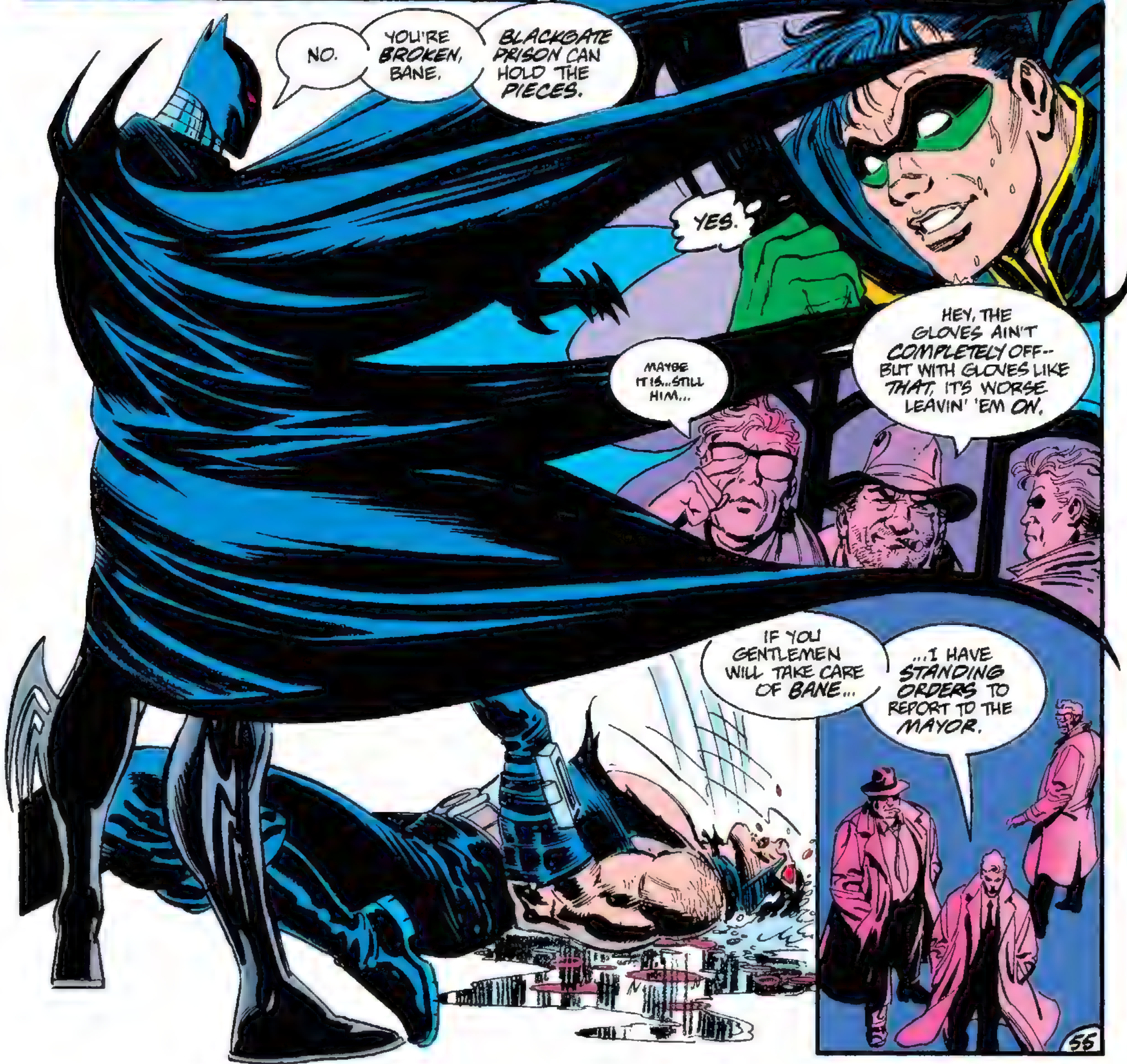








B-BATMAN...
...KILL
ME...
BATMAN...



NO.
YOU'RE
BROKEN,
BANE.
BLACKGATE
PRISON CAN
HOLD THE
PIECES.

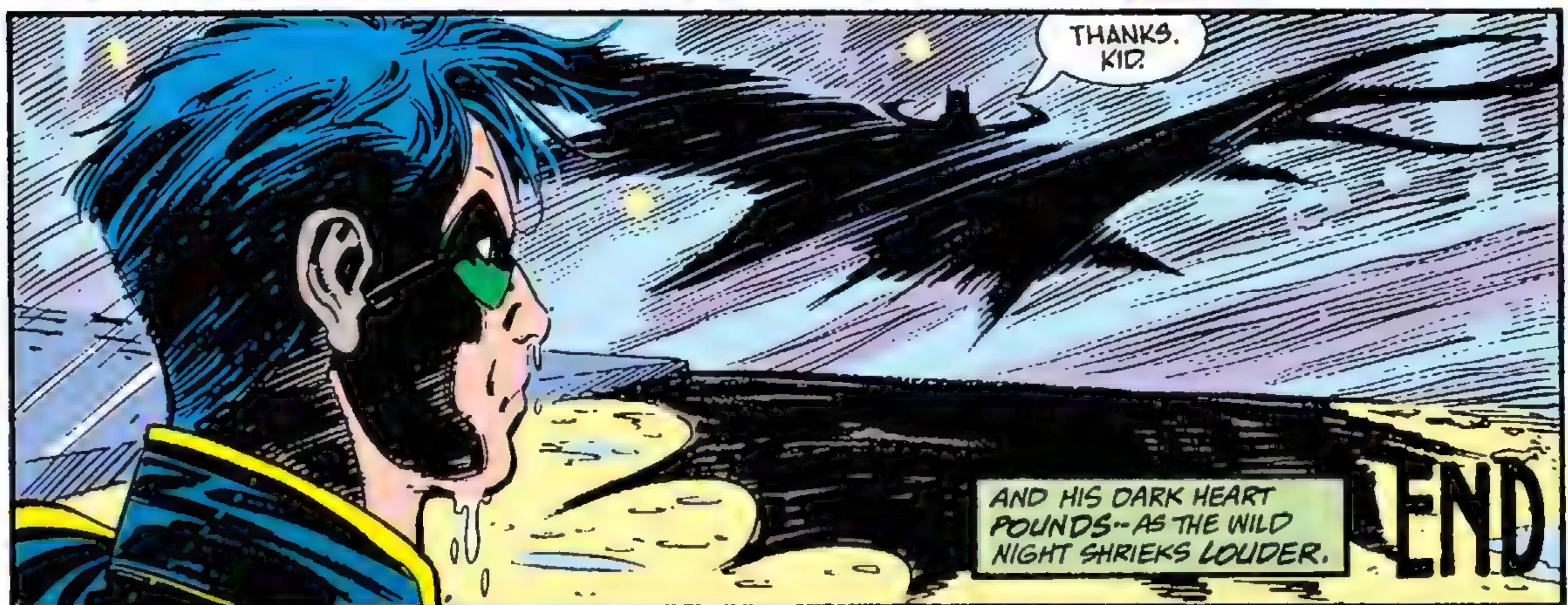
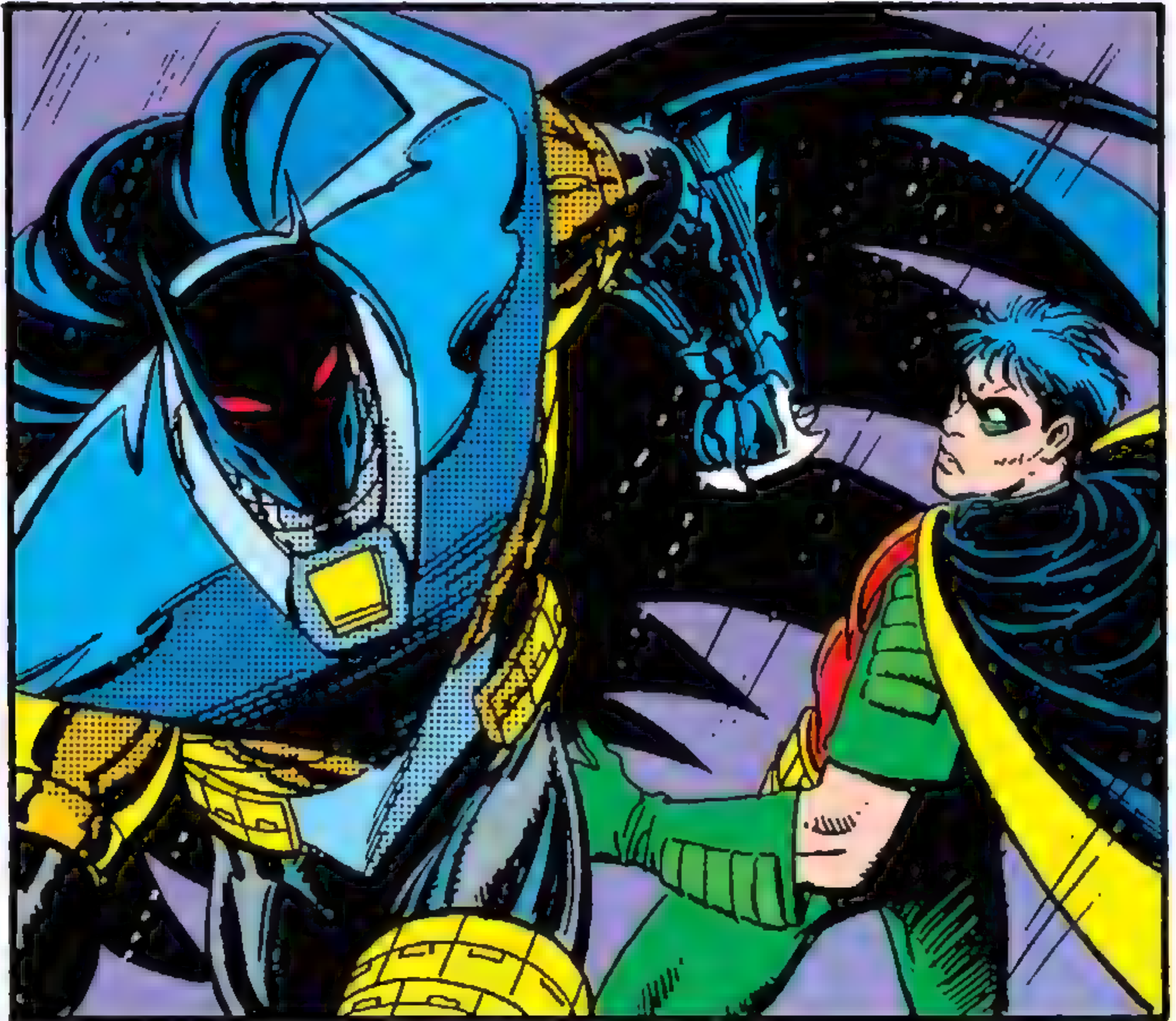
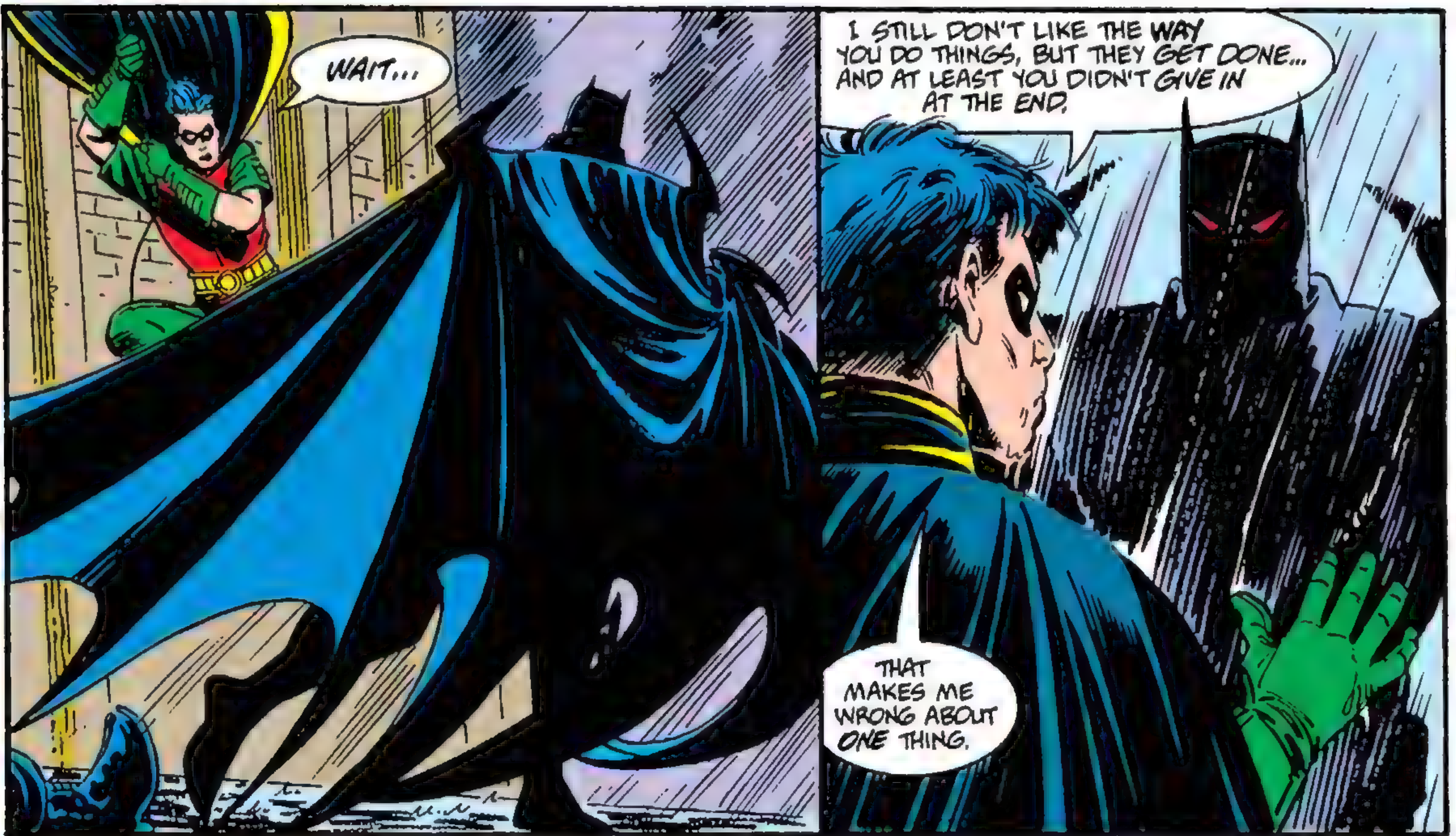
YES.

MAYBE
IT IS...STILL
HIM...

HEY, THE
GLOVES AIN'T
COMPLETELY OFF--
BUT WITH GLOVES LIKE
THAT, IT'S WORSE
LEAVIN' 'EM ON.

IF YOU
GENTLEMEN
WILL TAKE CARE
OF BANE...

...I HAVE
STANDING
ORDERS TO
REPORT TO THE
MAYOR.



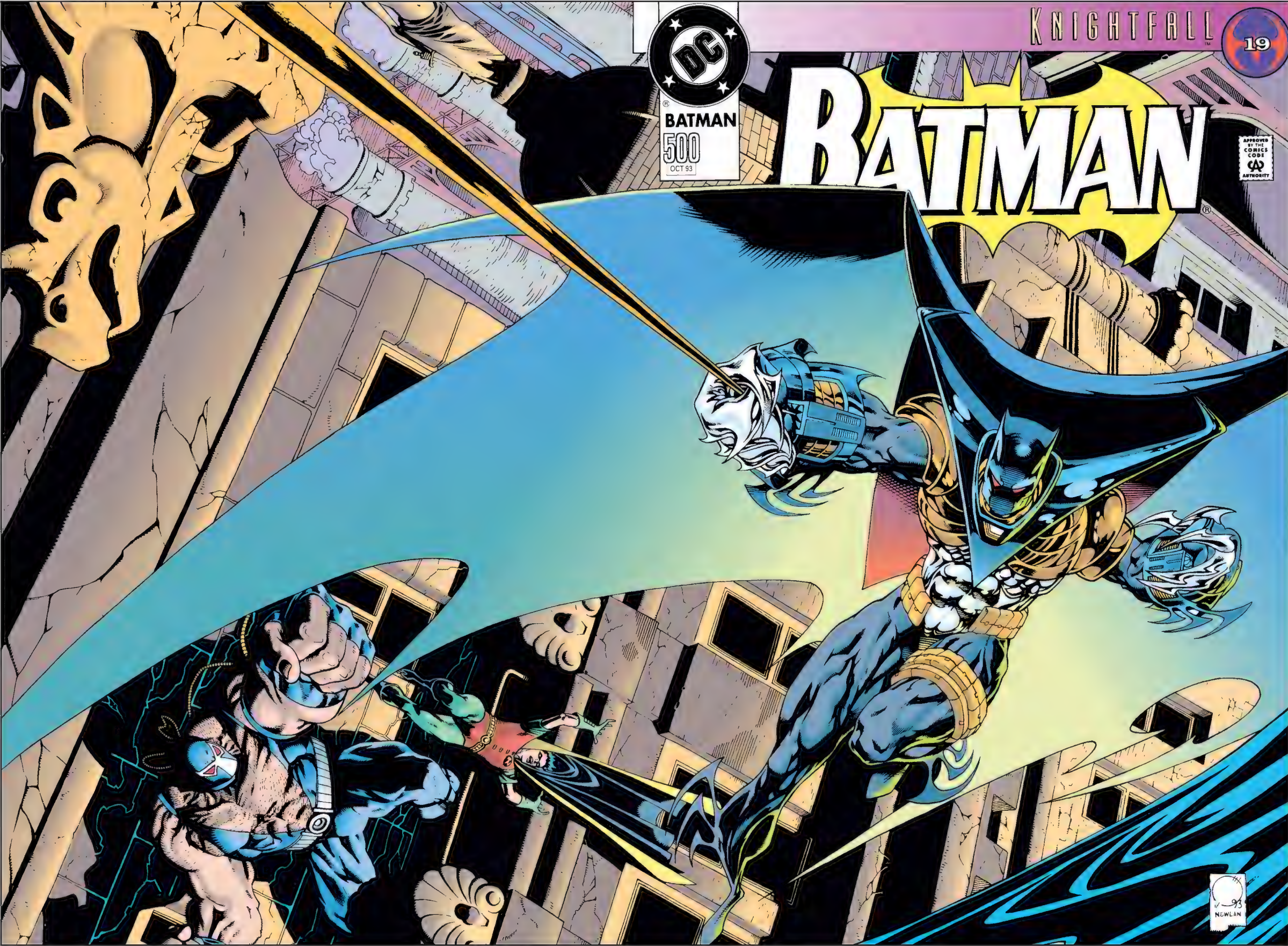
Follow the adventures of Batman and his own war on crime in



BATMAN KNIGHTFALL VOLUME 2

KNIGHTQUEST





BATMAN

KNIGHTFALL

PART ONE: BROKEN BAT



BATMAN KNIGHTFALL PART ONE: BROKEN BAT TPB cover art by MIKE DEODATO JR.



BATMAN

KNIGHTFALL

PART TWO: WHO RULES THE NIGHT





Every man has a

BREAKING POINT

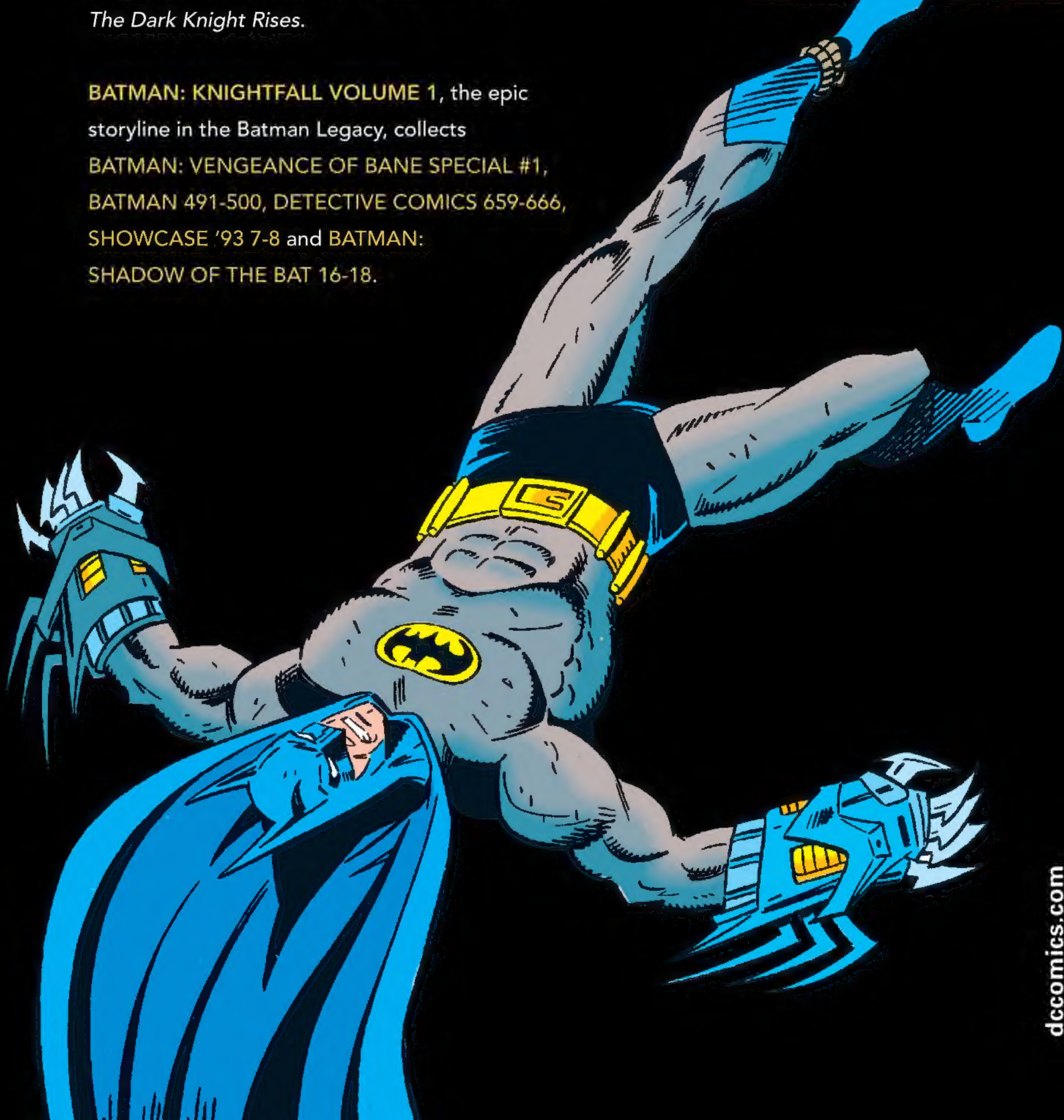
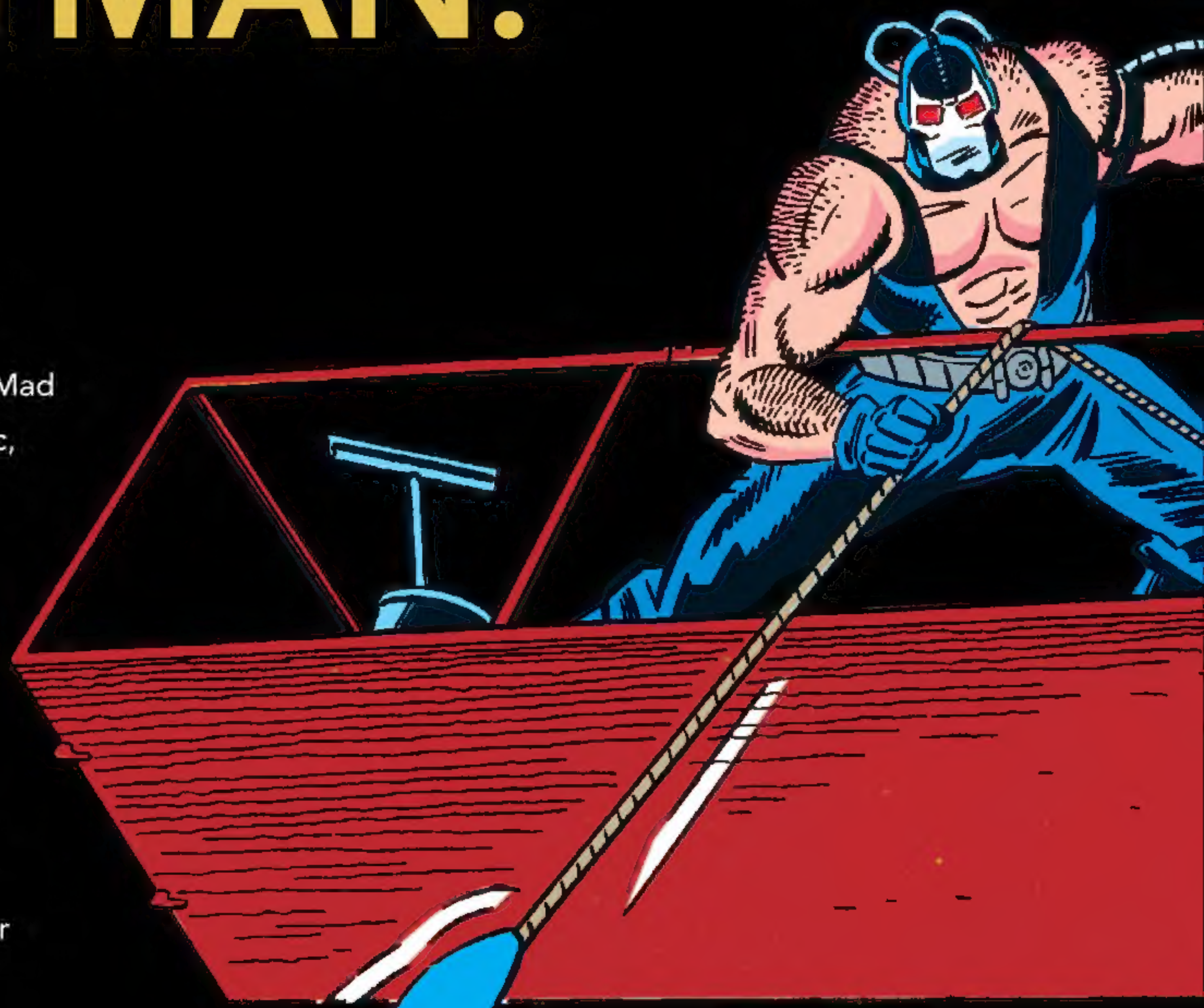
Even the

BATMAN!

THE DARK KNIGHT'S DEADLIEST ENEMIES have escaped Arkham Asylum! The Joker, Two-Face, The Mad Hatter, The Riddler, Poison Ivy, Scarecrow, Killer Croc, Firefly, and Zsasz — one by one, Batman must face them in mortal combat. But lurking at the end of this seemingly endless gauntlet is the deadliest menace of all — a mysterious man-mountain known as Bane!

Will Bane break the Bat, or can The Dark Knight save Gotham City from the latest reign of terror to be unleashed upon its citizens? Read the blockbuster story that introduced the featured villain in *The Dark Knight Rises*.

BATMAN: KNIGHTFALL VOLUME 1, the epic storyline in the Batman Legacy, collects **BATMAN: VENGEANCE OF BANE SPECIAL #1**, **BATMAN 491-500**, **DETECTIVE COMICS 659-666**, **SHOWCASE '93 7-8** and **BATMAN: SHADOW OF THE BAT 16-18**.





The Hand